

Public Document Pack

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Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democraidaidd



To: Cllr Aaron Shotton (Leader)

CS/NG

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Chris Bithell,
Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Christine Jones,
Kevin Jones and Billy Mullin

9 July 2014

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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CLWYD COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **TUESDAY, 15TH JULY, 2014** at **9.30 AM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 16)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting.

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Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawau gohebiaeth yn y Cymraeg neu'r Saesneg

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

STRATEGIC REPORTS

- 4 **"IN DEFENCE OF LOCALISM" - ELECTED GOVERNMENT IN WALES AND THE IMPACT OF AUSTERITY"** (Pages 17 - 40)

Report of Chief Executive - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

- 5 **ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORTING FRAMEWORK (ACRF)** (Pages 41 - 90)

Report of Chief Officer, Social Services - Cabinet Member for Social Services

- 6 **FLINTSHIRE CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2014 - 2017** (Pages 91 - 130)

Report of Chief Officer, Social Services - Cabinet Member for Social Services

- 7 **REGIONAL COMMISSIONING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ADVOCACY SERVICE** (Pages 131 - 136)

Report of Chief Officer, Social Services - Cabinet Member for Social Services

- 8 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBSIDY REFORM** (Pages 137 - 162)

Report of Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise - Cabinet Member for Housing

- 9 **3 COUNTY REGIONAL PROCUREMENT PROJECT** (Pages 163 - 166)

Report of Head of ICT and Customer Services - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 10 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 (OUTTURN)** (Pages 167 - 184)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

11 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 (OUTTURN)** (Pages 185 - 238)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

12 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15** (Pages 239 - 244)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

13 **PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS - ACTUAL 2013/14** (Pages 245 - 250)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

14 **ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR THE RECOVERY OF COUNCIL TAX AND NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES** (Pages 251 - 258)

Report of Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

15 **GARDEN SERVICE FOR COUNCIL TENANTS** (Pages 259 - 264)

Report of Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise - Cabinet Member for Housing

16 **IMPLEMENTATION OF A RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY** (Pages 265 - 268)

Report of Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

17 **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 269 - 318)

Report of Chief Officer, Planning and Environment - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment

18 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LEISURE FINANCE TASK & FINISH GROUP** (Pages 319 - 322)

Report of Member Engagement Manager - Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure

19 **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS** (Pages 323 - 326)

Report of the Chief Executive enclosed.

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - COUNTY COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT
AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - FOR INFORMATION**

The following reports were scheduled to be reported to this meeting but are not on the agenda for the reasons stated:

- Food Service Plan
Deferred until September as a report is awaited from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) who audited the Food Service in its entirety

CABINET **17 JUNE 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 17 June 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Aaron Shotton (Chair)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Christine Jones and Kevin Jones

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Chris Bithell and Billy Mullin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise, Chief Officer, Education and Youth, Chief Officer, Organisational Change, Chief Officer, Planning and Environment, Chief Officer Social Services, Corporate Finance Manager and Team Manager, Committee Services.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Helen Brown declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item number 16, Business Rate 'Retail' Relief and a personal interest in agenda item number 17, Private Sector Housing Renewal.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3. ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT FOR WALES AUDIT OFFICE

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance welcomed Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones and Mr Paul Goodlad from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) who were in attendance to present the WAO Annual Improvement Report 2013-14 for Flintshire County Council.

The Chief Executive explained that an updated version of the Executive response had been circulated which included details on schools maintenance backlog and out of county places.

Huw Lloyd-Jones introduced the Report which was in three sections:

1. The delivery and evaluation of services at Flintshire County Council in 2012-13 (updated where possible to reflect more recent developments)
2. Flintshire County Council's planning of improvement for 2013-14 and

3. Whether the Auditor General believed that the Council would make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15

Huw Lloyd-Jones made the following comments, full details of which were contained the Report:

- The Council had made good progress against the improvement priorities and improved its overall performance against the national indicators
- The Council had taken action to strengthen its approach to performance evaluation, but further work was required to harmonise its improvement planning and performance reporting arrangements
- The Council had enhanced its arrangements for planning and supporting improvement, but further action was required to provide the rigour necessary to cope with the challenges ahead
- The Council was likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15

In conclusion, Huw Lloyd-Jones said this was the best Report that had been presented to Flintshire County Council to date and that the Auditor General believed the authority was likely to meet the requirements of the Measure in making arrangements to secure continuous improvement. There were no new recommendations or proposals for improvement.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance thanked Huw Lloyd-Jones and Paul Goodlad for their attendance.

The Chief Executive added that the financial challenge facing the authority was not underestimated however Flintshire County Council had made progress in this difficult challenging time. Also, CIPFA had been invited to work with the authority on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the longer term.

On the Improvement Plan, the Chief Executive said this was a constantly evolving document which had focused officers and Members.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment asked if the WAO made representations to Welsh Government (WG) on the importance of local authorities receiving timely information on budgets to enable them to plan for the future. Paul Goodlad acknowledged the difficulties faced by local authorities but the extent to which the WAO could influence WG was limited, which had been recognised in the Annual Improvement Report.

The Chief Executive explained that the Annual Improvement Report would now be submitted to Audit Committee and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's Annual Improvement Report 2013-14 published by the Auditor General for Wales be received; and

- (b) That the report be noted and the Council's response be received and agreed.

4. WALES AUDIT OFFICE REGULATORY PROGRAMME 2014-15

The Chief Executive invited Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones to present the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit for the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for the period 2014-15 and the fees for the performance and financial audit work programme.

Mr Huw Lloyd Jones explained that the main piece work to be carried out in 2014-15 was the Corporate Assessment, which was a review of the Council's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement. The outcome of the Corporate Assessment would be a report that stated whether the Auditor General believed that the Council was likely to comply with the requirements of the measure.

On the fees for performance audit and financial audit work for 2014-15, Mr Huw Lloyd-Jones explained that there was a reduction of 9.4% compared with the fees for the previous year, with an explanation of the decrease outlined in appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit for the Wales Audit Office (WAO) for the period 2014-15 be accepted; and
- (b) That the reduction in fees for the performance and financial audit work programme be noted.

5. 2013/14 YEAR END IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING

The Chief Executive introduced the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan monitoring reports for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Members were asked to note the following:

- The levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of high level activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;
- The performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and
- The current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them

A summary of overall progress against the high level activities was as follows:

PROGRESS

- Good progress (green) was being made in 55 (56%)
- Satisfactory progress (amber) was being made in 41 (42%)
- Limited progress (red) was being made in 2 (2%)

OUTCOME

- There was a high (green) level of confidence in the achievement of 69 (70%)
- There was a medium (amber) level of confidence in the achievement of 28 (29%)
- There was a low (red) level of confidence in the achievement of 1 (1%)

Full details of the activities assessed as red, with an explanation of why that assessment was made, were contained in the report. Also detailed in the report was the assessment of the strategic risks and the level to which they were being controlled.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment expressed his disappointment in the non-achievement of 20mph advisory zones being placed outside schools, which he said was due to a delay in Welsh Government (WG) reviewing the compliance of the proposed signs with visual standards.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet Members note the sufficiency of actions taken to manage delivery of the Improvement Priority impacts; and
- (b) That the following be noted:
 - The levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of key activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;
 - The levels of performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and
 - The current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them

6. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014/15

The Chief Executive introduced the Improvement Plan 2014/15 prior to its final publication in June. An addition to appendix 1 on improving road safety was tabled.

It was a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan. It was a statutory requirement for the County Council to adopt the Improvement Plan which would be submitted to the meeting on 24 June 2014.

The Plan presentation had previously changed and provided details for each of the priorities which were to have the most impact during the year. This had helped the organisation to concentrate on the outcomes where most immediate action was needed.

The draft Improvement Plan submitted to Cabinet on 13 May 2014 had been presented for consultation at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the exception of Corporate Resources, along with the accompanying targets for measures and milestone dates on which achievement would be measured. It would

be presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the Improvement Plan 2014/15 be approved prior to adoption by Council and final publication in June.

7. LOCAL SERVICE BOARD AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS END OF YEAR REPORT

The Chief Executive introduced the end of year assessments for:

- The progress of the Local Service Board (LSB) Priorities and its key Strategic Partnerships and;
- The priorities for each of the Strategic Partnerships for the year ahead

The LSB had recently published its Single Integrated Plan which focussed on four priorities and supported the work of LSB related strategic partnerships.

The LSB had adopted four priorities which were:

- Priority 1: Lead by example as employers and community leaders
- Priority 2: People are safe
- Priority 3: People enjoy good health, wellbeing and independence
- Priority 4: Organisational environmental practices

All four priorities had detailed programme plans, governance and reporting arrangements and integrated with the Council's Improvement Plan. The Single Integrated Plan brought together those commitments and activities into one plan.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development commented on the RAG status and what did not go so well on the Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ). Although the authority shared its DEZ investment enquiries with Welsh Government (WG) on a monthly basis, communication was one way and investment enquiries and opportunities remained unreported in the council's data.

RESOLVED:

That progress made in the end of year reports be noted and the commitments for the current year as reflected in the Single Integrated Plan be endorsed.

8. SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING BILL

The Cabinet Member for Social Services provided an update on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the key implications and timelines for implementation.

The intended purpose of the Act was to enable the transformation of priority areas of social care, bringing about significant change in how services were delivered and to ensure they were sustainable.

The Act placed greater legal obligations on Local Authorities and Local Authority partners to: promote equality, improve the quality of services and the provisions for information and advice, provide service users and carers with a stronger voice and real control over the services they received and encourage a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.

Subordinate legislation including relevant regulations, codes and guidance would be drafted following the achieved Royal Assent which would provide further clarity on the requirements of the Act through 2014-15.

Full details of the proposed changes and updates were detailed in the report.

The Chief Officer, Social Services added that the Act required transformational change in the way the authority managed and commissioned services for vulnerable people. There was a need to ensure that vulnerable people had access to high quality services whilst at the same time needing to remodel more traditional models of care, and empower people and communities to take responsibility for their own wellbeing. This could not be delivered in isolation – the Council, the NHS, independent and voluntary providers of care and support and local communities would need to work together to turn the Act's ambitious plans and principles into an everyday reality.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the legislative changes and obligations associated with the Act be directed and overseen through the established Modernising Social Services Board;
- (b) That there be a sustained focus on how services are commissioned, provided and where appropriate integrated. The Council's response will also need to be informed as proposed regulations and guidance are received from Welsh Government; and
- (c) That a self-assessment be conducted against the new guidance/regulations when they are published, to be undertaken within three months of publication.

9. CSSIW NATIONAL REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN WALES 2013-14

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced the outcome of a national review of commissioning in adult social care. The review included an inspection of how well services for people with dementia and their carers were being commissioned in Flintshire.

The report for Flintshire was published on the CSSIW website on 16 April 2014 and was overall very positive about the services in place for people living with dementia in this authority.

The report identified a number of areas of best practice it found in Flintshire, namely

- the “Living Well domiciliary care team supporting people living with dementia using in-house domiciliary care staff and
- the North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS) as a model of best practice in supporting carers and families

Flintshire’s Community Care Brokerage Service was described as pro-active and commended for brokering Community Health Care packages in order to ensure that CHC and palliative care was provided in a timely way.

The report also recognised Flintshire’s contribution to the development of a Regional approach to commissioning through its work with the North Wales Regional Commissioning Hub and the development of a Regional Framework for domiciliary providers. It highlighted Flintshire’s focus on ‘quality and responsiveness of services’, noting positively that the authority did not commission 15 minute domiciliary care calls and described relationships with providers as “very positive and very collaborative”.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report, particularly the positive comment on Flintshire not commissioning 15 minute domiciliary care calls.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings from the CSSIW report be received and the development of an action plan detailing the response to the recommendations be supported;
- (b) That it be noted that a strong, reciprocal, partnership approach between BCUHB and the local authority will be integral to developing the action plan and ensuring that good quality support and care is available to people with dementia and their carers; and
- (c) That a progress report, and the final draft of the action plan, be submitted to Scrutiny and Cabinet in July for review and consideration.

10. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Housing provided an update on the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire and sought support for the Local Commissioning Plan (LCP) and Local Spend Plan (LSP).

The local authority was required to develop a 3 year Commissioning Strategy that would inform the priorities within the Regional Commissioning Strategy. Local authorities in North Wales had developed 12 month Commissioning Plans to cover the transition period and allow time for reviewing of existing services, new developments and appropriate targeting of reductions.

The Commissioning Plan was appended to the report and detailed the proposals for how the grant would be allocated for the next year; this plan was set within the context of reduced funding. This would be replaced by a longer term strategy which would details the Supporting People Commissioning intentions.

The report provided full details of the reductions and how those reductions would be managed. Also detailed within the report were the national, regional and local developments and the LCP Priorities for 2014/15.

In response to a question from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise explained that Local Solutions, who now delivered the services that had previously been delivered by Save the Family, remained in the same building but they were responsible for delivering the services to local people.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reductions to the Supporting People Grant be noted and the proposed approach to managing reductions be approved; and
- (b) That the Flintshire Local Commissioning Plan 2014-15 be approved.

11. QUEENSFERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL – CHANGE IN AGE-RANGE FROM SEPTEMBER 2014, RESPONSES TO THE STATUTORY NOTICE

The Chief Officer, Education and Youth informed Members of the response to the publication of the statutory notice relating to the change of age range of Queensferry Primary School from 4-11 to 3-11 years from September 2014.

No written objections had been received to the proposals which resulted in Cabinet having the authority to determine the proposal.

In response a question, the Chief Officer, Education and Youth said the decisions that were outstanding from the Minister on the proposals from the area review provision should be received before the summer recess.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to change the age-range of Queensferry CP School, Queensferry Campus, Chester Road West from 4-11 to 3-11 years from September 2014 be approved.

12. 2013/14 YEAR END HEAD OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Chief Executive introduced the 2013/14 Year End service performance reports produced at Divisional level. The report covered the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and Members were asked to note the following:

- The progress updates for the Council Improvement Priorities that were not set as an in-year priority
- Service Plan progress
- Progress/performance against Corporate measures e.g. absence management
- The assessment of any regulatory reports and

- Performance against Improvement Targets, National Strategic Indicators (NSIs) and Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Year End Head of Service performance reports be received; and
- (b) That the following be noted:
- The progress updates for the Council Improvement Priorities that are not set as an in-year priority
 - Service Plan progress
 - Progress/performance against Corporate measures e.g. absence management
 - The assessment of any regulatory reports and
 - Performance against Improvement Targets, NSIs and PAMs

13. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 12)

The Corporate Finance Manager provided the latest revenue budget monitoring information for 2013/14 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 12 based on the most up to date information available.

The projected year end position on the Council Fund as estimated at Month 12 was:

- Net in year expenditure forecast to be £3.152m less than budget (an increase of £0.937m on the £2.215m reported at Month 11)
- Projected contingency reserve balance at 31 March of £5.093m

On the HRA, the net in year expenditure forecast was £0.124m less than budget (£0.171m as at Month 11), with a projected closing balance at 31 March 2014 of £1.533m.

The table in the report showed a projected positive variance of expenditure against budget of £3.152m, which was an increase of £0.937m on the projected underspend of £2.215m reported at Month 11. The main reasons for the variances were detailed in the report.

The original budget column reflected in-year virements which had been approved in compliance with Financial Procedure Rules. All of the movements for Month 12 were summarised in appendix 1 to the report with detailed reasons for all variances by Directorate summarised in appendices 2 to 8.

As reported at Month 11, a number of carry forward requests had been reviewed during the month and been identified as requiring carry forward into 2014/15. Details of each request were contained in appendix 10.

The 2013/14 budget contained £5.331m of specific efficiencies and the table in the report summarised the current position in relation to the achievement of those

items. The analysis showed that it was projected that £4.213 (79%) would be achieved resulting in a net underachievement of £1.118m.

After bringing in the impact of the projected in year budget position the current projected level of the contingency reserve at the end of March 2014 was £5.093m.

On the HRA, there was an overall projected underspend of £0.124m and a projected closing balance at Month 12 of £1.533m, which at 5.36% of total expenditure satisfied the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the projected Council Fund contingency sum as at 31 March 2014 be noted;
- (c) That the projected final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (d) That the carry forward requests be approved.

14. PENSIONER DISCOUNT SCHEME

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise provided information on the proposed implementation of a revised Pensioner Grant scheme in 2014-15 to those Council Tax payers in receipt of partial awards under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).

In 2013-14 the Welsh Government (WG) prescribed a new national grant scheme with a targeted approach to provide a grant to those pensioners who already received partial awards under the CTRS. In Flintshire, 2,233 households qualified for funding of up to £100, although some households received less due to their net Council Tax liability being less than £100.

The WG had decided that they would not operate a national grant scheme for 2014-15, however within the Revenue Support Grant they had included £201,700 identified for the funding of a pensioner grant scheme at the discretion of each authority. WG had not stipulated that the grant should be paid to pensioners; however a review of North and Mid Wales local authorities showed that all were proposing to pay the grant with the exception of Wrexham and Denbighshire.

Data analysis work had calculated that there were 2,204 households in Flintshire, who were in receipt of Council Tax Reductions and would qualify for funding. It was not possible to identify the number of pensioners who would qualify if restrictions on applicants were not introduced however statistics from 2012-13 indicated a minimum of 8,700 applicants which would reduce the grant to £23.18 per applicant.

The demands and funding availability had been assessed to produce criteria which were based on the continuation of the 2013/14 WG Scheme to ensure continuity and an equitable distribution of the grant, targeted to those taxpayers in most need of financial help.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised funding availability for a Pensioner Grant scheme be noted and that a scheme for Flintshire for 2014-15 be agreed;
- (b) That the following scheme as prepared by Revenues and Benefits Senior Officers be approved:

Pensioner Grant Scheme

- That the grant is only payable to pensioners who fulfil the criteria at the qualifying date of 30 June
- A maximum award of £95. The qualifying criteria is:
 - Either the claimant or the partner to the claimant has reached the age of 60 and is liable for Council Tax at a property which is deemed to be a 'sole and main' residence, and
 - The claimant qualifies for partial Council Tax Support, but not the maximum level of support on the qualifying date and there is a net liability to Council Tax (after any other discounts or reductions, for example single person discount or disabled banding relief)
 - Should the net liability be below the £95 maximum level of award then the credit to the Council Tax account will only be up to the net liability
 - The minimum award will be £10
 - Grant awards will be automatically credited to the Council Tax accounts of qualifying households during July 2014

15. BUSINESS RATES 'RETAIL' RELIEF

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise provided Members with details of a new Business Rates Relief scheme, providing a grant of up to £1,000 to 'retail' businesses during 2014-15.

Welsh Government (WG) had confirmed that £581,299 of funding was available to Flintshire County Council to award retail grants to approximately 725 businesses. In many cases the awards would be less than £1,000 given that many retail businesses were also entitled to Small Business Rate Relief and already paid less than £1,000.

Full details of the criteria for discretionary rate relief policy for retail relief were detailed in the report.

Cabinet Members commended the report which would support the continuation of town centre trading and said the scheme should be publicised as widely as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the introduction of the scheme from 1 April 2014 be approved and 'retail relief' be awarded of up to £1,000 to qualifying businesses for the financial year 2014-15.

NB – Councillor Brown left the meeting during discussion of this item.

16. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the proposed revisions to the Private Sector Renewal and Improvement Policy, along with the rationale for the revisions.

The three areas of change included:

- Introduction of new loan products to support energy efficiency measures
- Introduction of the Welsh Government Property Improvement Loan Scheme
- Strengthening the criteria to access empty homes support

Current statistics suggested that 1 in 3 Flintshire households, which equated to 20,000 households, were in fuel poverty and tackling this was an Improvement Plan priority. The objectives were to provide benefits to Flintshire households and to the council, as well as being a self sustaining area of the service. External funding would be administered in a way that allowed it to be recycled, so that it could be reinvested in further energy efficiency initiatives. This would operate as an invest to save fund.

The focus of the energy efficiency programme in 2014/15 would be major gas infill schemes at Aston and Mostyn, where it was anticipated 233 council properties would be connected.

With that in mind, the Council was keen to provide an offer to private homeowners within those areas which would encourage them to connect to the gas main. Money from the WG Arbed ECO top up scheme had been secured which would be used to fund the new loans, full details of which were contained in the report.

It was proposed that two additional conditions be inserted in respect of empty homes, which included a minimum period the property must remain tenanted after support was provided. This would be two years, or until the loan was released. The minimum period would rise to five years for those owners accessing grant support. A further condition relating to the need for owners provided with financial support to consent to their property being managed by a social lettings agency would also be inserted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the introduction of a new Energy Efficiency loan product, to help deliver gas infill in communities across Flintshire be approved, and delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise to operate the scheme;
- (b) That the introduction of the WG Property Improvement Loan initiative be approved and the final terms and conditions of the scheme be delegated to the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise and the Chief Officer, People and Resources; and
- (c) That the additional clauses to be added to the Empty Homes assistance be approved, relating to the minimum period of rental being two years for a loan and five years for a grant and that the owner must consent to the property being managed by the Council's chosen social lettings agency.

17. TACKLING PRIVATE LONG TERM VACANT HOMES – ENFORCED SALES POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced an Enforced Sales Policy and sought approval for its use.

There were currently circa 450 long term vacant homes in Flintshire which had reduced over the previous two years. Flintshire County Council had a long and successful history of tackling long term vacant homes and had provided support to owners of empty properties for approximately 12 years, which was reflected in the relatively low number of empty properties, in comparison with other parts of Wales.

Legislation had recently been used by Manchester City Council, the Law of Property Act, which allowed Council's to force properties into auction where there was an outstanding debt. Full details of the proposed enforced sales policy were contained in the report and in the appendix to the report.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and the enforced sales policy.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed enforced sales policy, and its use, be approved.

18. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Housing introduced the Housing Service's proposed Responsible Pet Ownership Policy.

It was a requirement in both the current tenancy agreement and the proposed one that written permission must be obtained from Flintshire County Council to keep a pet or animal. However, some customers had complained that there was a lack of consistency in the decision making process.

It was therefore intended that the Responsible Pet Ownership Policy would provide the Neighbourhood Housing Teams with a clear framework for decision making so that there was a more consistent approach across the whole county.

The policy had been developed through feedback from residents who had reported animal related problems, through a Member workshop and in consultation with the Tenants Federation. Details of the implementation issues, legal framework, application process, decision making, enforcement and community animal welfare footprints scheme were contained within the report.

The Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise emphasised that the policy would be applied going forward and not retrospectively.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted and the proposed policy be approved; and
- (b) That the policy only be applied going forward and not retrospectively.

20. COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES

The Cabinet Member for Housing sought approval of the proposed heating charges to the communal HRA properties in 2014/15.

On 21 May 2013 Cabinet agreed to spread the 2013/14 heating increase over two years. Tenants paid 75% of the recommended increase from October 2013 and the remaining 25% to be applied in July 2014 in addition to any inflationary increase to bring charges up to the recommended level. The phasing of those charges over two years meant that tenants would incur an additional charge of £0.68 on average on top of the standard inflationary increase in 2014/15.

The heating rates for 2014/15 showed that Flintshire County Council would incur no inflationary increases to the current charges therefore it was proposed to only implement the agreed phases increase to tenants in July 2014. The table in 3.05 of the report set out the recommended heating charge increases for 2014/15 based on actual costs to the Council in 2013/14 and heating estimates for 2014/15.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure suggested that an advisory note be sent to tenants to advise them on being aware of the heating they used which was accepted by the Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That there will be no inflationary heating increases for 2014/15; and
- (b) That the phased increase of heating charges to tenants takes place from July 2014.

21. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

The Chief Executive introduced a revised Flexible Retirement Policy for approval which was one of a number of policies that were being updated.

Under the current policy there was no minimum amount that an employee could request to reduce their hours or salary and consequently, the benefits of flexible retirement were not maximised from the Council's perspective. To remedy that, the Council was recommending a new criteria for the approval of Flexible Retirements and a revised policy. The following revisions were recommended:

- To reduce contractual working hours/salary by at least 20% (or equivalent to 20% reduction)
- Reduction of hours/salary must apply for 12 months after implementation date
- An employee must give an indication of their planned or projected retirement date

Following the implementation of the new Operating Model and the Chief Officer team, the consideration of Flexible Retirement applications would take place via a recruitment panel involving the relevant portfolio Chief Officer, the Chief Officer for People and Resources and the Chief Finance / S151 Officer.

Flexible Retirement applications would be considered in accordance with the criteria detailed in the report.

The revised policy stipulated that the Council would only consider applications where there was no service requirement to backfill reduced hours and where identified savings would be released to the corporate centre.

RESOLVED:

That the Flexible Retirement Policy and associated procedures be supported and approved.

22. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information report on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

- Deeside Naval Club, Chapel Street, Connah's Quay – Release of Restrictive Covenant
- Grant of Easement at Land at the Head of St Mary's Drive, Northop Hall
- Drury Lane – Proposed Traffic Calming

23. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were two members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30am and ended at 11.20am)

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Chairman

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **"IN DEFENCE OF LOCALISM" - ELECTED GOVERNMENT IN WALES AND THE IMPACT OF AUSTERITY"**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To consider the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) consultation document "In Defence of Localism" – Elected Government in Wales and agree the Council's response.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Appended to this report is the WLGA consultation document "In Defence of Localism" – Elected Government in Wales and the Impact of Austerity" which was published at its Annual Conference on 19th June.

2.02 The document covers key issues including financial futures, the Public Services Commission's recommendations, central local relations in Wales and devolution. The predominate theme of the document is to restate the case for localism in Wales.

2.03 In England and Scotland, the Local Government Association (LGA) and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) respectively, are advocating localism as a campaigning stance. The LGA campaign "Rewiring Public Services" and the COSLA "Commission on Local Democracy" both argue for devolution of power to the most appropriate local level.

2.04 The WLGA is now utilising the "In Defence of Localism" badge on all further publications between now and the Assembly elections in 2016. It is also their intention to undertake a national customer survey on local government services and the value which the public place on these services.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 As part of the shared commitment outlined above, Welsh Local Government will:

- Engage in constructive debate around structural reform of local government and will continue to lead and deliver the wider public service reform agenda
- Promote and support the local contributions to the long term national strategic vision for Wales which will be articulated through the forthcoming Future Generations Bill
- Deliver specific local contributions to the Wales Programme for Government, through successful delivery of Outcome Agreements
- Continue to lead on self improvement and a collective sector-led approach to identifying and responding to improvement challenges faced by individual authorities
- Build on progress around improving engagement, challenge and scrutiny within the local democratic process, with particular focus on improving the diversity of democracy ahead of the next local elections
- Honour all existing specific service based commitments

3.02 It is vital that the relationship between Welsh Government and local government is improved and more clearly defined. The WLGA Consultation document argues that there is room for improvement with formal partnership agreements, concordats and memoranda of understanding etc. A completely new approach is needed towards redefining the relationship between Councils and their communities; providing services with local people, rather than for them.

The dividing line is a clear choice between two approaches:

- 3.03
- Centralist – that local government is primarily in existence to administer, provide and oversee the provision of public services and therefore must be regulated and controlled – as far as any constitution allows – by the centre; or
 - Localist – that it is a democratic body charged with the role of governing its locality and representing (and defending) it and its need to the centre, in which case it must have autonomy and financial security and control over its own locality.

3.04 It is the unanimous view of the leaders of all 22 local authorities that the localist approach offers the best way forward in terms of protecting our communities and enhancing democracy across Wales.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to consider the consultation document and agree to support the approach as outlined in paragraph 3.01 to 3.04 above.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined within the consultation document.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None directly associated with this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None directly associated with this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None directly associated with this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None directly associated with this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

None directly associated with this report.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

None directly associated with this report.

12.00 APPENDICES

WLGA Consultation Document:

“In Defence of Localism – Elected Government in Wales and the Impact of Austerity”.

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

Documentation is contained within the relevant files within the Executive Office.

Contact Officer: Sharron Jones, Executive Manager
Telephone: 01352 702107
Email: sharron.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

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In Defence of Localism - Elected Government in Wales and the Impact of Austerity

June 2014

Discussion Document for
Consultation

Welsh Local Government Association

The WLGA's primary purposes are to promote a better local government, its reputation and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public service and democracy.

It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales with the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities as associate members.

www.wlga.gov.uk | 029 2046 8600

Foreword

Any future reform of public service delivery in Wales must consider the Welsh public sector as a whole. While we acknowledge that local government itself must change as part of this wider process, such complex reform should be based upon a true consideration of the functions that are required rather than the structures that will eventually support them.

In presenting this paper, we hope to reclaim a vitally important debate on public service reform which has recently been reduced to an overly simplistic 'for and against' on local government reorganisation.

We would be grateful for your views. Please send your comments on this paper, and your thoughts on the role and function of local government to enquiries@wlga.gov.uk

Welsh Local Government Association

Local Government House
Drake Walk
Cardiff CF10 4LG

Introduction

1. It is noteworthy that the overused maxim "*may you live in interesting times*" is often purported to be a translation of an old Chinese curse. For local government in Wales over recent years this sadly resonates. The word "interesting" does not come close to describing the current context, the sheer scale of issues, or the task of transformation that lies ahead.

2. The financial and organisational sustainability of all public services in Wales will come into question over the next ten years as the squeeze on public spending continues. The viability of Wales' councils is potentially at stake and there are much deeper questions of how we shift services from badly outdated delivery models designed for growth to ones of prioritisation, responding to need and embracing innovation. These challenges pose fundamental questions about the nature of democracy in Wales and local government's place within that framework of democratic accountability and service delivery.

3. This paper sets out an argument for a localist approach to public service delivery. It argues that local public services must be provided within a democratic framework and that services are best provided when those who use them are directly involved in how they are delivered, managed and planned. Local government is seen as the tier of government closest to public service users and it is argued that councils should be empowered to deliver those services more effectively and efficiently over the coming years. This would require a mature relationship of trust between local and central government, where local government would be given

the freedom and flexibility to deliver services according to local circumstances while being held to account by Welsh Government for the outcomes delivered.

4. In setting out the financial challenges facing local government and the Welsh public sector as a whole, this paper also suggests that the viability and sustainability of public services is threatened unless an alternative approach to dealing with the austerity programme is considered. With this in mind, a range of alternative models for public service delivery are considered and discussed. The paper concludes with a commitment to continue to work in partnership with the Welsh Government to address and resolve these profound issues.

5. Since 1999 and the advent of the National Assembly for Wales, it has been accepted that central government sets strategy nationally and that local government delivers services locally in accordance with national strategy and circumstances within their communities. It is recognised that both central and local government have a democratic legitimacy in this process and that equilibrium must be found within the local-central relationship. That balance has shifted back and forth over the last 15 years but the equilibrium has more or less been retained. This balance has been supported by mechanisms such as the Local Government Partnership Council derived from the Government of Wales Act, and other related structures. As the financial and economic circumstances change, however, and the viability and sustainability of public services are threatened, the balance in central-local relations is also under threat.

The Current Context

6. It is often said in the business world that looking through the rear view mirror is often clearer than looking through the windscreen. While looking ahead is difficult the clues to future developments are to be seen all around us. Communities across the west and north Wales coast saw the fierce impact of climate change in action during the winter storms. At the same time, communities in the *South Wales Valleys* are at the sharp end of a new model of welfare reform which is bringing to the fore the need to prioritise efforts to eradicate poverty in all our communities. Rural communities are seeing the decline of the Welsh language and in trusted community institutions while Wales' City-Regions, though growing rapidly, are struggling with a road infrastructure which means that the average trip along the M4, A55 and A470 can often be more of an odyssey than a journey.

7. Within the big statutory services provided by local government there are major challenges ahead. Everyone is familiar by now with the story told by the PISA tests, but while we tend to compare Wales' relatively poor performance with the better performing UK nations, the real challenge to our education system lies elsewhere. The top seven performing countries in the OECD PISA rankings are all in Asia and it will take decades for Wales and the rest of the UK to catch up with them.

8. Finally, across Wales we have the great news that people are living longer and fuller lives. In 2008, 18 per cent of the population was over the age of 65; by 2033 this is expected to rise to almost 26 per cent. The issue however is not one of living longer but of ageing well.

9. Responding to these changing circumstances will require a new model of social care and an NHS that is less preoccupied with hospital provision and able to shift towards a renewed emphasis on public health and prevention. The concept of *Prudent Health Care* captures this idea and local government has a key role to play in addressing the wider social and economic determinants of health inequalities in our society.

The Growing Funding Crisis

10. All these challenges occur in the most sustained period of austerity since the Second World War. Across the UK, it is local government that is bearing the brunt of these cuts more than any other service.

11. While it is fair to say that local government in Wales has received better revenue settlements than elsewhere during this period, it would be fundamentally wrong to assume that local government has avoided cuts over the past five years. Taking one example over that same period Cardiff Council has cut £120m from its revenue spending. All Welsh councils experienced a cut of 5.6% in real terms in 2014-15 with further cuts to follow. Local government now finds itself in a "zero sum game" with funding decisions essentially shifting resources between local government and health. At the same time some of local government's larger services are subject to a level of protection that places an unbearable squeeze on smaller unprotected services.

12. The implications of these funding cuts in Wales have been analysed in the report "Local Government Expenditure in Wales - Recent trends and future pressures" which was commissioned by WLGA from the Institute of Fiscal Studies in October 2012. The report looks in depth at the impact on other services of applying preferential status to the budgets of larger services.

13. The report argues that, "if the Welsh NHS is protected from further cuts after 2014-15, our assumptions mean that Welsh unitary authorities would face a reduction in spending power of 4.1% per year, on average, in 2015-16 and

2016-17 if further welfare cuts are made, or 5.7% per year if no further welfare cuts are made. These falls are very substantial and mean the authorities' spending power would be 10% or 13% below its 2012-13 level by this date" (Institute of Fiscal Studies, page 48)

14. The financial plight of local authorities is gaining enormous media attention in Wales and recent local authority budget setting decisions were covered with an almost morbid fascination. The word "council" is rarely heard without the appendage "cash strapped" in contemporary reporting. Of course, this should come as no surprise as some £280 million has been cut from services this year. The WLGA estimates that by 2017-18 there could be up to a further £860m in cuts. In all probability this will mean thousands of further job losses and land a further blow on Welsh communities. Given the reliance on the public sector for employment, the cruel irony for Wales could be that an upturn in the UK economy coincides with a decline in public services and jobs.

15. For councillors, budget processes are becoming excruciating in terms of choices and devastating in their impact. No one seeks election to confront their communities with the removal of precious public services. Councils across Wales have engaged more than ever in intense discussions with council tax payers about what matters most to them and how to pay for the services the public want and value.

16. Local authorities must set balanced budgets however, and this means that concepts such as "continuous improvement" across every service area

are now becoming increasingly meaningless. Consolidated improvement and managed decline may be the more accurate descriptors of future service provision. By definition you cannot improve a service that you are about to close down and the debate in many councils now revolves around the question "what should we stop doing".

17. There are those who would urge local government to resist these cuts and to continue to protect all of the 500 plus discreet functions traditionally delivered by councils in Wales. This unfortunately is not a feasible proposition as such exhortations fail to recognise the scale and nature of the challenge ahead, particularly if current levels of austerity continue.

18. Another option is to centralise further with central government to increase its role as a provider. But does this mean that democracy in Wales is a "one size fits all" with government more centralised, more top-down, more statist and less accountable? The alternative is to seek a solution which is more attached to community interaction, more engaged and empowering of citizens.

19. The WLGA has long argued that decisions about how services are organised and managed should be taken as close to the point of delivery as possible and that those who use public services should have as great a say as possible in the way in which services are delivered. This means being comfortable with the principle of decentralisation and the idea that a matter ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralised authority capable of addressing that matter effectively.

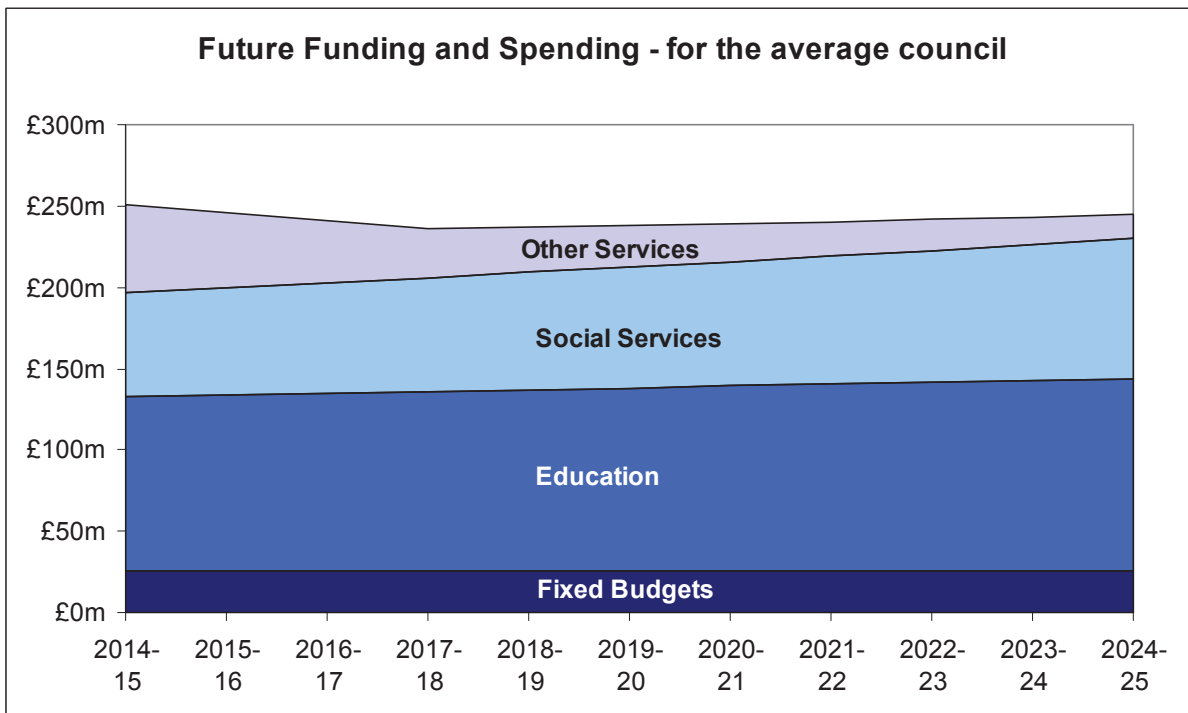
The “third rail” of Welsh politics

20. American politics has the concept of the “third rail” - the third rail refers to the charged middle rail of an electrified rail track - which is used as a metaphor for any issue so controversial that it is “deadly” or “untouchable”. The “third rail” of Welsh Politics is the growing tension caused by the need to protect large services like health and education and the impact of this on unprotected services in areas such as leisure, parks, libraries, arts, roads, environment, planning and transport etc. These are all areas of service that the public cares passionately about but questions must be asked about their sustainability in the future.

21. A recent report by Mark Jeffs of the Wales Audit Office, published for the think tank Welsh Public Services 2025 was entitled, “Future Pressures on Welsh Public Services” argues that it is imperative that we address these issues now as the trajectory of health spending related to demographics is ever upward. For example, he presents a best and worse case scenario based on funding forecasts. In this context what would it mean if spending on the NHS rises from 42% of the Welsh Government’s present revenue budget to a best case of 57% and worse case of 67% in 2024-25? The graph on the following page shows the impact of the squeeze on unprotected services based on these assumptions for an average council. In effect it means that by spend on services as wide ranging as leisure, libraries, transport, environmental health, trading standards and so on would have reduced to a quarter of current levels.

22. Such a scenario would deprive individuals and communities across Wales of much needed and valued public services. It is incumbent upon us collectively therefore to consider alternative models of delivering services. Not to do this would inevitably leave Welsh communities with a local government sector that is essentially an empty vessel devoid of previously cherished functions.

Future Funding Scenarios



A New Model for Local Government in Wales

23. Last year, the WLGA held a joint conference with the LGA in England to examine experiences of a new model of *cooperative councils* that is emerging in England, particularly in the north-west. This approach argues for a new settlement between citizens, communities and the state which would engage all in sharing the responsibility for achieving better social outcomes. Reformed public services would foster a new spirit of social citizenship, characterised by social responsibility, reciprocity and resilience. Forging them would require fundamental and long term change, developed – critically – in open dialogue with citizens. Councils across Wales have started similar dialogue in many areas but it needs to go further.

24. Councils will increasingly look beyond their own boundaries as they redesign services. The emergence of Waste Procurement Partnerships, School Improvement Consortia, a National Adoption Service, Shared Legal Services across a range of authorities, a National Procurement Service and much more all contradict the prevailing view that collaboration has been a failure. Other partnerships also see deeper public sector relationships being forged. These include the Western Bay Project in social care and the Gwent Frailty Project providing a platform to integrate health and social care, helping councils and the NHS to invest in prevention.

25. The publication of the Future Generations Bill in Wales has called for a vigorous “national conversation” on such issues, including the future of Wales and its long term development path. This debate has been avoided for far too long and the WLGA believes that we have a collective responsibility to address these issues and seek to tackle systemic problems. The themes set out in this document are seen as a contribution to that wider debate.

26. The scale of the challenge local government faces cannot be avoided or deferred. Choices for local government include more rigorous approaches to demand management and prevention, new and innovative approaches to delivery and in many cases ceasing to deliver some services altogether. If the current WLGA estimate is right and local government has to cut up to £860m from its revenue budgets in by 2018, then these issues have to be addressed and resolved.

27. In light of these circumstances, the future affordability of the Welsh Government’s “progressive universal” policies and services within local government will also need debate. For example the reimbursement rate for concessionary fares has been reduced from 73.59% to 64% in 2014-15 and the available budget is set to continue to decline, from £65m this year to £61m in 2016-17. Coming on top of a 25% reduction in bus funding between 2011-12 and 2013-14, this inevitably means

that bus operators are cutting back on services. Due to their constrained financial position, local authorities are simply not in a position to inject funds to keep marginal services running. What will it mean for the sustainability of the concessionary fares scheme if increasing numbers of bus routes are closed?

28. In terms of new approaches, it is becoming apparent that traditional local authority functions such as leisure are rapidly moving from being services delivered in house to being externalised services delivered through new models such as community trusts and mutual’s. Similar developments are happening in libraries, theatres, museums, public toilets and other community facilities. In England, this has led to a debate on the establishment of the *strategic enabling council* - with most local authorities moving some way down the road towards a slimmer strategic core with more services delivered at arm’s length through a wide variety of delivery bodies including the private sector.

29. In Wales, the tradition is different and probably far closer to the model recently put forward by the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) namely the “Ensuring Council”. This proposes an authority with a strong public sector ethic but with a willingness to examine other delivery mechanisms that are not for profit and which reflect a cooperative basis.

THE ENSURING COUNCIL | THE ENABLING COUNCIL

<p>ORGANISING PRINCIPLE</p> <p>Stewardship of place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house provision of core services and public employment Maintenance of core capacity within the sector Collaborative relationships Local representative and participative democracy Collective community outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joined up services meeting the needs of local communities and delivering wider strategic objectives 	<p>ORGANISING PRINCIPLE</p> <p>Strategic Commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses an explicit preference for the private and voluntary sectors as service providers Divestment to alternative service providers Contractual relationships Market democracy, individual choice and personalisation Individual user outcomes Fragmented services that lack the overall strategic co-ordination to deliver on wider policy objectives <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Source – APSE 2013</i></p>
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30. The WLGA has been in extensive discussions with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) over recent years to examine social impact bonds and partnership based service delivery models. The WLGA is also discussing with the Wales TUC and colleagues in the wider trade union movement how to reconcile new models with the concerns of their members and to ensure robust social partnerships can be built that can provide the necessary employment assurances. The WLGA has just signed a MOU with *One Voice Wales* to examine how we can enhance the role of town and community councils. This work is significant, but it is in its early stages and cannot offer the answer to all our ailments. As it stands, for most local authorities, strategies based on pragmatic downsizing, significant internal reform, bearing down on costs and exploring innovation remain the most common solution.

31. The reality is that in the immediate future, some of our services could be

shrunk by between 35% and 45%. A recent survey by the Wales Audit Office, for example, recently registered cuts of 20% in one year within some environmental services departments. When funding and services are cut by this order then it becomes impossible to retain the same level of provision. The status quo cannot be sustained magically when the service has been cut by 35%. Despite the well publicised examples of alternative approaches and innovative models this has still been the predominant response in England. As the New Local Government Network observed in a recent study:

32. "We expected to uncover a huge amount of innovation and divergence as councils plan for the future. It seemed likely that we might uncover many more 'easy councils' and 'co-operative councils' quietly reforming themselves away from the limelight. In fact, there appears to be surprisingly little of this kind of high concept reform"

Public Services Delivery and Governance

33. The WLGA recognises that the publication of the report by the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery chaired by Sir Paul Williams in January 2014 has attempted to address many of the issues raised in this analysis. The Williams report is a large and detailed study of the state of Welsh public services and it reiterates clearly that the sustainability of public organisations is under threat because of the dramatic fall in finances. It makes some very useful recommendations about shredding complexity, concerted efforts to improve culture and leadership, de-cluttering funding arrangements and downsizing the machinery of bureaucracy built up by the Welsh Government in support of its various policy initiatives.

34. Since the advent of the National Assembly, Wales has seen a huge growth in policy initiatives supported by individual dedicated funding streams. Specific grant funding amounted to £402m in 2003-04 and by 2012-13 it had more than doubled to £859m. The cost of administering, monitoring and auditing these myriad schemes is unknown but a recent report by the WAO into Grants Management estimates that it is somewhere between 5% and 10% of the value of the funding. This is simply unaffordable.

35. Unfortunately, nearly all of the 62 recommendations of the Williams report have become overwhelmed by the focus on the four recommendations proposing the reorganisation of local councils. A substantive report on the future of public services in Wales has in effect been reduced to an argument for and against local government reorganisation. An

inevitable debate about structures rather than services has regrettably followed. Six months after its publication, the status of the report is unclear and the Welsh Government has not responded formally to the recommendations proposed by the Commission. The timescale and the deadlines proposed in the report have inevitably slipped, and as time passes there is growing uncertainty across local government about its future configuration. In the mean time, the funding crisis continues to grow.

36. The WLGA recognises the need for a robust debate on the future shape of local government and is eager to play its full part. That debate must set out a new vision for local government and must define the relationship between central and local government. It must also include a robust analysis of financial implications of any structural change. The Williams report's brief did not include such a study and the report's analysis of costs is largely a critique of work undertaken by the consultants Deloitte. Following a seminar in early 2014 the WLGA has commissioned a full independent analysis of the potential financial implications of restructuring from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA). This work must be at the heart of any new vision for local government in Wales.

37. The need to set out the future role of local government was recognized by the former Minister for Education, Leighton Andrews AM, in a debate on the Williams report in the Assembly on the 28th January 2014 when he stated:

38. "Where I think the commission's report is somewhat weaker is in the area

of democracy. It does not give us an analysis of the appropriate role of local government or the appropriate relationship between local and central government.... The issue of the functions of local government is also an area that is not addressed effectively within the Williams commission report. Answering these issues will be critical to building a consensus for reform across Wales..... What is the role of local government? If you are going to develop a reform programme for reorganisation, you have to have a clear vision for local government going forward".

39. The recently published Commission on Local Democracy undertaken by the Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) addresses many of these issues within the Scottish context. Rather than focusing on structures, centralizing and contested arguments around scale, the COSLA Commission proposes a bottom up approach and provides a critique of the centralist philosophy. It is very much a reassertion of the principles of local democracy.

40. As it states: "*Over the decades, we've seen a culture in which more and more services and decisions been taken away from local communities and put into the hands of distant bureaucracies. As a country, we have got so used to this approach that we've come to think of it as the only way to improve public services, even though that has meant that for most people decisions are now taken far away from where they live their lives. That kind of thinking won't see us through for much longer. People are losing trust and confidence in democracy, and fewer and fewer are choosing to vote. Not only that, but this top down way of working hasn't produced the results that Scotland needs or tackled the local challenges that people face".*

41. This sentiment clearly resonates in Wales particularly as the contours of devolution have developed over the last 15 years.

The Constitutional Settlement in Wales

42. The outset of devolution saw a settlement that recognised the constitutional importance of all tiers of elected government. The Government of Wales Act 1998 obliged the Assembly “to promote local government”, establish a Partnership Council and report annually on local government performance. The Scotland Act 1998 contained no such provisions. This was a clear attempt in Wales to codify the place of local government in the devolved setting and to provide a counter balance to the inevitable centralising dynamic of a new tier of government. The need for checks and balances within any democratic system is widely recognised and this was an attempt to build those principles into an emerging system.

43. The Government of Wales Act left existing local government powers and responsibilities untouched. The strongly declared, implication was that the new Assembly would complement not compromise local authority autonomy. Section 73 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (“the Act”) prescribes that Welsh Ministers must produce a scheme setting out how they propose to sustain and promote local government in Wales.

44. The last ‘Local Government Partnership Scheme’ was published in 2008, over six years ago. With the passing of time, the focus and appreciation of the importance of this agreement appears to have diminished. As a result, the annual publication of a summary document of the scheme’s progress is now largely a formality and many councillors are unaware even of its existence.

45. Inevitably the balance in local central relations has shifted. The 2009

referendum that granted the Assembly further legislative powers strengthened central government’s position in relation to local government and the major public services. This was reinforced by the separation of the National Assembly into a legislative and executive in the form of the Welsh Government. The tone of central-local relations has changed significantly as a consequence. Over time, the Welsh Government has developed a more centralised and assertive approach to public services and the focus has switched from being strategic to being operational. Increasingly, service providers are being held to account by the Welsh Government for operational aspects of service delivery which has traditionally been the preserve of the regulators and the inspectorate. Although local government is democratically accountable and has its own popular mandate, there is a sense in which it is seen as the junior partner and must be subjected to an additional level of accountability.

46. It is undoubtedly the case however that Wales sees a much greater level of partnership working between local and central government than other parts of the UK. The WLGA has welcomed the relative protection that has been applied in recent years to the local government settlement in Wales in comparison to England. There have also been significant achievements in the major service areas. The recent passage of the Social Services and Well Being Act sees the function of social care fully retained in local government following extensive dialogue between Welsh Government and local councils. Local authorities in Wales continue to run education and retain their statutory responsibility. The recently

established National Model for Regional Working is an example of the partnership between local government and the Welsh Government and the increasing trend towards the shared construction of policy. The 21st Century Schools Programme is another example of shared construction that means Wales compares favourably against the cuts experienced in England.

47. Yet despite these achievements, the push for centralisation continues. There remains an ongoing debate about what should be the functional base of local government. There are also suggestions that some functions could be removed if local government reorganisation does not occur. For some reason, the successes of shared construction in these big policy areas do not translate into a wider or more positive debate about "localism".

48. As a consequence, there is the emergence of a contradictory phenomenon of centralisation within devolution. At a time when the functions of central government are being moved closer to the people, the functions of local government are in danger of being moved further away. This has led Paul Griffiths, the special adviser to former First Minister Rhodri Morgan, to observe that:

49. "If the Williams recommendation of just 10 local authorities is implemented, our most local unit of government will have an average population of over 300,000 people. The distance between community and government will be bigger in Wales than in any other part of Europe".

50. The table below graphically illustrates this point.

Table 1: Municipal Governments at the most local level

Country	No. Councils at Lowest Tier	Population
France	36,786	65,633,194
Austria	2,354	8,451,860
Spain	8,167	46,704,308
Estonia	226	1,324,814
Germany	11,252	82,020,578
Italy	8,092	59,685,227
Norway	428	5,051,275
Finland	320	5,426,674
Latvia	119	2,023,825
Belgium	589	11,161,642
Sweden	290	9,555,893
Netherlands	408	16,779,575
Lithuania	60	2,971,905
Denmark	98	5,602,628
N. Ireland	(15 from 2015) 26	1,823,600
Wales	22	3,100,000
England	353	53,493,700
Scotland	32	5,295,000
EU27	89,149	501,465,000

Source: Council of European Municipalities and Regions (2013) *Local and Regional Government in Europe* http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/FINAL_CEMR_factsheets_2013_EN.pdf

51. Despite the European evidence it seems that in Wales we are becoming ever more centralist in our thinking. Councillor Bob Wellington, the Leader of WLGA highlighted this trend in his speech to the 2013 WLGA Conference when he stated,

52. "There seems in some quarters to be a proposition widely circulating in Wales that we would all be better off with less local government. You've heard the argument, it goes that Welsh Government could run schools, let the NHS undertake social care and then divide the rest up between various quangos and other organisations. My question back to those wise pundits who propose this is a simple one, are we that scornful of local democracy? Well exercised local power can mitigate the follies of the centre. My colleagues in Cardiff Bay rightly state that one of their current key purposes is to constrain the impact of the excesses of Westminster government and its programmes. We know that our Assembly colleagues often complain that the Westminster does not listen or show respect to them. Central governments can be a bit like that."

53. Local democracy is not an abstract political concept that local government has a vested interest in preserving and promoting. It is a characteristic and feature of Welsh society that Welsh communities still cherish. The public want local government and local decision-making over the matters and services that they care about most. Councils and councillors have a better understanding, are more accessible and more responsive to local communities' needs.

54. The public place greater trust in councils and councillors than in any other tier of political representation. A recent

UK-wide survey shows that 76% of people trust their local councillors most to make decisions about how services are provided in their areas whilst only 9% trusted national politicians. Similarly, 77% trust their council most to make decisions about how services are provided in their area, whilst only 13% trust central government.¹

55. Despite some well-publicised service challenges in a number of authorities, satisfaction ratings with local government services are higher than those for the Welsh Government. The latest National Survey for Wales shows that 57% of people said that their local authority provided high quality services and the satisfaction rating for education is 6.4 out of 10 compared to 5.8 for the Welsh Government.²

56. The Williams report has offered up a variation on the localist approach linked to structural reform. This argues for more democratic input into all Welsh public services, the dismantling of costly control mechanisms like specific grants, properly costed legislation and the possibility of devolving more functions to local government. In a similar vein, the First Minister has also recognised that the process of devolution extends beyond the National Assembly when he stated in the Plenary Session on 28th January 2014 that: *"I spend a lot of my time arguing for powers to be devolved from London to here. I am fully aware of the fact that the same argument applies to devolving powers to local authorities, as long as they are able to deal with those powers."*

¹ LGA Survey January 2013 – http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/6175790/NEWS

² Welsh Government – National Survey for Wales [April 2012-March 2013] - <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/nationals-survey/?lang=en>

57. This is a clear recognition that decisions about how public services are managed and provided must be taken within a democratic framework, and more importantly, as close to the people who use them as possible. Once the Welsh Government's response to the Williams recommendations is published, the debate about empowering local government can begin in earnest. Whilst there have been suggestions about a larger role for local government in the NHS and the broader public health function, there is as yet no real substance to this discussion. The longer it takes to initiate this discussion and the process of reform, the less intrinsic resource benefits it yields as ongoing austerity means that budgets continue to decline.

58. The IFS report commissioned by the WLGA highlights that the most severe budget challenges are in the forthcoming three financial years up to 2018. The danger is that if local government reorganisation does not occur until 2020, it will have been overtaken by the impact of the cuts in public spending. Services will have been redesigned, reconfigured or cut in an immediate and more arbitrary way rather than being managed and planned. The scale of the current austerity cuts throws the relative modesty of the Williams projected savings of £60-80 million per annum into sharp focus. Taking just three authorities across Wales, the cuts in these councils during the current year alone have already exceeded this figure:

Financial Cuts 2014-15	
<i>Example South, Mid and North Wales</i>	
Cardiff	£50m
Powys	£20m
Flintshire	£15.5

59. Lynne Neagle AM also raised a further point about continuity with existing initiatives and the impact of the Williams report, during the Assembly debate on 28th January 2014 when she commented:

60. "Is there not an obvious danger that embarking on a long, complex and potentially very fraught process of local government reorganisation will derail that journey of improvement before the changes that we have put in place to try to fix the problems have even had a chance to bed in?Meanwhile, the fact that Ceredigion is currently our best performing local authority in terms of education and, yet, is also one of the smallest, should be enough in itself to strike a note of caution among those who dogmatically insist that bigger is, by default, always better"

61. In advance of the 2015 General Election, a cross-party debate is occurring in England on giving more power and freedoms to local councils to enable them to make changes locally. This is deemed to be vital in order to design and deliver more efficient public services and help local areas innovate and, in particular, promote growth. A similar debate needs to occur in Wales.

62. Local government has been central to the development of devolution in Wales and has been a constructive force in the partnership governance that has shaped the first decade of devolution. Welsh local government remains committed to continuing this partnership and working with the Welsh Government to reform public services and respond to the unprecedented challenges that face our communities.

63. As part of this shared commitment, Welsh local government will:

- Engage in constructive debate around structural reform of local government and will continue to lead and deliver the wider public service reform agenda.
- Promote and support the local contributions to the long-term national strategic vision for Wales which will be articulated through the forthcoming Future Generations Bill.
- Deliver specific local contributions to the Wales Programme for Government, through successful delivery of Outcome Agreements.
- Continue to lead on self improvement and a collective sector-led approach to identifying and responding to improvement challenges faced by individual authorities.
- Build on progress around improving engagement, challenge and scrutiny within the local democratic process, with a particular focus on improving the diversity of democracy ahead of the next local elections.
- Honour all existing specific service based commitments.

64. In order to deliver these commitments, Welsh local government needs greater flexibilities, freedoms and clarity from Welsh Government, including:

- The transfer of all specific grants into the RSG and a restatement of the commitment to reduce the burden of service plans.
- A robust financial process to cost the impact of new legislation and burdens based on the principle that local government only assumes implementation for new responsibilities which are fully funded.
- A review of the balance of funding and local government financial regime as part of the Silk Finance and Tax-raising reforms.
- The introduction of the power of general competence for councils in Wales which was introduced in England through the Localism Act 2011.
- An acceptance that “managed difference” and local variation are at the heart of local democracy. This means that local services and solutions will be different for different communities.
- Establishment of a dedicated group under the auspices of the Partnership Council to examine what areas of public service delivery should be placed under local democratic control.
- The establishment of a Staff Commission to examine the implications of local government reorganisation and look at workforce planning and transfers across all sectors.
- A proper codification of central-local relations and responsibilities in Wales.
- Fully respect and apply the principles of the European Charter of Local Self Government.
- That Welsh Government should re-establish a process to understand financial pressures within local government prior to the publication of the settlement, on the proviso that this is not a commitment to full funding of those pressures.
- That Welsh Government should fully commit to the principle of introducing three year financial settlements to give greater stability in terms of resource planning.

Conclusion

65. It is vital that the relationship between Welsh Government and local government is better and more clearly defined. The previous experience of formal partnership agreements, concordats and memoranda of understanding to cement such approaches have inevitably disappointed and not worked. A completely new approach is needed that moves the focus towards a redefinition of the relationship between councils and their communities – providing services with local people, rather than for them.

66. The dividing line is a clear choice between two approaches –

- **CENTRALIST** - that local government is primarily in existence to administer, provide and oversee the provision of public services and therefore must be regulated and controlled – as far as any constitution allows - by the centre; or
- **LOCALIST** - that it is a democratic body charged with the role of governing its locality and representing (and defending) it and its needs to the centre, in which case it must have autonomy and financial security and control over its own locality.

67. Founded on the principles of community of interest, access and accountability, local government remains closest to the people, both in proximity and value. Despite this important role, it is frequently taken for granted and, in some instances, widely misunderstood. It is the unanimous view of the leaders of the 22 local authorities in the WLGA that the localist approach offers the best way forward in terms of protecting our communities and enhancing democracy across Wales.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, SOCIAL SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **ANNUAL COUNCIL REPORTING FRAMEWORK (ACRF)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To present the final version of the Social Services Annual Performance report to Cabinet for Agreement.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Every Chief Officer for Social Services is required to produce an annual report summarising their view of the authority's social care services and priorities for improvement. The Overview Report is part of the Welsh Government (WG) performance framework for Social Services.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The final version of the Annual Report has been prepared following an in depth review of current performance by the Chief Officer, Heads of Service, Service Managers and Planning and Performance Officers. A period of consultation included a Member Task and Finish meeting to review the initial draft of the report and an opportunity for Cabinet Members to further shape priorities and the style of the final format.

3.02 The Annual Report has for the second year in succession, been prepared by our Social Enterprise "Double Click Design". The report for 2013/2014 is attached at Appendix 1.

3.03 The report has been developed in sections that reflect the key themes contained within the Social Services and Well Being Act. The alignment of our assessment and future priorities to the Act was an approach that was positively received by CSSIW last year.

3.04 The annual report will form an integral part of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) performance evaluation of Flintshire Social Services.

3.05 The report is intended to be an objective picture of services in Flintshire demonstrating a clear understanding of the strengths and

challenges faced.

3.06 Our overall assessment is that Social Services in Flintshire continue to drive forward service improvement, ensuring we have an effective range of good quality services that support and protect vulnerable people. Through our assessment we can show that we have:

- supported families successfully at an early stage to help prevent problems escalating this includes supporting parents through Flying Start and the Integrated Family Support Service
- provided early support and helped people to regain their confidence and ability to care for themselves e.g. reablement after a fall
- supported people to live independently in the community by using more flexible and creative responses one example being the successful use of Direct Payments.
- delivered good outcomes for people with mental illness through a recovery model – we were awarded a Social Care Accolade in 2013
- supported an increasing number of looked after children with a strong, consistent, and stable fostering service
- safeguarded children and vulnerable adults effectively
- worked in partnership with other authorities and agencies including setting up a co-located team with Health at Holywell and the development of Llys Jasmine Extra Care
- a stable workforce who are supported with their professional development
- strong leadership driving forward our approach to modernise social care and support the development of alternative models of service delivery – for example our Living Well service which provides flexible support to people with dementia, integrated working with Health through our Crisis Intervention Team and securing agreement to develop Double Click as a Social Enterprise
- robust financial management which has delivered challenging efficiencies whilst sustaining the delivery of front line services

3.07 Our achievements have been delivered within the context of some real strategic and operational challenges, including an increasing number of vulnerable children, young people and adults with complex care needs requiring support. We have, never the less, made good progress with our programme to modernise social care. However, we recognise that we need to continue to adapt and modernise and our report therefore sets out our priorities for service development and improvement in 2014/2015. In summary the improvement priorities focus on:

- continuing our work to respond to the requirements of the Social

Services and Well Being Act

- developing our systems to ensure that people are at the centre of our work and that they have a voice and control in what happens to them, whilst we further establish a comprehensive understanding of the quality of the services and people's experiences
- developing and delivering our commissioning intentions to ensure that the right services are in place which will include remodelling and modernising services
- ensuring that we have a strong and professional workforce across the whole social care sector
- making sure that we continue to safeguard vulnerable people and looking at the potential for bringing together approaches across Children's and Adults safeguarding
- driving forward more integrated services particularly with Health

3.08 The improvement priorities are consistent with the themes and strategic intentions of the Improvement Plan and the Single Integrated Plan. We will ensure that specific actions, accountabilities and timelines for delivering the priorities are integrated into our service Business Plan.

3.09 Each quarter we will formally review and evaluate progress in delivering the improvement priorities. This process is aligned to quarterly Improvement Plan monitoring arrangements.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Cabinet agree the Annual Report to inform the organisation, workforce, clients, partners, public and CSSIW of our assessment of performance and priorities for 2014/2015.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The priorities identified within the report are aimed at delivering service improvements, improving outcomes and meeting local needs within the context of achieving challenging financial efficiencies and value for money.

Priority actions contained within the report have been identified for delivery within existing resources.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None arising from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None arising directly from this report. However the report includes an assessment of current performance against the equalities agenda and has associated improvement priorities.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None arising from this report, but some of the identified improvement priorities may have associated personnel implications. These will be separately detailed as part of our plans relating to value for money reviews.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 No further consultation is planned.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including a Members Task and Finish meeting, discussion at the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee who fully support the assessment. As a result of feedback from key Members the length of the report has been reduced to make it a more accessible and succinct document.

11.02 An independent critical friend has provided objective comment on the draft report.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Annual Performance Report 2013-2014

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Flintshire County Council Social Services

Annual Performance Report 2013-2014



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This document provides a summary of our annual self assessment. If you receive a service from us please let us know if you think this report is a fair description of your experiences. Your views matter to us and are crucial if we are to continue to improve what we do and deliver on our future priorities.

If you are reading this on the web then there are links (in bold) throughout the document if you want to read more about individual projects. For words underlined there is a glossary at the end of the document that may help explain unfamiliar words and terms.

We welcome your comments on the format of this report, particularly whether it includes information that is helpful and of interest to you in a suitable format.

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1. Introduction

We are pleased to share our third annual report about Social Services in Flintshire. The services we deliver as part of the Council are vitally important to adults, children and families. We provide social care services directly and in collaboration with partner agencies such as Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, independent sector care providers, voluntary and charitable organisations. We are currently providing services to 3,305 adults and 843 children with an annual budget of £55 million for 2013/2014.

This report looks at our performance in 2013/2014, our priorities for 2014/2015, the challenges we face and the opportunities we can take as we continue to move forward.

During the year we have spent valuable time listening and learning from people who use our services so that we can better understand how our performance impacts on peoples lives.

Our staff are central to the delivery of good quality services and our greatest asset and speaking to them face to face provides the opportunity for sharing our joint vision of the future. Our vision is to work with people to achieve healthy, independent, fulfilling lives, safeguarding vulnerable local people and building strong communities.

Our plans for the future delivery of services are set against a backdrop of wanting to do better whilst meeting increasing demand from a larger population with less money. This includes an increase in the number of children on the Child Protection Register, more children with significant disabilities, an ageing population with more complex care and support needs and carers and young carers who need support to help them to continue in their caring role.

Modernisation

During 2013/2014 our ambitious programme to modernise social care in Flintshire has gained momentum. Our Modernising Social Services Board has focussed on delivering sustainable change to improve outcomes for people and maximise efficiency across Children's and Adult Services. The Board is made up of Councillor Christine Jones, corporate colleagues and senior managers from social services. During the year Councillor Jones, who is Cabinet Member for Social Services, has worked tirelessly to support the improvement initiatives that are bringing about change for the people of Flintshire. This includes an active role as Older Peoples Champion and Recovery Champion for Mental Health Services as well as involvement in the development of social enterprises.

Our modernisation programme responds to the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act which places greater legal obligations on local authorities and their partners to enhance well being, independence and safeguarding of people and their carers, including greater



integration of social care and health services. It is clear that the increased demands on social care will continue and the need for change in how we deliver those services has been identified in Flintshire County Councils **Corporate Priorities** which you can read more about in section 2. Our Modernisation Programme will continue in 2014/2015.

How are we performing?

Our assessment is that Flintshire Social Services has made real improvements in both performance and the quality of services this year. This can be demonstrated through:

- supporting more people to stay living independently at home after a period of Reablement
- providing early support to families to help prevent problems increasing
- more people being in control of their own support through personal budgets
- opening of our second extra care scheme which includes specially designed apartments for people with dementia
- our strong Fostering Service which provides stable positive support to children and young people
- recognition of services at national award ceremonies, including our Mental Health Services and Kinship Carers
- positive relationships with our care provider partners
- being fully committed to involving the people who use our services and having improved quality monitoring processes
- delivering services within budget whilst meeting increasing demand from a larger population

The Financial Challenges

The financial challenges for local government have been widely reported on in the press. The budget for Social Services in Flintshire in 2014/2015 is just under £56.5m. We need to ensure that we continue to use this money efficiently and effectively to secure good outcomes for vulnerable children and adults. This is in the context of delivering £15m in efficiencies across the Council in both 2014/2015 and in 2015/2016. We will achieve this through value for money reviews. The reviews focus on how we make better use of our resources whilst delivering more integrated, joined up and customer focussed services. We envisage that in some instances this will require us to change the way in which services are delivered but our focus will be on ensuring that positive outcomes are delivered. Whilst we do not want to underestimate the challenges we face, we want you to know that we are confident of the real difference we are able to make to the lives of people across Flintshire. Our corporate commitment to protect frontline services remains as strong as ever.



Neil Ayling, Chief Officer Social Services

2. A Well Governed and High Performing Council

Flintshire is a well governed and high performing Council. We have a clear sense of purpose and direction and have set four shared priorities with our partners at a County level, and eight priorities for the Council itself.

Council Priorities

The Council's priorities and sub-priorities for action are set out in our annual improvement Plan. The Improvement Priorities and sub priorities for 2014/2015 are summarised below:

SUB-PRIORITY	IMPACT
HOUSING	
Extra Care Housing	Helping more people to live independently and well at home
Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing
Achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard	Improving quality of life for our tenants through improved housing
LIVING WELL	
Independent Living	Improving quality of life
Integrated Community Social and Health Services	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home
ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE	
Business Sector Growth in Deeside	Creating jobs and growing the local economy
Town and Rural Regeneration	Making local communities viable
Social Enterprise	Supporting and creating new forms of local business
SKILLS AND LEARNING	
Modernised and High Performing Education	Improving learning provision to get better learning outcomes
Apprenticeships and Training	Meeting the skills and employment needs of local employers
COMMUNITY SAFETY	
Community Safety	Keep people and communities safe
Traffic and Road Management	Improving road safety
POVERTY	
Welfare Reform	Protecting people from poverty
Fuel Poverty	Protecting people from poverty
ENVIRONMENT	
Transport Infrastructure and Services	People being able to access employment, local services and facilities
Carbon Control and Reduction	Reducing our carbon impact on the natural environment

MODERN AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL	
Organisational Change	Managing services well to achieve our priorities
Financial Strategy	Protecting local front-line public services and delivering Council priorities through the best use of our resources
People Change & Development	The Council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a reduced sized organisation
Asset Strategy	Having the right buildings in the right places for the right uses
Procurement Strategy	Making our money go further through smarter procurement
Access to Council Services	Achieving customer focused, modern and efficient access to council services

The main ways in which Social Services will contribute to our Corporate Priorities in 2014/15 will be through:

1. Improving quality of life through the promotion of independent living.
2. Helping more people to live independently and well at home through integrated community Social and Health Services.
3. Improving the opportunities for the growing numbers of Looked After Children, with a focus on learning opportunities and educational attainment.

It is important to note that as a Council we work collectively across service areas to deliver the improvement priorities. As such Social Services have a key role in delivering the Council's improvement priorities. For example we are working hard to deliver the Asset Strategy to make the best use of the council's buildings by making sure our offices are brought into local communities and using our Flintshire Connects facilities to deliver a wide range of services. Conversely services across the Council work to support vulnerable people and deliver priorities relating to the social care agenda e.g. through the provision of quality Housing, anti poverty work in response to Welfare Reform and making local communities viable and vibrant so vulnerable people are safe and can access local support networks.

Partnership Priorities

We are proud of our longstanding track record of partnership working. The communities we serve rightly expect the statutory and third sector partners to work together, to work to shared priorities and, through collective effort, to get things done.

As a Local Service Board (LSB) we have jointly developed "**Flintshire's Wellbeing Plan: A Single Integrated Plan for Flintshire 2013-2017**". The Plan focuses on four initial priorities:

- **Priority 1** - Lead by example as employers and community leaders
- **Priority 2** - People are safe
- **Priority 3** - People enjoy good health, wellbeing and independence
- **Priority 4** - Organisational environmental practices

Working together to make an impact in these priorities is the collective aim of the LSB, realising that no single organisation can achieve on their own; the partner organisations represented on the LSB can collectively make a positive difference for the people who live, visit and work in Flintshire.

We acknowledge that over recent years there have been challenges in ensuring effective and consistent partnership working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). As a large organisation BCUHB have previously sought to develop single regional approaches that have not always reflected local priorities, differences and strengths. We are encouraged by more recent working relationships and refreshed strategic direction being led by BCUHB's new Executive Board. As this new relationship is developing, and whilst it is taking a positive direction, we will continue to review the success and pace of partnership working with BCUHB as part of our approach to risk management.

Working with members

Elected members have a valuable role in shaping policy, setting the direction for the service and scrutinising progress. Good examples of joint working include the rigorous quarterly monitoring of the Improvement Plan, half yearly Performance Reports presented for challenge and scrutiny to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Annual Budget Challenge and consultation on the setting of priorities and targets. Elected members also provide an invaluable link to our communities and to the issues that are important to them.

Organisational Change

During 2013/2014 the Council developed and adopted a new operating and senior management structure. The transition to the new Chief Officer Team has gone well, and at a fast pace. We will need to continue this transformation to ensure that the Organisation, including Social Services, has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a reduced sized organisation. We are all up beat about the next phase of change despite the amount that needs to be done to meet the financial challenges which lie ahead.

Resources

The Council has succeeded in setting balanced budgets whilst investing in key priorities, meeting growth in service demands and absorbing the cost impacts of inflation. The Council has achieved this through developing internal programmes of change and reform to make efficiencies. The scale and pace of efficiencies required over the coming years is unprecedented. During 2014 we will be updating, and further developing, a comprehensive Medium Term Financial Plan to ensure that we continue to respond to the medium and longer term financial challenges ahead. Within this context we were pleased to recently receive our best ever annual improvement report from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) which reflects our commitment to remain a high performing organisation despite the challenging landscape.

3. A Stronger Voice and Real Control for People

Carers

We value the vital role carers, including young carers, play in the delivery of social care. We are committed to working in partnership with carers and have been actively involved in the regional Carers Strategic Group developing the North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012 – 2015. We have commissioned a new local information booklet for carers which will be published later this year.

We commission a wide range of services for carers which are coordinated by **NEWCIS**. The Bridging the Gap scheme was launched in April 2013 with an investment of £50k to provide carers with flexible breaks and replacement care which is sometimes needed at short notice. 173 requests were received by NEWCIS between April 2013 and January 2014, with 16 of these being for emergency breaks.

Bridging the gap case study

A carer was admitted to hospital unexpectedly, and had a longer stay than was expected. The carer's partner had dementia and even though family members supported them, one daughter was on holiday abroad and the other worked and had a family of her own.

Bridging the Gap was put in place to support the carer and their family. A number of visits per day were arranged whilst the daughter was in work and until more family support was available. When the carer returned from hospital a home visit was arranged.

Bridging the Gap prevented an admission into care for the carer's partner, who had not used such services before and would have found this a daunting experience without their partner and other family members around them.

Last year we increased short break provision for children and young people with disabilities by moving our respite care service to Arosfa, a larger adapted building, which is able to offer more flexible breaks. This has increased available provision by 54% and in real terms means that 23 children were able to stay between April and December 2013, an increase of six families. Children visiting benefit from a new Sensory Room and projects for 2014/2015 include updating the digital technology available to children during their visits. We know that the move to Arosfa has been positive because families have said:

“The building is very smart, new and clean and purpose built. It looks very homely with photos of the children and decorations. The standard of care has been excellent, very much cater for the individual child and ---- their needs taken into consideration”

“ very accommodating when it comes to requesting dates of care”

“Communication is very good. A phone call the night before my child goes in and also communication book I write in and staff inform me of what my son has done”

“X loves coming to Arosfa and participates in various activities but also allowed to chill out when she wants or needs to”



The summer Play Schemes give families and carers of children with disabilities short break opportunities during the school summer holidays whilst the children benefit from structured play and individual activities. In 2013 83 children with a range of disabilities and health needs attended the sessions held in local special schools, with 19 children (23%) being new attendees. Feedback reinforces the value families place on this service.

“I chose the club because of its facilities for disabled children, access, trained staff, understanding and because my son loves it! Which is the most important reason!”

“My child is safe and comfortable in the Holiday Club. I know her needs are being met (and more). She is understood on every level. She can play at her own pace and has the opportunity for lots of new experiences. She gets the chance to play with old friends and make new friends. I have complete trust in the staff, each and every child is their priority and it shows!”

Young Carers

The Young Carers Strategy Group has a clear measurable multi- agency plan for action and in 2013/2014 we have continued to work with our partners to reach young carers with a particular focus being in schools and colleges. We recognise that we need to strengthen how we record the numbers of young carers that we are supporting during the coming year as part of a wider approach to understand the difference we are making.

Our ‘Access to Action Card’ (A2A card) for young carers, Looked After Children and care leavers was requested and developed by young people who are part of **Barnardo’s Cymru** Flintshire Young Carers or supported by Flintshire Children’s Services and who find it difficult to explain their status in school to teachers and when they need instant access to Council services. We are pleased to report that all schools in Flintshire and Coleg Cambria’s Flintshire sites have signed up to use of the A2A card. Young carers have told us:



“Using the A2A card was really positive and the teacher was really helpful” (Young Carer)

“I didn’t feel embarrassed about showing the card because everyone knows what the card is for” (Young Carer)

“Glad I’ve got it just in case I need it” (Looked After Child)

“The teacher gave me extra time for my home work. We discussed it privately and they were really understanding” (Young Carer)

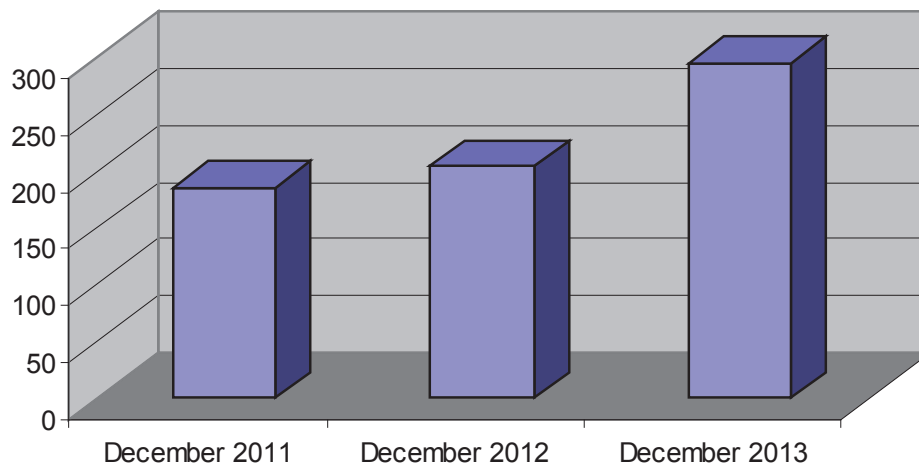
Direct Payments

Direct Payments enable people to take control over their care arrangements. For example, a person may choose to receive a monthly payment to purchase their own care instead of receiving support arranged by social services or to purchase an item of equipment to meet their assessed needs. We are making Direct Payments more flexible and responsive to individual needs and are proud to have developed “provider administered Direct Payments”. They are becoming increasingly popular particularly amongst older people ensuring that they can access the flexibility and control a Direct Payment offers without any associated concerns of administering the funds themselves. In January 2014, 32 provider administered Direct Payments had been approved with 53% of these being for older people.

From April to December 2013 there were a total of 296 people using Direct Payments across Adults and Children’s Social Services, an increase of 31% from the same period in 2012/2013 (205).



Service Users receiving Direct Payments



Dignity in Care

Promoting dignity in care is a cornerstone of our approach in the delivery of services. Promoting and supporting peoples self respect means we are committed to providing services on an individual basis and ensure that wherever possible people receive a service that meets their particular needs, choice and aspirations.

Involving people and gathering feedback

We have a set of Involvement Standards which are our commitment to the way we involve people across our services and have systems to record brief details of involvement activity, including the outcome. This helps to ensure our involvement activities are meaningful and that the people who take part receive timely feedback on what was said. Some of the ways we have involved children and adults include

- Young people with disabilities and their families commenting on the development of the new Transition Team
- being involved in the recruitment of staff across Children's and Adults services
- Organising and co-hosting the Pride of Flintshire Ceremony for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Us UnLtd, a youth led social enterprise for and led by young people who have experienced homelessness, run regular focus groups for young people and care leavers
- Older people were involved in a "Communities 2.0" project to test a range of digital technology to assess what was suitable to introduce in day service and residential care settings.



We also commission independent organisations to help find out what people who receive services, and those that know them best, have to say about their care and support. One example of this is **Care Checkers**. In consultation with people with dementia and their families Care Checkers obtained crucial feedback to help us develop the "dementia road" (section 4). They have also undertaken consultation with people with disabilities and learning disabilities to inform the review of both supported living and day services.



We have developed a standard questionnaire across Adult Social Services which can be tailored with specific questions dependent on the purpose of the questionnaire. Key messages coming from the responses are that people are accessing a wide range of support and services that they rate as very positive in improving their quality of life and confidence in their own abilities and skills. Care plans and staff delivering support also receive consistent praise.

A range of satisfaction questionnaires is in use in Children's Services and the findings are presented to Senior and Team Managers to influence service development. One recent example of this approach were comments on the standard of building work during an adaptation for a disabled child and this has been referred to Housing to follow up on. However responses to questionnaires from young people have dropped and we will be redoubling our efforts to improve feedback from them in 2014/2015, making more use social media to gather their views.

Learning from compliments and complaints received is important and inform our policy and practice. We seek to resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage and our compliments and complaints team provides training for managers and works with them to ensure complaints are addressed. Our performance management process includes quarterly reporting to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to Senior Management Children and Adults Performance meetings. The robust lessons learnt process has led to improved services and most importantly for people who make representation supports the resolution of complaints at the earliest opportunity. We produce an annual report on our complaints procedure which includes examples of actions we have taken as a result of complaints. Examples include:

What you said: Help is needed in situations where parents are in disagreement with each other regarding their children and which may have an effect on their children's emotional wellbeing.

What we did: Piloted a new mediation process for parents in dispute with each other so childcare arrangements can continue with minimal disruption (e.g. weekend arrangements, collections to and from school etc.).

What you said: Clearer information is needed that explains the reasons why commissioned transport cannot be used by service users who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

What we did: Introduced new concessionary transport guidelines for both staff and service users.

Compliments are equally valued, recognising where a member of staff has gone over and above what is expected from them. Compliments received during the year about the work of Social Services staff included:

A letter of thanks commending the Llys Gwenffrwd staff describing them as

"The most compassionate people I have ever met".

"I cannot thank them or praise them enough for not only the care but the love and affection they showed towards her"

A Childcare Social Worker received a compliment from a mother who said:

"Thank you so much for your support. I know you are always there if I need you. Due to your encouragement I am going to carry on with my head held high and try to continue making all the right decisions. Thank you so much."

Welsh Language

The Welsh Government framework called 'More Than Just Words' **Strategic Framework for Welsh Language services in Health, Social Services and Social Care**' aims improve services for those who need or choose to receive their care in Welsh. Our More Than Just Words Action Plan sets out the practical steps we will take to strengthen Welsh service provision in Flintshire.

During 2013 we have mapped welsh language skills across our workforce and developed new workforce initiatives. We have strengthened our approach by accepting the Active Office principle and including welsh language requirements into our commissioning and planning systems. In October 2013 Jo Williams, Welsh Government Strategy Implementation Manager visited us to evaluate our progress. She expressed her enthusiasm for many of the changes Flintshire are developing, stating she was extremely impressed with proactive and energetic way in which we are steering this framework.



A stronger voice and real control for people priorities for 2014/2015

1. Develop and agree our Action Plan to deliver on the requirements of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act to put in place integrated arrangements to undertake proportionate and outcome focussed assessments that focus on 'what matters' to a person.
2. Consolidate Year 1 actions and deliver on Year 2 actions in our More Than Just Words action plan to strengthen Welsh service provision locally, as set out in the 'More Than Just Words' Strategic Framework for Welsh Language services in Health, Social Services and Social Care.
3. Continue to expand the take-up of Direct Payments and Citizen Directed Support to promote greater choice and control.
4. Complete the review of our Involvement Action Plan learning from the evidence gathered to ensure people who use services and their carers are able to make meaningful contribution to service planning and delivery.
5. Increase the range of opportunities and technology, including social media, for children, young people and their families to provide good quality feedback so that we are able to incorporate feedback into our lessons learnt process.
6. Train more Elected Members on their role as a Corporate Parent to ensure that they understand the part they play in helping children and young people who are in care to have the best outcomes.

4. Smarter Commissioning

In 2013/2014 we are pleased to have had three commissioning strategies approved. All three strategies aim to support people to maintain their independence, secure good quality outcomes and achieve value for money.

The Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy 2012 - 2018 adopts the 'progression model'. The building blocks of this model are:

- An assessment of the persons abilities and strengths
- Individualised support planning
- Enabling people to be as independent as possible
- 'Just enough support' to promote wellbeing and ensure they are safe
- An ethos of promoting independence and positive risk taking

Fundamental to delivering this approach is to give people with learning disabilities more choice of where they live and who supports them to live as independently and safely as possible. Service users and carers were amongst the partners who developed the plan with an initial consultation workshop providing invaluable information about their expectations and needs. People told us about "living independently" "what makes a good home", and about "short term care". An easy read version of the strategy explains the vision for the future, how we will get there and how we will know we have achieved the vision from the perspective of the service user, the commissioner and the provider. As part of this strategy we are undertaking value for money reviews of our in-house learning disability services.

The Mental Health Commissioning Strategy 2013 - 2018 builds on a joint vision with Health. Our strategy will see us build on the strong foundations to further promote the recovery approach, by increasing the training, education and work opportunities we offer. Our Mental Health Services were winners in the Care Council for Wales Social Care Accolades 2013.

In January 2014 approval was received for Double Click Design, one of our Mental Health Support Services, to be developed as a Social Enterprise. As a social enterprise with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, Double Click Design will provide a combination of training, placements and eventually paid employment in IT, graphic design, customer services, marketing and administration.



Our Mental Health Services Social Care Accolade 2013

Flintshire Mental Health Support Services was successful in winning a Social Care Accolade in 2013 in the category “Better Outcomes through Working Together”. The service is working to embed a recovery orientated approach in the delivery of support through: Accommodation Support, Social Support and Occupational and Educational Support. The main aim is to listen to the needs and aspirations of people and to tailor support to each individual, helping them to achieve personal goals and to have hope in their lives. Progress includes:

Policy and process

- A revised statement of purpose with a “Recovery Champion” in each team to promote the recovery approach and share good practice with their peers
- Team training days focussing on recovery which service users help to deliver. Staff and service users also attend Wellness Recovery Action Planning training together
- Support plans better record personal goals and achievements
- Service user feedback survey has questions which reflect recovery principles
- Service user led and open access groups have been developed

Joint working

- With Children’s Services to assist in safeguarding children and for parents and children to have regular safe contact;
- With Housing to help find accommodation;
- With the voluntary sector leading to services employing volunteers and having close links with Peer Mentoring scheme and **Involve project hosted with Unllais**

Outcomes for service users

- During the last year includes: 70 people volunteering, 61 people accessing training, 54 people accessing education, 12 people obtaining paid employment, 8 people accessing work placements and 2 people being supported to retain their jobs.

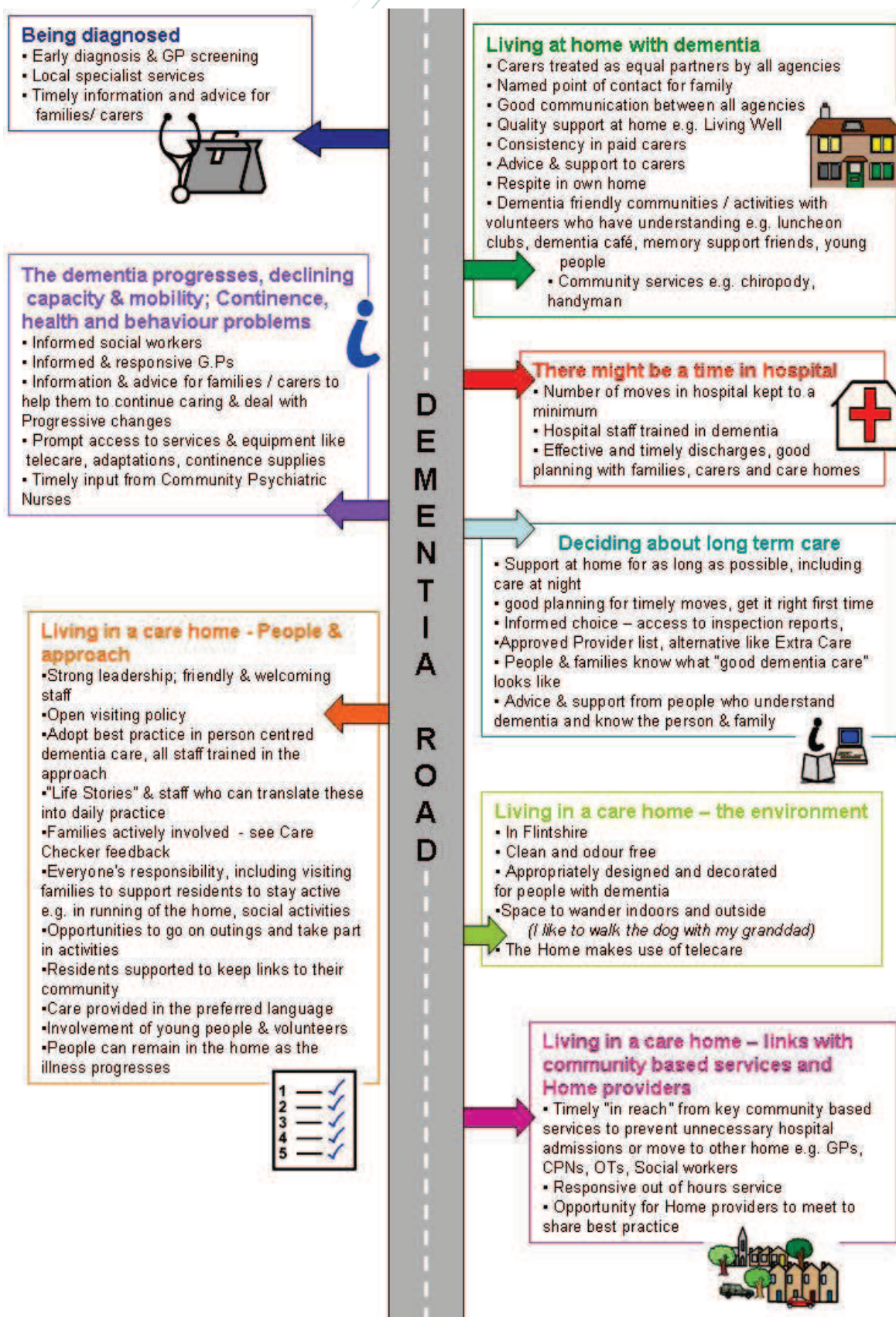
Our future plans involve

- Further development of groups run by people with lived experience and the expansion of peer mentors
- Enabling service users to have better links with and access to community facilities and more support for people to take up Direct Payments
- Development of social enterprise in order for people to be able to take up paid employment and have valued roles within society

The final adult commissioning strategy to receive approval in 2013 was the Older People [Dementia Care Long Term Placements] Commissioning Strategy 2013 - 2018. It’s focus is primarily residential care services with the overarching objective being to ensure that people living with dementia have access to high quality person centred dementia care in the most appropriate settings to meet their needs and that there is sufficient provision available within Flintshire’s boundaries. We are undertaking exciting ground breaking work with local providers including working collaboratively with an independent Home to remodel the services they provide to adopt a proven model which shows that people with dementia matter and supports them to have a quality of life. We would want this to be a joint commissioning strategy with our partners in Health but given that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board extends across the whole of North Wales recognise that we will need to work towards this goal through a regional collaborative approach, involving Social Services colleagues in the other five Local Authorities. Shared visions of integrated services for high cost, low volume placements and community services, specifically joined up service arrangements that support people early on the ‘Dementia Road’ and as the illness progresses, are key.

The “Dementia Road” below clearly illustrates the views of all stakeholders which were sought as part of the consultation for the commissioning strategy including the views of people with dementia and their families were instrumental.

The Dementia Road



We remain firmly committed to collaborative working through the Regional Commissioning Hub which includes all local authorities across North Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to maximise regional capacity and rationalise the costs of high cost, low volume residential placements that provide quality accommodation and packages of support. Examples of our regional approach include

- Savings of £300k for the period 2012/2014 for Learning Disability Care Home placements
- All out of county residential placements for Looked After Children being made via the Regional Commissioning Hub since May 2013 and our documentation being adopted by the Hub for use on a wider regional basis.
- Development of a regional framework in Children's Services and domiciliary and residential contracts in Adult Services which include quality monitoring outcomes
- Agreeing a business case and specifications to commission a regional advocacy service for vulnerable children and young people to ensure that their voices are fed into commissioning intentions, with a view to launch this service early in 2015.

It is important to work in partnership with Providers to improve standards and outcomes for people who use services and we have successfully worked alongside Providers to sign off improvement plans where necessary. We place greater emphasis on observing and evaluating the parts of a service that impact most on people's daily lives in Care Homes so we can measure the outcomes achieved for those residents. We have started to apply a "judgment framework" in recent Monitoring Reports as we believe this approach will aid the development of a shared understanding of quality and best practice. We also believe that people who use our services and their families should play a key role in our contract monitoring process. People are invited to share their views by completing a quality assurance questionnaire but we want to strengthen involvement and as such we are asking what people want to see in a contract monitoring report and how they wish to be involved.

Our collaborative approach has seen positive joint work with the Supporting People Team to commission a number of initiatives and support services. Examples include:

- Developing an integrated approach for 16-17 year olds who present as homeless (section 7)
- An Activity Coordinator in Llys Jasmine Extra Care Scheme, providing activities and events for tenants, supporting healthy ageing and a stimulating environment whilst promoting two way community engagement



Smarter Commissioning Priorities for 2014 /2015

1. Further develop our programme of commissioning strategies and market position statements taking opportunities for collaboration with Health and other partners where money will be saved and the quality of services is maintained.
2. Evaluate our “judgement framework” approach in Contract Monitoring to develop a shared level of understanding of levels of practice
3. Progress plans to develop agreed Social Enterprises, including Double Click Design and explore options for the development of further viable social enterprises such as the Sure Start Crèche.
4. Develop and agree a plan to implement a night support service for people with a frailty and / or disability to support greater independence, working with health providers including G.P.s
5. With partners, launch the regional advocacy service to ensure that the voices of vulnerable children and young people are heard

5. A Strong and Professional Workforce

Our workforce will always be our most valuable asset to support people to achieve their best outcomes and lead independent lives. Modernising to deliver quality services and meet the challenges ahead must go hand in hand with modernising our workforce. Our approach to performance management is strong and we are reviewing our strategies for communication across the workforce to foster shared aims and strengthen close working. Our investment in training has continued, and 2013/2014 saw increasingly numbers accessing a range of new training opportunities including:

Wellness Recovery Action Planning

(WRAP)-Popular since its inception in 2008, our success in adopting the 'train the trainer' approach means that we do not incur costs for the delivery of these courses. In 2013/2014 52 people attended WRAP and we continue to promote the attendance of staff with people who use the services to promote communication and trust. Ten people who use services and four members of staff have completed the WRAP Educator course enabling them to deliver the 2 day WRAP course and 14 people have undertaken the Educator 5 day course.

Reablement

Following the successful delivery of an intense period of Reablement training in 2012/2013, a further 17 members of staff have attended Reablement training this year. The course is designed to ensure staff have the appropriate skills, knowledge and attributes for delivering a community-based service which focuses on enablement and increasing independence.

Dementia

29 members of staff have attended the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) at Level 2 or 3 (19 at level 2 and 10 at level 3). The qualifications aim to give people an understanding of the main feature of dementia, the principles of a person centred care and communication with people with dementia. Understanding and managing behaviour and to explore relationships. We continue to deliver dementia awareness training to wider workforce groups and have pioneered high level advanced dementia training for managers, Occupational therapists and social workers. However we are conscious that services to meet the needs of people with dementia continue to evolve and we will review the delivery of our dementia training to ensure we continue to be able to equip staff with the most current knowledge and deliver quality service.

Looked After Children

A range of courses delivered to 102 members of staff including foster carers. This includes courses targeted at the new Transition Team to ensure staff transferring from Adult services were fully conversant with LAC requirements. Courses included Hear to Listen: Hearing the Voice of the Child: 21 staff, Childrens Advocacy: 19 staff, Paediatric First Aid for Foster carers: 5 staff, Managing emergency foster placements: 9 staff.

Safeguarding

We are piloting the Care Council Safeguarding Adults & Children safeguarding awareness course across our workforce. 165 members of staff have attended safeguarding training and a further 13 training on The Deprivation of Liberty. Ten members of staff from Adult services attended Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment training which as part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse supports the use of the standard risk assessment tool for high risk victims.

Direct Payments and Citizen Direct Support

22 People attended Direct Payments and Personal Budgeting training. Our second successful open event in partnership with a not for profit organisation in November 2013 saw over 100 people attending. The open event promoted personal budgets, information about being a personal assistant and information about employing personal assistants.

Independent sector care staff access a range of the courses we provide for free and care providers we commission support from take up the opportunity to access “training vouchers” from us. The vouchers enable their staff to access training provided by other training organisations that meet both our and the **Care Council for Wales standards**. Our contracts with the independent sector specify our expectations for training over and above the minimum standards required by registration with **CSSIW** and the Workforce Development Team works with our Commissioning Team to monitor the number of vouchers being used by different independent sector agencies.

The training of the next generation of social workers is vital for Flintshire and the work we do with other Welsh counties has been held aloft in the national press by central government advisers, as an example of best practice when supporting student social workers. Our Workforce Development Team currently supports 33 students and works collaboratively with our colleagues in the region to invest in the future social care workforce.

Over 150 staff received recognition for qualifications they have obtained in the last 12 months. We know that people also learn in other ways and this has been evidenced as part of our commitment to More Than Just Words. In 2013 we developed weekly informal conversational Welsh groups where staff may come to practise existing skills, learn new ones and develop their confidence. The conversational groups have been well received, acknowledging that not everyone learns in the same way and at the same pace. We know this because comments received are illustrated by:



“The Welsh Groups are really friendly informal environments. Everyone is at different levels, but we encourage each other to speak freely so we are learning from each others pronunciations or mispronunciations...as is often the case, but it’s all part of the fun. I really enjoy the groups and would recommend them”.

Workforce Absence

We continue to make progress with our ongoing priority to address work absence across Social Services and our panel of senior managers and Human Resource representatives oversees and proactively manages absence. This approach combined with close working with Occupational Health, has contributing to the reduction of long term absences. In December 2013 we were on target to meet 2013/2014 intentions. We will pilot a new electronic data collection and monitoring system in 2014 to allow us to improve the management of sickness absence information.

A Strong and Professional Workforce Priorities for 2014 / 2015

1. Pilot and evaluate a new electronic data collection and monitoring system to better enable us to review the reasons for and rate of absence for the social care workforce and set targets for further reduction
2. Commission the delivery of training and qualifications to ensure the workforce is equipped to deliver services in accordance with the Social Services Care and Well Being (Wales) Act and the Welsh Language More Than Just Words Strategic Framework.
3. Deliver a programme of training to support the Public Law Outline – Evidence Matters
4. Complete the benchmarking review of our Workforce Development Team to ensure we are a quality training provider that delivers value for money

6. Stronger Safeguarding

Supporting people to live independent lives in safe communities will rightly always be one of the Council's main priorities. We have strengthened our Adult Safeguarding Team, identified as an area for attention by CSSIW, and this has been a positive step forward in providing a more consistent approach to decision making and application of legislation. The appointment of a social worker to the Safeguarding Team, whose role is to conduct person centred investigations and to work alongside the Commissioning Team, is proving a good use of resources securing positive outcomes for vulnerable people

From 1 April to 31 December 2013 193 vulnerable adults were referred to us, which was nearly double the number completed in the whole of the previous year. In 99% of these cases we were able to reduce or remove the risk to the service user; in the remaining small number of cases people made a personal choice to accept a higher level of risk.

We have brought together our Children's Safeguarding Managers and Independent Review Officers into an enhanced Children's Safeguarding Unit. The Unit has an internal consultancy role supporting front line staff and our Performance Development Forum which underpins service development and promotes positive working relationships. 74 Children's Social Service staff have completed training on the new assessment and screening Risk Model Tool in order that they can routinely assess and analyse risk of significant harm. We are implementing processes which will enable improved reporting on information from external agencies.



We have recruited a Therapist with specific remit for Looked After Children to focus on placements at risk at the point of transition. This arrangement with Action for Children will be evaluated in 2014.

Another key element in our arrangements to safeguard vulnerable children and families is our Flintshire Family Project which we commission Action for Children to provide and who work closely with Children's Service Managers and the Safeguarding Team. There has been a change in the nature of referrals to more vulnerable families with children and young people, who have been subject to, are at risk of or who have witnessed abuse. The more complex needs arising require longer term therapeutic interventions to enable them to sustain the effective changes that the referrer and therapist have identified.

What people have told us about the Flintshire Family Project

"I wanted less anger and aggression in the home, better relationships between my son's and for them to understand that it is not ok to treat each other and me the way they do, just because this was what they had grown up with. We have learnt to listen to each other and manage our angry feelings; we have had an opportunity to talk to each other about our past experiences of domestic abuse and move forward." (Parent)

"For her to have an understanding of why she cannot live with her parents and the role of responsible adults to keep children safe. From the work done, she began to accept boundaries and guidance rather than shout and create chaos. It was good to have ongoing feedback and communication with the therapist. I found the service extremely friendly and professional." (Member of staff)

In a challenging climate where the number of children on the Child Protection Register has continued to increase all of our key performance indicators for Children's Safeguarding remain well above the All Wales average. All children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated social worker, and 98% of these children have had their child protection plans reviewed within statutory timescales.

The online postcard system set up by the **Flintshire and Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board (FWLSCB)** enables all stakeholders to give feedback and it continues to be promoted. From April to October 2013 25 online postcards were received, tripling the number received for the same period in 2012. Enquires ranged from requests for general information and training, to potential child protection enquires.



We recognise that we need to extend the ways in which children and young people locally can give feedback on their experiences of the child protection system in line with '**Don't Make Assumptions**'. We are looking at how we can use social media to better receive and evaluate feedback and we are also considering expanding our regional advocacy arrangements to include other partners including Health to encompass more of our vulnerable young people.

In March 2014 the Wales Audit Office undertook a National Study on Safeguarding which included fieldwork in Children's Social Services in Flintshire and we look forward to receiving the national findings from the local government study and a local summary for the Council.

Stronger Safeguarding Priorities for 2014 /2015

1. Explore and confirm options for regional safeguarding arrangements
2. Agree options and implement procedures to take forward cross service Safeguarding arrangements in Adults and Children's Service
3. Consider and where appropriate implement recommendations arising from the Welsh Audit Office Study on Safeguarding.

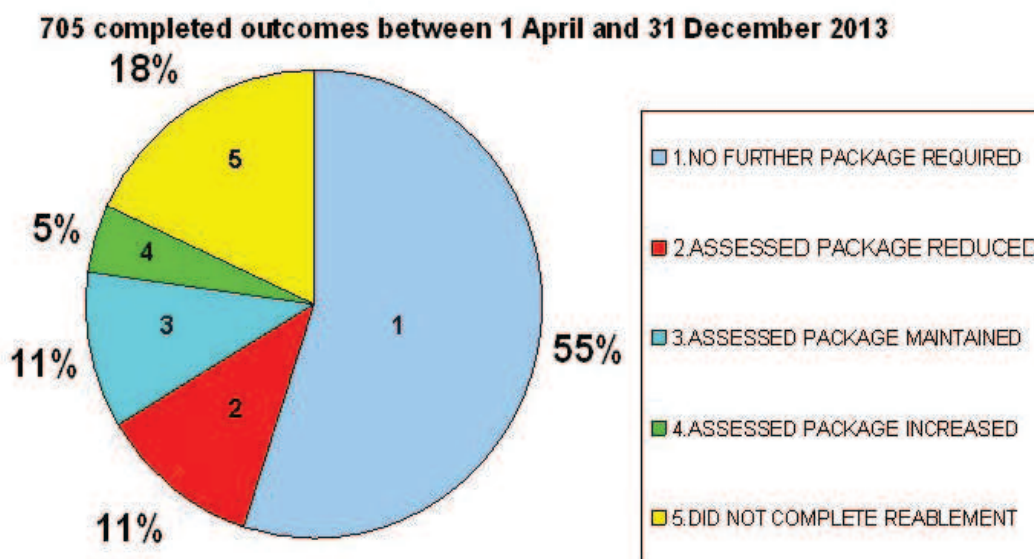
7. Driving Forward more Integrated and Preventative Services

For Adult Social Services:

Intermediate Care

Intermediate Care describes a wide range of services which focus on prevention, rehabilitation, reablement and recovery and they can help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharge and inappropriate admission to residential care. We have secured significant funding from the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund for 2014/15. The funding will be targeted at supporting frail older people, to maintain their independence in their own homes and will have strong integrated working with Health and our other partners.

The number of adults who have benefited from our Reablement Service has continued to increase and in 2013, there were a total of 1370 referrals to Reablement; an increase of 46% on 2012. Between April and December 2013, a period of Reablement was completed for 692 referrals and the chart below shows that 75% of all adult service users completing a period of Reablement required a package of care which was the same or less than they had previously, or no package of care.



A Telehealth case example:

Mrs Jones* is 100 years of age and has a history of chronic kidney disease, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and hypertension. She lives alone in her own bungalow and has had 4 falls recorded in the past six months. The 4th fall resulted in fractured femur and admission into Countess of Chester Hospital. Following surgery mobility was reduced with partial weight bearing with a wheeled frame and Mrs Jones was transferred to Deeside Hospital for rehabilitation and was there for 10 weeks.

The Hospital Social Work Team completed an assessment and identified Reablement intervention with 4 calls a day. Reablement services started 23rd December and continued until the end of January. Mrs Jones confidence has returned, with improved mobility within the home. Mrs Jones is managing all meal times independently and back to her pre accident routines. Telecare equipment has been installed and a bath lift provided so that Mrs Jones can bathe independently

Mrs Jones has been informed about Age Connects services, Library Home Services and will call us when she feels ready to return to her routine shopping trip and we will assess to rebuild confidence with outdoor mobility.

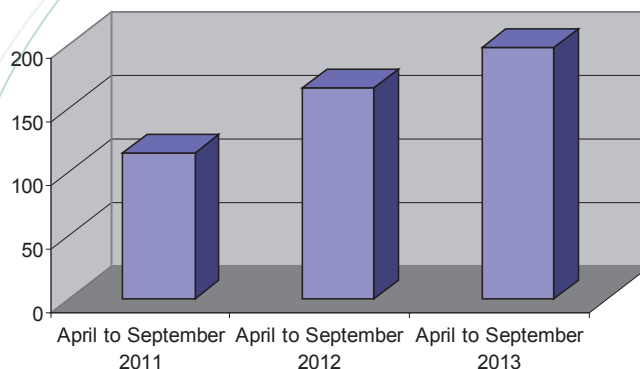
Mrs Jones said “I have been very happy with the service and all are very nice, it has been excellent”.

Granddaughter said “Flintshire Social Services have been very good I must say”.
(*Names have been changed to ensure client confidentiality)

Telecare and Telehealth

Telecare supports independence and facilitates less intrusive support in people’s lives through a range of sensors and detectors. Carers are also supported to be able to continue with their caring role. As part of our Reablement approach, we have seen a steady growth in the number of people using Telecare to 198 for the period April to September 2013 as compared to 166 for the same period in 2012 and 115 in 2011, an increase over 2 years of 72 %.

Number of people using Telecare services



All young people with disabilities in transition from Children's to Adult Services are assessed for Telecare equipment enabling them to be more independent and in control of their own lives.

We chair the North Wales Regional Telecare Programme Board which has been extended to include the trial of Telehealth. Telehealth equipment helps people with chronic conditions to live as safely and independently as possible in the community, accommodating timely safe discharge from hospital and supports the prevention of avoidable and unnecessary hospital admissions. We have invested in increasing our capacity to hold a store of Telecare and Telehealth equipment locally so that we are able to respond efficiently to more local people. This is evidenced by the increased number of people accessing Telehealth equipment in Flintshire, 46 people with equipment in December 2013 compared to 12 people in December 2012, an increase of 74%.

A Telehealth case example:

Mr Smith* has chronic lung disease and his Telehealth equipment is connected to the local authority Care Connect Monitoring Centre.

The Nurse Case Manager was alerted by messages picked up automatically on her mobile phone that although his vital signs readings were within the range set as appropriate for his condition, he had given negative answers to questions asked. She was able to quickly visit and it was obvious that his condition had been aggravated. Swift treatment was put in place avoiding the need for unplanned hospital admission over the weekend.

Patients struggling to breathe often do not wish to use the telephone to speak with anyone, however with Telehealth equipment, readings can be reviewed and trends analysed. As patients live with their chronic diseases each day, Telehealth encourages self empowerment via use of the equipment coupled with a Nurse Case Manager to educate, encouraging pro-activeness and more control of their own health.

Mr Smith's GP receives summaries of his condition and intervention and is able to scan them onto his records to ensure they are up to date.
(*Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality)

Extra care

In October 2013 we opened our second Extra Care Scheme in partnership with Wales and West Housing Association (WWHA) in Mold. The scheme provides 63 apartments and bungalows, including 15 apartments specially designed for people with dementia providing person centred flexible support. We believe we are the first in Wales to offer this model of support for people with dementia and are pleased that initial feedback from tenants is very positive. Everyone moving into Llys Jasmine is offered a period of Reablement to maximise their independence and well being.



A selection of comments received in the first weeks after opening:

"In just over 3 weeks of living in her new home, independence has improved from having 4 calls a day to "pop ins" to check all is ok"

"Her skin care has never been so good" District Nurse

"I have never heard my mum laugh so much for years" Daughter

Our next plan for Llys Jasmine is to establish a Dementia Café which will provide a resource for tenants and for people with dementia living in the community and their carers and families. We are currently developing plans for a further two Extra Care schemes in Flintshire by 2016/2017.

People with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and acquired brain injury have told us they want more choice in where they live and who they live with (section 4). During 2013 we have worked with First Choice Housing Association and people with learning disabilities to scope different models of accommodation and support and in 2014/2015 we will be working with the Housing Association to ensure the development of a small apartment complex enables people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. People with physical disabilities and acquired brain injury were fully involved in the retendering of their support for supported living arrangements, choosing to use Direct Payments to give them more flexibility.

Locality Working

We have continued to strengthen our joint working with Health and in December 2013 the first co-located team of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Districts Nurses became based within Holywell Community Hospital. This approach improves communication and our effectiveness of working together. The second team will be co-located in 2014/2015 and the final locality team in 2015/2016.

Enhanced Care at Home (HECs) is a core element of the locality working model which we implemented in our North West locality area in September 2013 with the two other locality areas following by the summer of 2014. HECs brings together our Reablement Team and the Crises Intervention Team from Health and provides short term "step up" intensive community based care as a realistic alternative to hospital admission or "step down" support to enable early discharge from hospital. The service has been welcomed as illustrated:

"This service is second to none! The peace of mind it gives is fabulous. My mother was comfortable in her home and cared for and monitored in the same way as she would have been in hospital. Thank you all very much".

The partnership approach we have taken with Health in locality working demonstrates our commitment to the integration of care for older people. We have developed our local plan to take forward the regional Statement of Intent on Integrated Care for Older People with Complex Needs so that we can deliver better outcomes for older people, ensuring that they have a positive experience of care and support and equality of service.

Recovery Approach

The recovery approach focuses on wellbeing, identifying the strengths people have to build on to achieve meaningful lives and not become dependent on long term social care irrespective of their mental health problems. We recognised that we needed to do more to fully embed the recovery approach for people with mental health problems to enable them to help to manage their own recovery.

Our Feedback survey in 2013 indicated that 76% of respondents felt that they had received enough support from the services and all indicated that they wanted to become more independent and to move further along in their recovery by undertaking valued roles within society. We have prioritised supporting people to access information, find paid and voluntary work, education and training from the feedback received and our Commissioning Plan reflects this. We know that the recovery approach continues to deliver positive outcomes because people have told us:



“Both, Double Click and Growing Places are encouraging and supportive. Neither judge people and treat everyone equally. I feel very lucky to be part of them”.

“The ongoing work is helping me to fit into society, building my confidence and independence”.

Our Recovery approach was widely recognised when we won a national Social Care Accolade, reflecting the continued, genuine commitment of all members of the team to work in true partnership with the person as well as with partner organisations to ensure pathways out of services (section 4). In further recognition of this wonderful achievement and our approach we have been invited to speak about it at a UK wide Mental Health conference in December 2014.

Mental Health Measure

In 2013/2014 we have worked with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board on the Mental Health (Wales) Measure (Welsh Government legislation), focussing on Assessment and Care Planning to ensure we adopt a recovery ethos and the further embedding of the recovery approach across all services.

Single Point of Access

Flintshire is the host organisation for a regional programme to transform access to Health and Social Care by the development of a Single Point of Access (SPOA) programme. SPOA will create a new streamlined system across North Wales providing equal access to advice, assessment and community health and social care services. Key principles will be people and families getting the right support, in the right place, at the right time. The SPOA will be developed regionally but delivered locally. We have appointed a project manager to take the development forward in Flintshire and envisage the SPOA will build on our already well established First Contact team. Our target is to launch SPOA in Flintshire by 2016.

For Children's Social Services

We have continued to make progress in embedding our model of early intervention that supports the whole family. The initiatives will mean better outcomes for children and value for money as fewer children will need to go into care. Here is a summary of the initiatives we have in place:

The Families First Programme

The Families First Programme reduces the impact of poverty on families in Flintshire and is making sound progress and the new Challenging Years programme offers support to parents of teenagers.

The Taith Y Teulu Team support families in need who do not meet the threshold for Children's Services. They are fully operational and working to support families referred to them by the Team around the Family Project.

In September 2013 we held an event to publicise our QUEST and NOVUS projects. The projects provide complementary support, concentrating on parents, particularly single parents, to help support them to get out of unemployment and back into the work place, by enabling them to develop the skills required by their personal development plan, including communication, numeracy and literacy.

"It has been very beneficial to me and inspirational. I know it will help me and my children in the future".

"I have struggled to find what it was I wanted to do when I go to work but now I have a definite plan".



The Sure Start Crèche Service continues to deliver services to enable parents to attend courses. The long term aim is to develop this into a Social Enterprise and discussions are ongoing to take this forward.

Finally in December 2013 as part of the Families First initiative we submitted a bid to the Lottery scheme to expand the delivery of family focussed services from the Gronant Centre.



Integrated Family Support Service

Our Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) was formally launched with Wrexham in September 2013. The first such initiative in North Wales it provides support to vulnerable families to improve their quality of life chances through an integrated family focussed multi-agency approach which bridges Children's and Adults services in local authorities and health. The IFSS enables parents to improve their parenting capacity and can involve the wider family.

Children in Need

As part of our ongoing commitment to organisational value for money reviews we commissioned an independent consultant to review and benchmark our Supervised Contact Arrangements for Children in Need. We will now explore the benefits of developing a specific Child in Need Team.

Flying Start

Multi agency teams deliver the Flying Start Programme with eligible parents of 2 – 3 year olds receiving quality free childcare, parenting support, an enhanced health visitor service and help for early language development. Construction of a new Flying Start Centre in Deeside began in January 2014 and is due to open in September 2014. It doubles the number of local children who are able to receive childcare services and facilities with the full range of services under one roof. We are encouraged by the Deputy Minister for Tackling Poverty's comments that the Flying Start programme is progressing well in Flintshire.



Flintshire Fostering Service

We have completed a full and detailed Systems Thinking review of our Flintshire Fostering Service following a positive inspection report from CSSIW. Six options for change were presented to the Modernising Social Services Board in October 2013 and an action plan has been developed and progress will be reviewed in 2014.

We received a positive annual report from CSSIW and came second in the inaugural Grandparents Association Local Authority Kinship Care Awards in 2013. CSSIW's 2014 inspection of our Fostering Service was again very positive. Our pool of foster carers has continued to increase with the figure now standing at 102 approved carers.

Our electronic training facility for Kinship carers delivered through a specialist provider has gone from strength to strength with over 120 licences being issued to carers to complete on-line training. This enables them the freedom to complete the training at any time of the day without impacting on their caring commitments. To find out more about fostering in Flintshire visit www.flintshire.gov.uk/foster.

Volunteer Mentor Project

The volunteer mentor project provides a range of supports for Looked After Children, care leavers or children in need to develop independent living, personal and social skills. We currently have 26 volunteers come from all walks of life and have good retention with over 54% being with the service for over 18 months. 36 young people received support from a volunteer from April to December 2013.

We know the volunteer mentor service works because all the young people who have completed a survey would recommend it to other young people and could state one way in which having a mentor had helped them.



Homes for our Care Leavers

The Housing support needs of our care leavers is important to us and the impact of Welfare Reforms heightens the need to ensure appropriate accommodation given the increased restrictions placed upon the payment of benefits to this group of young people. Our aim is to see an expansion of the housing options on offer for all our care leavers who will be equipped with skills to live independently. We continue to work in collaboration with Housing to address the issue and this includes completing joint assessments within agreed protocols with the Supporting People Team.

Following a commissioned report from the British Association for Adoption and Fostering on a review of supported lodging schemes in Flintshire we have developed Nightstop which provides a safe alternative to bed & breakfast accommodation in a family home for 16 – 18 year olds. Between April 2013 and the end of February 2014 270 nights of accommodation support were provided with over £2,000 savings in accommodation costs. Positive move on outcomes were achieved for the nine young people supported.

We are working to develop joint systems with the Housing Options team to support young people between the ages of 18 – 24 who are recognised under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 or Southwark Judgement.

Transition

Our joint Transition Team across Children's and Adult Services has been operational since July 2012 with staff members transferred and relocated to one team. Initially young people with disabilities over the age of 16 transferred to the Transition and we are now working towards all young people transferring at 14 years. An independent review of the new service showed we were making positive progress to provide consistent services for young people with disabilities. We await the recommendations from the North Wales collaborative research on ageless disability services which we expect in summer 2014 to further inform best practice. This will be considered alongside feedback from the young people and their families and the independent review of the Team to inform future development in Flintshire.

The Youth Justice Service

The Council has identified Community Safety as one of its eight priorities and in 2013/2014 our aim was to improve victim engagement within the restorative justice process, reducing the fear of crime, supporting victims and encouraging mediation opportunities. The Youth Justice Service (YJS) have set up a reporting system to capture work undertaken with victims of crime and we are reviewing our victim strategy to set targets for 2014/2015. The multi agency YJS continues to work closely with partners and other agencies, including Children's Services in order to secure the best possible outcomes for young people and their families. Case managers have a particular knowledge and expertise in dealing with young people who display sexually harmful behaviours and work cases in partnership with Action for Children.

"Flintshire Sorted" - Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team continues to develop its range of services to minimise the impact of substance misuse by children and young people.

Dedicated 'Link' staff at secondary schools across Flintshire support the education and awareness of drug and alcohol issues. Targeted support is provided for young people at increased risk and less resilience of using substances. "Flintshire Sorted" is the only referral based service for young people with identified substance misuse issues that impact on their lives and 1-1 referrals are received from all agencies with young people assessed and treatment interventions are provided within the national time frames.



Driving forward more Integrated and Preventative Services Priorities for 2014/2015

1. Agree plans to extend our extra care provision by providing two more schemes with 60 units in each location and establish a Dementia Café at Llys Jasmine to provide a resource for people living with dementia and their carers both in extra care and in the wider community.
2. Progress the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) in the three localities through improved communication and agreed governance arrangements to address the key health, social care and well being needs of the population and implement our local plan to take forward our commitment to the Statement of Intent on Integrated Care for Older People with Complex Needs
3. Further progress the locality model of working, including Enhanced Care Services (ECS) and maintain our successful Reablement and Recovery approaches, through extended local use of Telecare and Telehealth technologies and Intermediate Care Funding
4. Complete the review of the Children's teams and Flintshire Fostering Service to provide better outcomes by providing timely and effective support to children and families in need and improve the customer experience
5. Work with our partners to develop alternative housing and support models to meet the housing needs of care leavers, other young people and people with disabilities
6. Through the Integrated Family Support Service use a whole family approach to reduce the numbers of Looked After Children and care proceedings and reduce re-referral rates
7. As part of the Families First Initiative and pending the outcome of the Lottery bid, consider options to expand the delivery of family focussed services from the Gronant Centre
8. Work collaboratively with regional partners to develop and agree a Single Point of Access (SPOA) Plan for Adult Services in Flintshire

8. Evidencing our Improvement

We assess and evidence how our services are improving in a variety of different ways. They include:

External inspection:

For 2013 these have included

- Arofsa our short break facility for young people with disabilities which received an unannounced inspection in April. The inspection report was very positive with inspectors noting “there is a strong sense of person centred care, because there are detailed systems in place to identify the individual requirements of the young people using the service”.
- Our three residential homes for older people all received positive reports with particular reference to the recruitment of volunteers extending the range and number of activities on offer and staff having more engagement in their role as key workers leading to greater understanding of the expected outcomes of the activity for each person.
- **CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales) Annual Council Performance Evaluation.** This evaluation is in response to the Director of Community Services’ Annual Performance Report for Social Services (ACRF) 2012, drawing on various evidence including improvement plans, audit reports and inspection reports, and the regulatory work of CSSIW completed during the year. The report sets out the areas of progress and areas for development for Flintshire Social Services, for the year 2012-13. We were pleased with the final evaluation, which notes the council is forward looking and innovative. Inspectors recognised we continue to make progress in a number of key areas and are able to evidence a range of positive outcomes which have been delivered through our strategic modernisation of services. We were proud to note the Inspectors recognition that our performance against a significant range of national indicators remains amongst the best in Wales. The evaluation also noted our intention for more people to live independently through Reablement and the development of a range of preventative services and provision of good support to young people leaving care and access to accommodation has improved.

Internal assessment

- Monitoring of the Directorate, Head of Service Plans (HOS) and internal plans. Senior managers monitor their progress and report on this to Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and reflect how well we are performing in our priority areas. Our Modernising Social Services Board oversees and drives forward service change contributing to the Councils priorities, in particular the Living Well priorities that the department leads on.
- The Outcome Agreement. This includes themes that are a priority for our Directorate Improved quality and length of life, with fairer outcomes for all - Good social care allows people a better quality of life - Children and young people grow up as active citizens and achieve the highest possible standards of wellbeing.

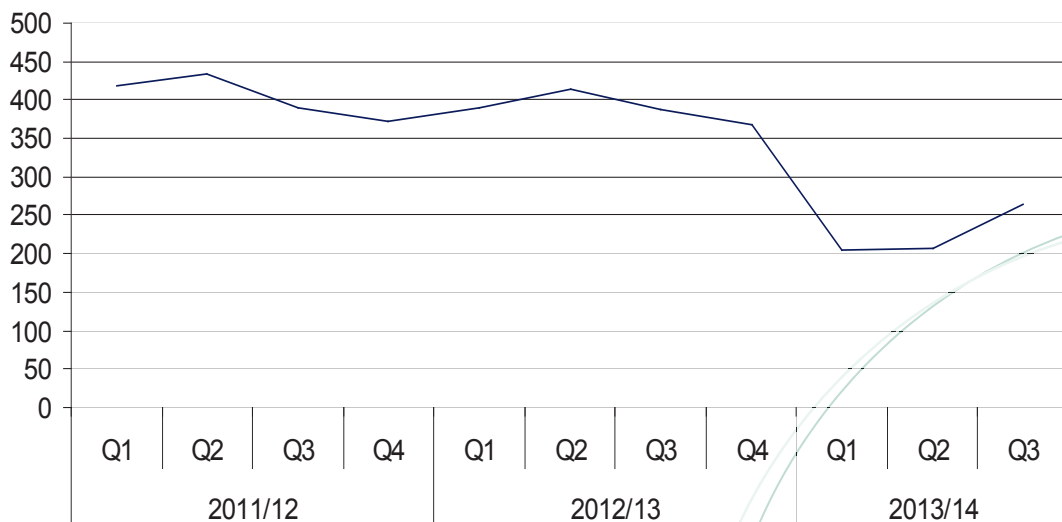
- Compliments, Complaints and other service user feedback. In order to improve services, we need to know what users think. We use this feedback to inform the decisions we make about the way we deliver our services.
- Strategic Equality Plan 2012 to 2016. Our **Strategic Equality Plan** details the objectives, actions and targets we must deliver on to fulfil our statutory public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality and eliminate discrimination.

Managing our Performance

2013 has seen us embed our improved performance management structure and processes. All performance information from across both Adults and Children’s services is consolidated and regularly presented to the Senior Management Teams and the Quarterly Performance Forums to highlight best practice and identify areas for improvement. Our performance is strong overall and we have made improvements in 2013/2014 against the national set of performance indicators, as detailed in our Directorate Plan 2012-2016.

In 2013/2014 we have reduced the times taken to deliver major adaptations which are important for people’s independence at home. Between April and December 2013 64 major adaptations were completed in owner occupied properties; this is slightly fewer than in the same period last year. However, we have reduced the time that people have to wait, and the average time taken to complete a major adaptation was 230 days. This is better than the All Wales average of 271 days and an improvement on our average for last year.

Average number of days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant



The project to pilot a Social Services Inspection Agency (SSIA) 'Outcomes Framework' for child protection ended in July 2013. The focus of the project was on child protection planning and delivery that is outcome focussed for the young person and not process driven. Social workers recorded the project has resulted in them having an increased understanding of outcomes and the outcome led approach which has seen a move away from needs or service led practice. On a wider level the project has recommended to SSIA that an outcome led approach be more widely delivered across Wales, having the potential to be transformative for people who use services and social workers alike.

You have already read about some of our main areas for improvement in Children's and Adult Social Services and we have included below further examples from 2013 which we believe evidence our continuing improvement.

- The Modernising Social Services Board commissioned two successful Systems Thinking reviews. Systems Thinking acknowledges that performance is governed by how a service is designed and most importantly the approach starts with the customer, what do they want from the service, rather than what works for the service. The review of our Flintshire Fostering Service resulted in us improving and streamlining the process for training and approving foster carers, making it shorter and simpler for applicants with less likelihood that they will drop out of the process. We have also changed the way we supply foster carers with the equipment needed by each child or young person, making this more straightforward. We also used the Systems Thinking process to review our Financial Assessment and Charging Team (FACT) processes. We found out that the most frequent contact was from people who use services whose circumstances had changed, resulting in queries about charges for services. We have been able to achieve a number of "quick wins" to streamline our processes to address this and have an action plan to take forward more improvements.
- We have improved our "front door" service in 2013/2014 within the context of a significant increase in the number of referrals received. In 2012/13 there were 709 referrals compared to 1,220 in 2013/2014. Positively for all children referred to us a decision was made for 99.2% of referrals within one working day and 85% of initial assessments are completed within seven working days. This means that children, young people and their families receive the support they need and others are signposted appropriately as soon as possible.
- We have worked hard to improve the stability of placements for children looked after by the Local Authority with 6.5% of children experiencing three or more changes of placement. Sometimes placements do break down and a change of placement can be a positive move for the individual, for instance where they move to a longer term arrangement. 97% of our Looked After Children had a Permanency Plan at their second review, an increase from 94% in 2012/2013. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of looked after children moving school during 2013/2014 we know that some of the changes were a 'managed' move to prevent permanent exclusions to keep children in education. The others were 'foster placement' or 'returning to parents' moves with education provision in the new home community rather than continue to travel distances to former home placements.

- With respect to the Looked After Children and young people, we have a number of high profile performance indicators and all of these are currently performing above target. All our targets for safeguarding are set above the All Wales average and Flintshire's performance is among the best in Wales against the national indicators for safeguarding children. We have achieved this in a challenging climate where the number of children on the Child Protection Register has continued to increase.
- We work in partnership with Barnardos to identify children and young people who have a caring role and whilst this is a positive service we need to enhance and extend the take up.
- Providing aids and adaptations to people is crucial to improving independence. The self assessment project gives people control over the assessment process and enables people to identify the need for small pieces of equipment and minor adaptations such as grab rails and stair rails to help with everyday activities. Introduced in April 2013 it offers a fast track service for people who have low level needs which could be met without the need for a face to face assessment. In the first six months, 97 referrals were received for self assessment. Of those that resulted in an intervention, 72% were provided with equipment or a minor adaptation without the need for a home visit. Over 90% of people felt that their needs had been met fully in this way and almost three quarters found the form easy or very easy to complete (73%). We are continuing to offer self assessment for small pieces of equipment in Adult Services and are monitoring the impact it has on our minor adaptations programme. We are considering piloting this approach in Children's Services.
- We commissioned with an independent provider who said they could competitively supply and fit minor adaptations across the County thereby assisting in maintaining people in their own homes. We received positive feedback from customers who experienced the service with 100% of respondents said they were "very satisfied". We have decided to extend the pilot to undertake a continued in depth evaluation of the service and ensure we are receiving best value for money with a view to going out to tender locally or regionally in the longer term.

Evidencing Our Improvement Priorities for 2014 / 2015

1. Improve the timeliness of major adaptations and evaluate the impact of the extended minor adaptations and self assessment projects to inform further service improvements and options to increase people's independence.
2. Further improve the data collection for Carers and Young Carers to meet the outcomes for the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure
3. Consider the findings of research underway on parent's perceptions of the Child Protection process and take appropriate action.
4. Develop a coherent quality assurance framework which draws together information about the quality of our services into a single quarterly report

9. Glossary

Cabinet - The Council's Cabinet comprises 8 Elected Members. Each Elected Member, supported by a Lead Director and accountable Heads of Service / Managers, is assigned a portfolio of Council services / functions. The roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members in respect of their portfolio is to: lead, with their respective Directors, their assigned set of portfolio services/functions, lead key corporate priorities according to the Improvement Priorities and Assessment of Strategic Risks and Challenges (SARC), participate in and lead county and regional partnerships and actively participate in the national agenda e.g. WLGA, Ministerial meetings, conferences etc.

Care Council - The Care Council for Wales is the social care workforce regulator in Wales responsible for promoting and securing high standards across the social services and social care workforce.

CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales) – established in 2007, the powers and functions of CSSIW are enabled through legislation. CSSIW has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. They provide professional advice to Welsh Ministers and policy makers.

Citizen Directed Support - It is where people choose, organise and control their own support to meet assessed and agreed social care needs in a way that suits them with an identified budget. It is about using available resources to achieve what is important to them. The service package can be made up of statutory and other services.

Commissioning - involves making decisions about what services are required to respond to need. It involves making decisions about the capacity, location, cost and quality of services, together with who will deliver them.

Collaborate - where agencies pool resources (time, expertise and money) to work together to deliver and develop services.

Corporate Parent - The Council has a duty to act as a good parent to children and young people in its care and those young people in the process of leaving care. The Council wants these children to have the best possible outcomes. Clear strategic and political leadership is crucial in ensuring that Looked After Children and the Corporate Parenting agenda is given the appropriate profile and priority.

Direct Payments – Cash payments given to people who are eligible as a means of controlling their own care, allowing more choice and flexibility. They are regular monthly payments from Social Services enabling people to purchase their own care, instead of receiving help arranged by social services.

Domiciliary Care contract - A single regional contract for care in the home being developed in partnership with Local Authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Independent Sector. This means that all providers work to the same standard and service specification.

Enhanced Care - forms part of the spectrum of intermediate community based services, but specifically provides care at the 'far end' of this spectrum for people who have medical and/or nursing needs who, without enhanced care, would otherwise be admitted to a hospital bed or would remain in hospital for a longer period of time . (This includes people admitted to an acute hospital bed and those who are admitted / transferred to a community hospital bed).

Extra Care Scheme – extra care schemes provide independent living for some older people in Flintshire and apartments can be purchased by or rented to people aged 60+ who have care and accommodation needs. Llys Eleanor, our first extra care scheme, was developed by Flintshire County Council in partnership with the Pennaf Housing Group and provides 50 one and two bedroom apartments and a range of communal facilities. Llys Jasmine, our second innovative extra care scheme opened to accommodate its first tenants in October 2013. Developed in partnership with Wales & West Housing the scheme provides a total of 63 apartments and bungalows of which 15 are specifically designed for people with dementia. Both schemes feature state of the art alarm systems and 24 hour care is available on site.

Families First Initiative - Improving the delivery of services to families across Wales, especially those living in poverty, as set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's Child Poverty Strategy 2010.

Full Council – The full council comprises all elected Flintshire County Councillors and is the ultimate decision making body.

Integrated Family Support Service - An innovative service model that aims to reform services provided to vulnerable children and families. For families with complex problems there is an increased likelihood that the child's physical, social and emotional development will be impaired and for some children there will be repeated or long term episodes of being looked after by the local authority. The main aim of IFSS is to support families to stay together by empowering them to take positive steps to improve their lives.

Just enough support (Right sizing) - The right sizing assessment process aims to ensure an outcome focussed personalised approach is taken so that people receive the right amount of support to be as independent as possible – the right amount of support, at the right time and in the right place.

Locality Leadership Teams – There are three teams in Flintshire - North East (Deeside), North West (Flint and Holywell) and South (Buckley, Mold etc).The overall aim of the Locality Leadership Teams is to enable multi-agency staff from the locality to work in partnership as an integrated team to plan, deliver and monitor the best possible locality services for residents by:

- 1) Maintaining independence and wellbeing at home and in the community as appropriate, and avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital and long term care
- 2) Improving the multi-disciplinary care of people with chronic conditions and
- 3) Targeting resources more effectively in the community to include a range of health promotion and preventative interventions.

Local Service Board – A local Leadership Team of Flintshire’s public service bodies (Council, Police, BCU Health Board, Further and Higher Education, Probation, Fire and Rescue, Environment Agency, Voluntary Sector). It has four principal roles as a set of local leaders: to take ownership of the community strategy; provide oversight and monitoring of relevant partnerships; identify common issues as public bodies/employers and promote effective joint working in the design and provision of public services.

Looked After Child (LAC) - Looked after children are children and young people who are in public care and looked after by the state. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. The term is also used to describe ‘accommodated’ children and young people who are looked after on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents.

Market Position Statement – Informs the Care Provider market of the local authorities commissioning and service priorities based on the evaluation of data and evidence for current demand and possible future trends in services. The data presented should help providers to develop effective business plans.

Mental Health (Wales) Measure - The proposed Measure places duties on Local Health Boards and local authorities in Wales in relation to assessment of mental health and treatment of mental disorder. It also makes provision in relation to independent mental health advocacy for qualifying patients – those are persons subject to the compulsory powers of the Mental Health Act 1983, and persons receiving treatment in hospital (suffering with a mental disorder).

Minor and Major Adaptations - Minor Adaptation is an adaptation which costs under £1000 such as a grab rail or level access shower (not equipment). A Major Adaptation is over £1000 and would be through the Disabled Facilities Grant or if a Housing Association tenant through Scheme 1A which is Welsh Government funded (e.g. bathroom, kitchen or bedroom extension, stair-lift or lift)

More Than Just Words – A strategic framework for Welsh language services in health and social care in Wales, developed by the Welsh Government. The framework outlines the current position and provides a systematic approach to improve services for those who need or choose to receive their care in Welsh

Outcome - The benefits, changes or other effects that result in an improvement in quality of life for the person from services provided. E.g. an improvement in physical functioning or maintaining a life skill leading to continued independence

Prevention – The prevention approach enhances the persons well being by preventing or minimising major problems of living. Providing information for people to self manage alongside early intervention before problems escalate, monitoring and proportionate risk assessment means that problems are reduced and the need for ongoing longer term support is minimised.

Provider Administered Direct Payments - Avoid the need for people who use services to manage the financial aspects of their care or to become an employer of a personal assistant with these tasks being taken on by the care provider.

Reablement - Reablement is an approach which aims to maximise independence, choice and quality of life. This means that all people who wish to access Social Care Services undergo a period of assessment and support to enable them to live as independently as possible, thus minimising the requirement for ongoing support. Reablement is a short term assessment and intervention service which is person centred and outcome focused. As such the duration of the Reablement will vary for each person (from a few days to a maximum period of six weeks). During the Reablement phase there will be regular reviews to assess progress against agreed outcomes.

Regional Commissioning Hub - A collaboration of the six North Wales' authorities for the commissioning and contracting of high cost low volume care home placements for adults and children.

Rehabilitation – Rehabilitation means taking effective and appropriate measures including through a variety of support, to enable people to attain and maintain their maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

Scrutiny Committee – Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold the Cabinet to account as a critical friend and to monitor/ assist in the improvement and development of the council's policies and services. Under the Local Government Act 2000 the Local Authority must have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee. There are six Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Flintshire of which the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is the one relevant to this report.

Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act - The Act will set out the core legal framework for social services and social care, reinforcing people's rights to information and services and supporting the delivery of our services in an integrated way to ensure that social services and social care are sustainable.

Strategic Equality Plan - In producing our plan we meet our statutory Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality, eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment, and foster good community relations in our employment, policy, procurement and service delivery functions. The Strategic Equality Plan replaces and builds upon the progress we have made through the previous Equality Schemes. The Strategic Equality Plan alongside the Diversity and Equality Policy and Welsh Language Scheme sets out the Council's commitment to equality. The Strategic Equality Plan is integrated across the ten Council improvement priorities.

Supporting People Team – The team ensure the Supporting People Programme Grant (SPPG) from the Welsh Government funds the most appropriate housing related support services in the county to maximise outcomes for people. This includes support to vulnerable people to enable them to maintain their independence in the community and to prevent homelessness.

Telecare - is a way in which support can be provided through telecommunication devices in the home. It uses simple technology to manage risk and give people the peace of mind they need to live in their own homes for longer. Telecare equipment is provided through Community Equipment Stores and fitted and monitored by Carelink. There are currently over 400 homes in Flintshire with Telecare as part of an assessed care package



supporting mental health

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, SOCIAL SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **FLINTSHIRE CHILD CARE SUFFICIENCY**
ASSESSMENT 2014 - 2017

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of the findings of the Flintshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for the period 2014-2017.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Childcare Act 2006 underpins the Welsh Assembly Government's childcare strategy "Childcare is for Children" and enshrines in law:

- Parents legitimate expectation of accessible high quality childcare for children and their families; and
- Local Authorities' responsibilities for providing information to parents and prospective parents to support their parenting role.

2.02 The intention of the Act is to place a duty on Local Authorities in Wales to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to train, to work, or to prepare for work. The Act provides the Assembly with powers to make regulations requiring Local Authorities in Wales to prepare assessments of childcare sufficiency in their areas.

2.03 This Assessment of Childcare Sufficiency executes Flintshire County Council's obligations under Section 26 the Childcare Act (2006). It identifies gaps and makes recommendations that will meet the needs of parents so that the Authority can fulfil its childcare sufficiency duty.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The duties on Flintshire County Council to manage the local childcare market need to be taken seriously and resourced appropriately. Childcare should be recognised as a crosscutting issue that benefits the wider economy and community as much as individual children and families.

- 3.02 This assessment of sufficiency suggests that the childcare market is functioning adequately across much of the County in meeting the needs of most working parents. However, there are areas where there are shortfalls in the volume or type of childcare. Here, childcare is insufficient to meet not only the demands of working parents, but also insufficient to break down the barriers to work or training that a lack of childcare creates for families not in work.
- 3.03 In the majority of areas, the role of the Authority should be in monitoring levels of supply against changing demand; providing information; and ensuring high levels of quality.
- 3.04 Through partnership working with Communities First, Jobcentre Plus, Families First Projects the Childcare Development Group aims to target groups of parents who need intensive support, or specific localities where the market is not functioning. This could make a difference to families and their ability to participate and contribute to the local economy, and to raise children out of poverty.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To advise Members of the Council's Childcare Sufficiency Audit 2014-2017.
- 4.02 Members note the contents of the report and support the on-going work being undertaken by the Childcare Development Group in working towards addressing the recommendations in the audit of sufficiency.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Funding to support the childcare market in Flintshire comes from the following sources:
- FCC Childcare budget
 - FCC Early Education budget
 - Welsh Government Flying Start Grant
 - Welsh Government Out of School Childcare Grant
 - HMRC via childcare tax credits

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 Access to childcare can be a barrier which prevents parents/carers from accessing training and/or employment. The Flintshire Assisted Places Scheme provides families on low incomes with financial support to assist them in paying for a childcare place
- 6.02 The Family Information Service provide information to families to enable them to access information about help with childcare costs.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no environmental impacts as a direct result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The report takes into account the diverse needs of the population of Flintshire and it considers how childcare can be made accessible to:

- Children with a disability
- Children from minority ethnic groups
- Welsh speaking children
- Children in rural areas
- Children of lone parents

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no direct personnel implications for Flintshire County Council as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to assess the sufficiency of childcare provision to enable parents to access employment or training. There is a requirement that consultation is undertaken to gather the views of:

- Parents
- Children/Young people
- Employers
- Childcare providers

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Between October 2013 and February 2014, a consultation exercise took place to establish the views of parents and carers.

11.02 An electronic survey was publicised to all parents of children in Flintshire via schools, through existing childcare provision, local press, County Council website and Twitter account, local employers and in a number of other locations where parents meet.

11.03 Face-to-face consultation took place through existing structures such as parent and toddler groups; integrated centres; family learning groups in schools; pre-schools; health clinics and other locations where parents were already meeting.

11.04 Parents in more deprived areas and in marginalised groups (such as parents of disabled children) were targeted to provide balance against the likelihood that fewer parents in these areas and groups would

return surveys.

- 11.05 Feedback gathered throughout 2013-2014, from parents who access assistance with the costs of childcare has also been incorporated.
- 11.06 Childcare providers were engaged through a telephone survey carried out between September 2013 and December 2013. They were representative of types of provision as well as geographically spread across the authority.
- 11.07 Children and young people were engaged in consultation about their views of childcare within Flintshire. In August 2013 41 children and 11 members of staff from 4 holiday clubs attended a consultation day. A further 41 children in 7 holiday clubs were consulted during holiday club sessions. Between November 2013 and February 2014 35 children from 1 welsh after school childcare setting and 7 English settings were consulted on their views of childcare. The clubs were set in both rural and urban areas of Flintshire and representative of the type of provision and geographically spread across the county.
- 11.08 Thirty nine employers were consulted between September 2013 and December 2013. They ranged from small and medium enterprises to large multinational employers employing in excess of 5,000 staff and they were located throughout the county.
- 11.09 In September the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014-2017 will be presented to the Social and Health Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Flintshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014-2017

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Childcare Act 2006

Welsh Government Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit 2010

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**Assessment of
Childcare
Sufficiency
Flintshire County
Council**

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Introduction

Statutory Duty

The Childcare Act 2006 underpins the Welsh Assembly Government's childcare strategy "Childcare is for Children" and enshrines in law:

- Parents legitimate expectation of accessible high quality childcare for children and their families; and
- Local Authorities responsibilities for providing information to parents and prospective parents to support their parenting role.

The Childcare Act will achieve these aims through statutory duties that will build on Local Authorities' existing roles and responsibilities. In Wales it will:

- Place a duty giving Local Authorities the lead role in facilitating the childcare market to ensure it meets the needs of working parents; in particular those on low incomes, those with disabled children, or those who wish their child to attend Welsh medium provision.
- Ensure people have access to the full range of information they need as a parent.

The intention of the Act is to place a duty on Local Authorities in Wales to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to train, to work, or to prepare for work. The Act provides the Assembly with powers to make regulations requiring Local Authorities in Wales to prepare assessments of childcare sufficiency in their areas.

This *Assessment of Childcare Sufficiency* executes Flintshire County Councils obligations under Section 26 the Childcare Act (2006). It identifies gaps and makes recommendations that will meet the needs of parents so that the Authority can fulfil its childcare sufficiency duty as set out in section 22 of the Act.

Methodology

All of the information gathered for the Assessment has been analysed by area to present a picture of childcare supply and demand by sub-local authority area as proscribed by the Act.

Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MLSOA's) have been used as the geographical area of study. MLSOA's are groupings of lower layer areas used for collecting Census data and have an average population size in Flintshire of 7,429 people. One of the advantages of using MLSOA's is that they are much more similar in population size than electoral divisions (wards) making comparisons between areas less prone to error. In addition, MLSOA's are much less prone to change than wards enabling accurate updating of the Assessment to be carried out on a regular basis. There are 20 Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MLSOA) in Flintshire as shown below.

Figure 1: Flintshire County Middle Layer Super Output Areas



During October 2013 and February 2014, a consultation exercise took place to establish the views of parents and carers in Flintshire regarding childcare. Through a mixture of focus groups and structured questionnaires, the views of parents (fathers, mothers and other carers in loco parentis) as to the availability and accessibility of childcare were sought.

An electronic survey was publicised to all parents of children in Flintshire via schools, through existing childcare provision, local press, County Council website and Twitter account, local employers and in a number of other locations where parents meet. Only 63 responses were received.

Face-to-face consultation took place through existing structures such as parent and toddler groups; integrated centres; family learning groups in schools; pre-schools; health clinics and other locations where parents were already meeting. A total of 43 parents in 6 groups across Flintshire were interviewed in person or by telephone. Parents in more deprived areas and in marginalised groups (such as parents of disabled children) were targeted to provide balance against the likelihood that fewer parents in these areas and groups would return surveys.

In addition, feedback gathered throughout 2013-2014, from parents who access assistance with the costs of childcare, has also been incorporated.

Childcare providers were engaged through a telephone survey carried out September 2013 and December 2013. In total 31 registered childcare providers were interviewed as part of the assessment, representative across provision types and geographically across the authority.

Children and young people were engaged in consultation about their views of childcare within Flintshire. In August 2013 41 children and 11 members of staff from 4 holiday clubs attended a consultation day. A further 41 children in 7 holiday clubs were consulted during holiday club sessions. Between November 2013 and February 2014 35 children from 1 Welsh after school childcare setting and 7 English settings were consulted on their views of childcare. The clubs were set in both rural and urban areas of Flintshire and representative of provision type and geographically spread across the county.

39 employers were consulted between September 2013 and December 2013. They ranged from small and medium enterprises to large multinational employers employing in excess of 5,000 staff and they were located across the county.

Children and Families in Flintshire

The number of children in the population is important in deciding how much childcare is likely to be needed to meet local demand. In Flintshire, the population of children set against all people, ranges from 16 per 100, to just over 20 per 100 people. Areas on Deeside have more children in the population compared with the more rural areas in the west of the County.

For the purposes of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, it is estimated that there are 26,719 children and young people Flintshire between the ages of 0 and 14 years along with disabled children aged 15 to 17 years of age.

While the population of Flintshire as a whole has increased from 148,629 in 2000 to 152,743 in 2011, the population of children fell from 30,732 to 26,719 between 2000 and 2011. This was a higher than average loss for a Welsh County. While there has been a small increase in the number of births in the County recently, the overall trend is downwards. By 2026 it is expected that there will be between 11% and 17% fewer children and young people living in the region than there were in 2001.

There is a small net gain in families coming to Flintshire from elsewhere in the UK, but more recently, a larger gain from children moving to the County from Eastern Europe. While migration is unlikely to place a significant additional burden on the childcare market, the way in which services are delivered and in particular, how information is delivered may need to be examined to meet the needs of migrant families.

The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan allows for nearly 500 new houses to be built each year in Flintshire up to 2015. While this scale of house building will probably not result in a significant increase in demand for childcare across Flintshire, where significant developments are taking place of a type likely to attract families with young children, discussions within the local authority are needed to ensure that the impact on the childcare market is assessed.

The population of Flintshire is overwhelmingly white, with less than 2% of residents recorded as being from a black or minority ethnic group.

Welsh is spoken by 13.2% of people in Flintshire compared to 19% across Wales. Welsh is used across most areas of the County by a significant

minority. In five areas of the County, Welsh is spoken by over a fifth of residents.

Family structures in Flintshire are slightly more traditional than the averages across Wales, with more families headed by married couples (63%). The proportion of families headed by a lone parent (20%) is less than the average for Wales. However, in areas that are more deprived, the proportion of children living in lone parent families is as high as 48%.

The number of lone parents is an important factor in childcare demand as they are less likely to be working when their children are younger but have greater need for childcare to support work once their children are in school. In Flintshire there are 4,466 lone parent households. In 35.6% of such households parents are in part-time employment and 29.2% are in full-time employment. 35.1% are not in employment.

Work and Family Incomes

Overall, economic activity levels in Flintshire are higher than is average in Wales with 72.7% in employment compared to 68.9% for Wales.

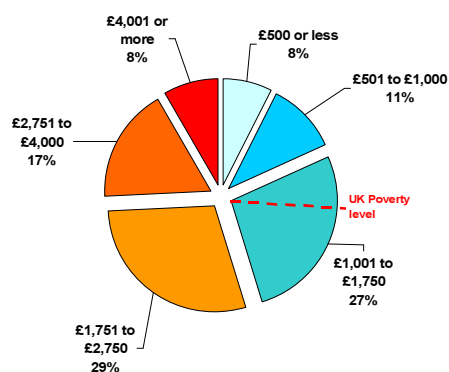
The overall level of unemployment and long-term unemployment rates are lower than the average for Wales and Great Britain. This should mean that demand for childcare in Flintshire should be high.

In 2012 15% of children in Flintshire were living in a household where no-one works. Of these, two-thirds live with a lone parent. New requirements for parents to seek work will have an impact on this figure and will increase the demand for affordable childcare for up to 1,000 lone parents moving into employment in Flintshire over the next two years. Childcare to meet this demand will need to be in the areas of highest deprivation, where there are currently a disproportionate number of lone parents. It is unlikely that the market will respond to this growth in demand and some intervention may be needed.

For working families, average earnings are higher in Flintshire than in Wales as a whole, but lower than the UK average. An average gross income for a two-parent family based on one partner working full time, and the other working part time would be £512.25 or £26,637 per annum. For a single, female parent, the average weekly wage for working full-time would be £420.

Around half of all families in Flintshire have moderate incomes of between £21,000 and £40,000 per annum, but a quarter have incomes that puts them below the UK poverty level of £16,500 per year.

Figure 2: Monthly Income of Flintshire Families



For low and moderate income families, the Working Tax Credit should provide an income top-up and provide support to pay for 70% of childcare

costs. However, in Flintshire (as elsewhere in Wales) take-up rates are relatively low at 79.5% of families in work receiving Working Tax Credit compared to 74.7% across Wales. 20% of families do not claim their entitlement – particularly the childcare element. Some parents do not know that they are entitled to support, while others are put off by stories about overpayments and lots of form-filling.

Low take-up of tax credits is compounded by a perception amongst many parents that it does not provide enough support, so it's not worth working.

Overall levels of deprivation in Flintshire are low but there are a number of small areas of the County where many people experience multiple deprivation. These include parts of the Shotton Higher and Sealand in Garden City, Greenfield and Holywell Central, *Bagillt*, Mold West in *Mold* and Flint Castle. In these areas, childcare is likely to be needed to tackle child poverty, but is least likely to be sustainable in the short-term.

More women work in Flintshire than the average across Wales. As women take primary responsibility for childcare, this is likely to lead to a higher demand for services.

Childcare: Supply

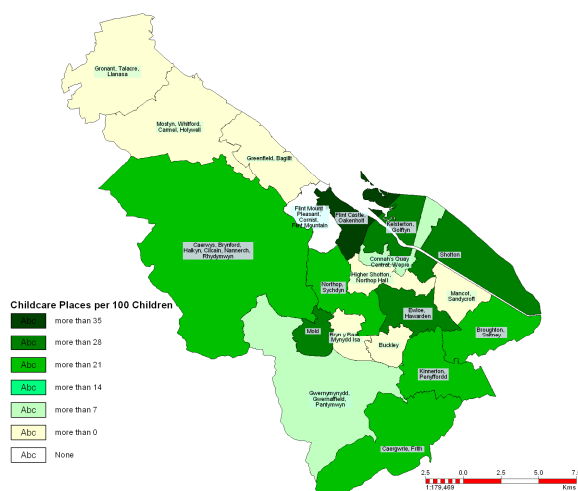
The Childcare Act (2006), defines childcare for which the Sufficiency Assessment must take account, as that for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is payable.

According to information held by Flintshire FIS there were 5235 childcare places in 260 settings for which the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit could be claimed in December 2013. Set against the population of children aged 0 to 14 (and to 17 with disabilities) there was one childcare place for every five children in the County. Compared with other local authorities, Flintshire had the fourth highest amount of childcare in Wales in relation to its population.

Childcare is not spread evenly across all areas of the County but there is not a direct link between the amount of childcare and levels of deprivation. In many areas of Wales, the market often fails in less affluent areas as the private sector sees little opportunity to sustain a profit-led business model. Some of the most deprived areas of Flintshire have the highest levels of childcare and the expansion of Flying Start is a significant contributor to the sustainability of early years childcare in such areas.

Early Years Childcare for children under 5 in Flintshire, is provided by childminders and day nurseries. Sessional care settings (pre-school playgroups and cylch meithrin that only operate for 2 ½ or 3 hour sessions) have not been included as on their own, they are not generally meeting the childcare needs of working parents as set out in the 2006 Childcare Act.

Figure 3: Early Years Childcare Places / 100 children aged 0 to 4



Across the County there were 1,472 places available for children under 5, in 29 group daycare settings and with 132 registered childminders. Set

against the population, there was one early years childcare place for every six children aged 0 to 4 years of age in 2013. Analysis by area shows no clear pattern to the spread of early years childcare in Flintshire with low levels of provision in some areas interspersed by areas with more. Neither is there any clear link between deprivation and a lack of early years childcare with some evidence that use of day nurseries, for example, in more deprived areas is higher than in more affluent communities.

The type of early years childcare is important in providing parents with a choice of setting between home-based care and group care. Childminders also often provide the only option for parents working unusual or flexible hours. In Flintshire, childminders provide a minimum level of daycare provision in most areas of the County, but in a number of areas there are none, or very few. In general, there are far fewer childminders across the northern part of the County.

Childcare for babies is limited with few vacancies with childminders or in day nurseries.

Care for school aged children in Flintshire is provided by out of school clubs, schools, some day nurseries and childminders. In total, there were 1,850 school aged childcare places in Flintshire in December 2013 providing 10 places per 100 children in the population (aged 5 to 14). This compares with 6.7 places per 100 children across Wales. In 2013, Flintshire had the fourth highest amount of school aged childcare in Wales.

Before school care is mainly delivered in schools where it is estimated that 74 out of the 95 schools in Flintshire are served by either before-school childcare or a free breakfast club.

After school care in Flintshire is provided by 48 registered out of school settings, along with a small number of day nurseries and 132 childminders. The majority of care is delivered by out of school clubs attached to a particular school, but there are a small number of clubs and day nurseries that provide transport or 'walking buses' from more than one school.

There are 48 registered after school providers in Flintshire and of the 95 schools in the County, only 14 schools are located more than 1km away from an after school club. However, while some schools may be served by a distant club providing transport, this is not generally a sustainable option and schools of any significant size should consider how they can meet the needs of their communities through developing after school care as part of the Out of School Childcare initiative. For small schools in rural

areas, sustaining an out of school club may not be possible. Here, close links with local childminders could provide parents with a coordinated service.

While most schools in Flintshire are served by an after school club, many parents said that there were not enough places available when they needed them in some clubs. Details of vacancies gathered through the provider's survey of indicated that after school clubs were reporting occupancy levels of 75%-100%. The vast majority of out of school care is focused on children of primary school age and many providers exclude older children as most clubs admissions policies make the intake exclusive to the school in which it is based. Only 8 after school clubs cater for children over the age of 11.

There were 19 separate settings recorded by Flintshire FIS providing holiday care to school aged children in 2008. They were run by a mixture of day nurseries, out of school clubs, schools and voluntary organisations. In addition, there two open-access playschemes registered with CSSIW. While this setting may be used by some parents as childcare, it is not included in the out of school holiday childcare figures.

There were 574 places recorded as being available in holiday schemes alongside 144 childminder places usually taken up by school aged children. This works out as 1 holiday place for every 33 children aged 5 to 14 years in Flintshire. The amount of holiday care is low across most of the County and not all settings are open across all school holidays.

Sessional care is daycare that is provided for a continuous period of less than four hours. It is used primarily to provide pre-school playgroup or cylch meithrin services to children aged 2 to 4 years of age, for sessions of 2 ½ to 3 hours at a time.

In Flintshire there were 43 sessional care providers in 2013. Together they were recorded as having 1,044 registered places between them. As some settings offer two sessions per day, a further 246 places could be added to this total. Eleven settings were recorded as providing an extended service that 'wraps around' the sessional place or a school nursery place to match the school day. In most cases, these places match the school day and operate only during term-time, yet they are likely to be meeting the needs of a number of working parents.

Flintshire has a good spread of sessional care provision with sessional or sessional and wrap-around services in all areas. Set against the population of 3 and 4 year old children in Flintshire, there were 46

sessional places available for every 100 children aged 3 and 4 years of age.

Along with 19 maintained schools, 37 sessional care providers and 19 day nurseries, 5 childminders provide free early education to 3 year old children, and in Flying Start target areas, free places for 2 year olds. The type of setting in which children receive their early education is important in providing working parents with a choice of sessional care; sessional care combined with other care such as a childminder; or an integrated package of care as provided by day nurseries and Playgroup Plus / Meithrin + settings.

Childcare provision for disabled children in Flintshire is provided by mainstream childcare settings along with two specialist holiday schemes operated in partnership by Action for Children and the specialist schools. While the majority of childcare providers said that they would make efforts to accommodate children with disabilities who wanted to use their services, in practice, it would seem from the evidence that disabled children are not taking up childcare places in proportion to their population. In order to address this concern a specialist post of Childcare Brokerage Officer has been developed jointly with Wrexham FIS to support families with a child with a disability to access childcare.

Childcare providers in Flintshire have a range of services for which they charge differing amounts. The average (median) hourly amount that parents paid for childcare in 2013 was £5.39 per hour. Prices for childcare in Flintshire would seem to be broadly in line with the rest of Wales, although there are some isolated differences.

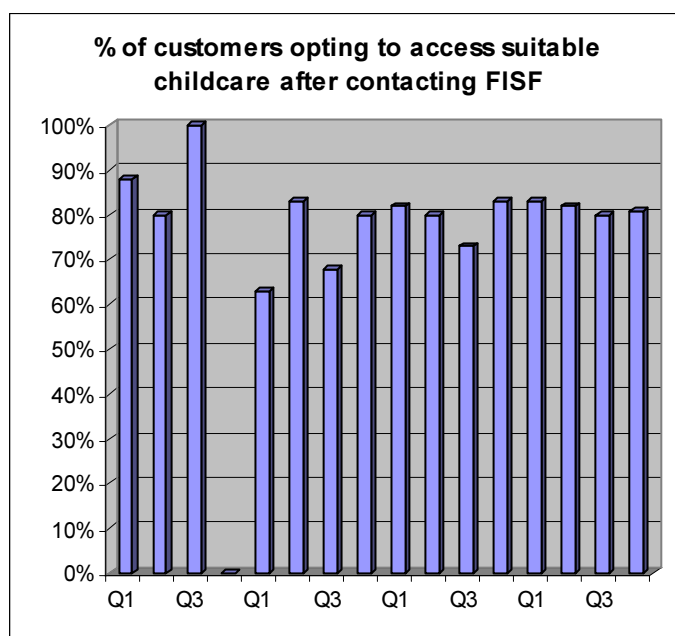
Just over 20% of the childcare providers surveyed in 2013 were planning to increase their fees in the coming year. Of those planning increases, the average price rise was approximately 3%. How providers charge for childcare can have a bearing on its accessibility to parents. In Flintshire, 48% of providers charge for their services in advance; 26% charge in arrears while the same number are flexible. Whilst it is good business practice to charge in advance, it can make accessing childcare more difficult for some parents. A third of childcare providers in Flintshire also ask for deposits from parents before they start using their services. This can range from a £5 registration fee to use a Cylch Meithrin to a £600 deposit to secure full daycare places in a nursery.

Overall, the majority of childcare providers in Flintshire class themselves as *English Medium*. Only 4% are Welsh medium with a further 2% being *Welsh and English* and 2% *Bilingual*. The largest proportion of *Welsh*

medium childcare is delivered by Mudiad Meithrin, providing sessional and wrap around care. In total, only 10% of childcare places are available through the medium of Welsh or bilingually. This is set against a Welsh speaking population of around 14% of all Flintshire residents. Welsh medium childcare is also only available in 5 out of 20 areas of the County.

Childcare information is supplied by Flintshire Family Information Service who operate a website, personal and telephone enquiry service to parents looking for childcare and information about a wide range of services to assist families. Of the 26,000 or so enquiries for childcare information made in 2013-2014, a consistently high percentage were assisted in making a positive choice about accessing childcare.

Figure 4: Customers accessing childcare after gaining information from FIS.



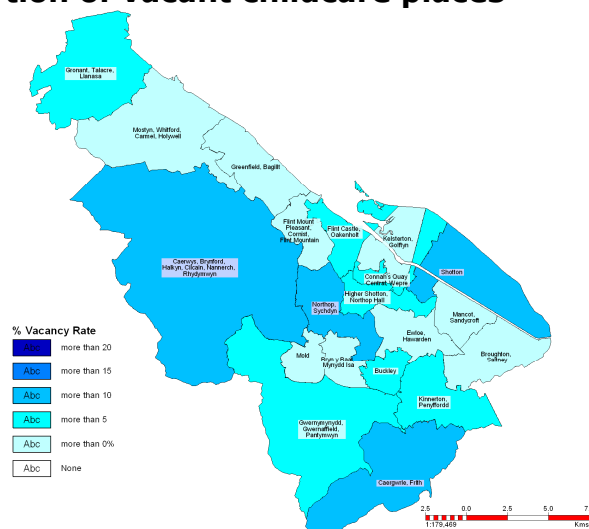
Childcare: Demand

To establish sufficiency, an assessment needs to be made of the demand for childcare by parents that will enable them to remain in, or enter, work.

An indication of unmet demand can be made from the number of vacancies available in settings, by type, across the area. Where there are high levels of vacancies, there may be low demand. Alternatively, settings with less than 15% spare capacity are likely to find it difficult to take many more children. Within an open market, this should indicate high demand and either sufficiency, or some unmet demand.

In December 2013, 11% of all childcare places recorded in Flintshire were vacant. While over half of all childcare providers had at least one vacancy, only 15% had a vacancy for a full-time place. Across the areas of the County vacancy rates ranged from 3% to 15%. Compared with vacancy rates in other authorities, Flintshire had very little spare childcare capacity in 2013. While this means that settings should be operating efficiently and sustainably, parents may not be able to access their preferred childcare service.

Figure 5: Proportion of vacant childcare places



The volume of enquiries that childcare providers receive is a further indication of demand for childcare services. In 2013, out of the 31 providers surveyed, 20% of providers said that they had received more enquiries for their services over the past 12 months; 28% said levels had not changed; while 24% said that demand was falling. There were some differences by sector, with more childminders reporting a drop in enquiries as opposed to other sectors where more than half reported an increase in demand. In total, 7 out of the 20 areas in Flintshire reported a net increase in demand for childcare. No areas reported an overall drop in

demand. The overall picture, would suggest that there is a healthy demand for all types of childcare provision in Flintshire.

Parents in Flintshire have some strong views about the availability, affordability and accessibility of childcare. Their opinions provide a good indication of demand for childcare by area, and by type. Due to a very low number (63) parents responded to the parent childcare survey, it is not statistically significant so cannot be used to conclude that their views are representative of parents across the County.

The survey found that 67% of parents of children aged 0 to 14 in Flintshire regularly use childcare. Relatives or friends provide the most frequently used childcare option with 17% of parents taking this option. Formal childcare is used by 50.3% of parents in Flintshire.

Overall, 92% of parents who expressed an opinion, said that they were satisfied with their current childcare arrangements. The most satisfied were parents using childminders, day nurseries and out of school clubs where there was over 90% satisfaction. Interestingly, there was a lower rate of satisfaction with current arrangements by parents using informal childcare suggesting that care by friends and relatives was not their first choice but was perhaps their only option.

Barriers to childcare use fall under a number of common themes: accessibility; availability; affordability; lack of information; and a lack of services catering for specific needs.

Nearly a third (33%) of all parents surveyed who gave an opinion, said that there is a good choice of local childcare. In many cases parents said that there was not a good range of services that catered for different situations and different age groups. In particular, out of school care was not sufficient to meet their needs – particularly during school holidays. By area, responses showed that in general, parents in the rural and outlying areas of the County felt that they had the least choice in childcare provision.

Some parents choose informal care because they prefer and trust their relatives. For others, it is the last resort and many parents clearly would prefer to use formal care if it were accessible and they could (or would) pay for it.

Supply data shows that childcare is not spread evenly across the County with childcare provision accessible in some areas but not in others. 45% of parents responding to the question said that they agreed that childcare was available locally where they needed it, but 38% of parents disagreed. In the *Gronant, Talacre, Llanasa* and *Broughton, Saltney* areas, a majority of parents said that the childcare they needed was not accessible to them.

The lack of appropriate childcare for older children (of secondary school age) was an issue that a large number of parents (over 10% of all comments) were concerned about.

A majority of parents say that childcare was not available when they need it. Many parents said that childcare was not available to enable them to work shifts; was not available outside 'normal' working hours; and was not available at the times of the year they required it.

Over 12% of survey respondents and 18% of working parents said that they worked shifts or unusual hours. This is higher than was found in other areas of Wales. In some areas, over 35% of parents work a-typical hours.

While those working rotating shifts clearly find it most difficult to access childcare, parents having an early or later than usual start to the working day also find it difficult.

While 38% of parents who were surveyed said that they could afford to pay for childcare, 43% said that they couldn't. As would be expected, those with higher incomes find childcare most affordable, while families with low incomes find it much more difficult.

Parents with low incomes, or low earning potential are also discouraged from using childcare by the reality – or the perception - that their salary would not, or would only just cover their childcare costs. Lone parents said that there was no incentive for them to work because they feel that as soon as they work more, or receive any maintenance, the same amount is taken away from their benefits.

Some of the parents who were interviewed said that it was difficult to find out about childcare, and support for childcare costs. Those parents

engaged with agencies usually had more information, but in general parents would like better information with which they can make informed decisions.

Of parents that use formal childcare 53% think that the quality of childcare locally is high, while 22% said that it was not. While the number of comments about poor quality of childcare was limited, some parents who use formal childcare raised some specific issues around the quality of care.

The parent survey suggests that there is some unmet demand for additional Welsh Medium childcare provision in Flintshire. 23% of parents in Flintshire – representing 6,000 children – said that there was not enough Welsh medium childcare. Those that highlighted a lack of Welsh medium services were most likely to be in the northern areas of the County, and *Shotton* and *Kinnerton, Penyffordd*.

Parents would clearly like to see some choice of Welsh Medium childcare of all types – including day nursery care, all types of out of school care and particularly holiday care.

Survey data shows how childcare use by families with disabled children differs from other families. Disabled children are less likely to be in day nurseries, with childminders, in out of school childcare or even cared for by family or friends. A far higher proportion of families with disabled children do not access childcare outside of the home.

While parents of disabled children had the same concerns as any others, their difficulties were often compounded by a lack of information, trust and flexibility.

Some parents of disabled children require help with asking for help. They are not sure what they are entitled to and struggle to cope with their everyday situation. This impacts on the children themselves who need to socialise with other children when not at school. For parents of young disabled children, childcare in day nurseries is possible but very expensive. Some parents have given up their former employment to look after their disabled child when they are very young, perhaps taking up more local, less well paid / low skill part time hours when the child reaches school age. Even then, there are significant barriers for many in accessing out of school care – both during term-time and in school holidays.

Parents of disabled children can themselves feel isolated as carers. In families where there are siblings, it can be very difficult for the parent to

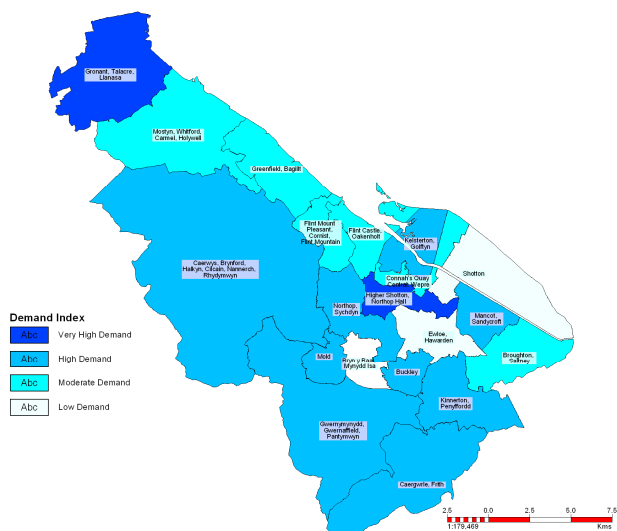
take them out on excursions during holidays, when one child is disabled / has behavioural problems. This can result in the whole family being confined to the home.

Employers contacted for this assessment reported that staff recruitment and retention is generally not an issue in Flintshire area, and does not seem to be affected by any shortage of childcare provision. However, employers are increasingly aware of childcare as an issue with many larger employers engaged through the provision of childcare vouchers. There is an opportunity for the childcare sector to utilise this new interest to build mutually beneficial relationships. The local authority has a key role in facilitating this.

Statistical Evidence of Demand

In making a full assessment of demand, parents' needs must to be taken in context alongside an analysis of social and economic data. This is particularly important in making an assessment of whether additional childcare is likely to be sustainable. The following map is based on a range of data including parental demand; vacancies and a range of other data to suggest where demand for childcare in Flintshire is likely to be highest.

Figure 6:Childcare Demand Index Map



Market Analysis

The evidence collected for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment highlights many issues regarding the supply of childcare and the demand for childcare places in Flintshire.

Geographical Gaps

Relating the supply of childcare to demand is a complex calculation that involves many variables. The most obvious method of identifying childcare gaps geographically, is to examine current levels of provision in different areas and plan to 'bridge the gap' between the current level of provision and the average number of childcare places by type across the County.

In total, this would require 501 new daycare places (with day nurseries or childminders) to be created along with 435 term-time out of school places and 198 holiday scheme places. The total number of new places in each area are set out below:

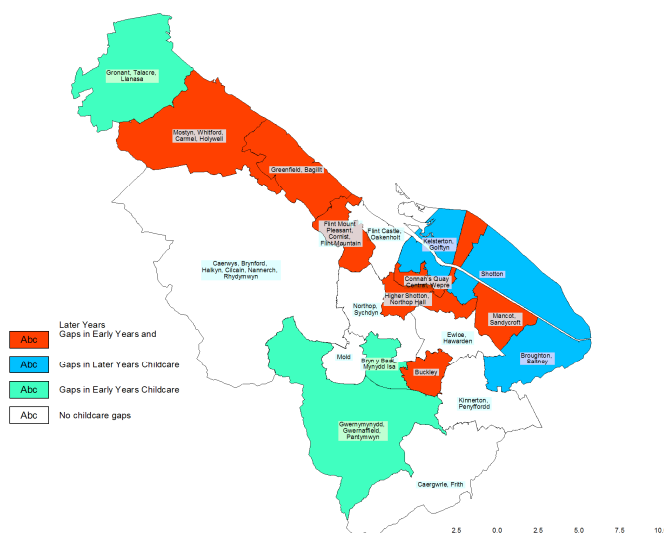
Figure 7: Childcare gaps based on average levels of provision

Area	Additional Daycare Places	Additional After School Places	Additional Holiday Places
Gronant, Talacre, Llanasa	40	0	0
Holywell	52	51	24
Greenfield, Bagillt	62	8	0
Flint Castle, Oakenholt	0	0	0
Cornist, Flint Mountain	65	59	27
Cilcain, Nannerch,	0	0	0
Kelsterton, Golfryn	0	33	0
Wepre	31	27	0
Shotton	0	65	27
Higher Shotton, Northop Hall	52	42	21
Mancot, Sandycroft	46	42	20
Northop, Sychdyn	0	0	15
Ewloe, Hawarden	0	0	0
Bryn y Baal, Mynydd Isa	46	0	16
Broughton, Saltney	0	58	0
Mold	0	0	0
Buckley	56	42	0
Kinnerton, Penyffordd	0	0	15
Gwernaffield, Pantymwyn	15	0	20
Caergwrle, Frith	35	9	12

Filling the gaps identified through developing new childcare places would result in a minimum level of provision being available in all areas of Flintshire and there is some evidence from the levels of vacancies in current settings and in consultation with parents, that there is demand in some of the areas highlighted for childcare services to fill these gaps. In particular, comparing maps of where parents are least satisfied with the accessibility of childcare and the map above, shows up particular areas

such as Talacre, Mostyn, and Saltney as having childcare gaps and parents saying that childcare is inaccessible.

Figure 8: Childcare gaps based on average levels of provision



However, the analysis fails to take into account the range of demand evidence – such as vacancies - and also the need for childcare to be sustainable. Local issues such as the rural nature of areas of the County, and deprivation in other areas means that it is highly unlikely that the amount of new provision needed to make things equal, would be practical. For example, it is unlikely that nearly 150 new childcare places in the *Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist, Flint Mountain* area would be sustainable given the amount of childcare available in the neighbouring Flint Castle, Oakenholt area. In the Mostyn, Whitford, Carmel, Holywell area, the childcare gap is 128 places, yet a higher than average unemployment and poverty may make this number of places difficult to sustain in the short term.

To identify areas of Flintshire where childcare is both needed and would be easily sustainable, the gaps in current provision need to be placed within the context of the Demand Index as set out in *Section 6*.

The following table combines a range of data to summarise the local childcare supply and demand situation in each area of Flintshire. While this may provide some guidance in developing strategy, further local context will need to be sought prior to any new development of childcare places.

Figure 9: Supply & Demand Analysis by Area

Area	Early Years Care Supply Level	Out of School Care Supply Level	Demand Level
Gronant, Talacre, Llanasa	low	high	high
Mostyn, Whitford, Carmel, Holywell	low	low	low
Greenfield, Bagillt	low	low	low
Flint Castle, Oakenholt	high	high	low
Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist, Flint Mountain	low	low	low
Caerwys, Brynford, Halkyn, Cilcain, Nannerch, Rhydymwyn	high	high	high
Kelsteron, Golftyn	high	low	high
Connah's Quay Central and Wepre	low	low	low
Shotton	high	low	low
Higher Shotton, Northop Hall	low	low	high
Mancot, Sandycroft	low	low	high
Northop, Sychdyn	high	high	high
Ewloe, Hawarden	high	high	low
Bryn y Baal, Mynydd Isa	low	high	high
Broughton, Saltney	high	low	low
Mold	high	high	high
Buckley	low	low	high
Kinnerton, Penyffordd	high	high	high
Gwernymynydd, Gwernafield, Pantymwyn	low	low	high
Caergwle, Frith	low	low	low

Areas with **low** supply and **high** demand are those where development of more childcare is needed and should be sustainable (eg. *Higher Shotton, Northop Hall / Mancot, Sandycroft / Buckley / Gwernymynydd, Gwernafield, Pantymwyn*)

Areas with **low** supply and **low** demand are those where it is unlikely that the market will develop childcare places. The needs of these communities may be being served by provision in neighbouring areas. Where they are not, to increase childcare supply intervention in the market is likely to be required to stimulate more demand (eg. *Mostyn, Whitford, Carmel, Holywell / Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist, Flint Mountain / Caergwle, Frith*)

Areas with **high** supply and **high** demand are those where the market is most likely to be functioning and market forces will meet supply with little further intervention (eg. *Caerwys, Brynford, Halkyn, Cilcain, Nannerch, Rhydymwyn / Northop, Sychdyn / Mold / Kinnerton, Penyffordd*)

Area with **high** supply and **low** demand are likely to have a sufficiency of childcare. It is possible that there could be an over-supply in these areas (eg. *Flint Castle, Oakenholt / Ewloe, Hawarden*) or that the supply in these areas is meeting demand elsewhere.

Type Gaps

Taking the average number of places by each type of childcare provision, the following table shows the number of additional places required of each type, in each area, to bring it up to the average level of provision for Flintshire.

Figure 10: Childcare Gaps by Type and Area

Area	Childminder Place Gap	Day Nursery Place Gap	Sessional Care Gap	Out of School Club Gap	Holiday Scheme Place Gap
Gronant, Talacre, Llanasa	7	34	0	0	0
Mostyn, Whitford, Carmel, Holywell	14	42	0	45	24
Greenfield, Bagillt	27	38	0	0	0
Flint Castle, Oakenholt	0	0	0	0	0
Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist, Flint Mountain	21	48	26	51	27
Caerwys, Brynford, Halkyn, Cilcain, Nannerch, Rhydymwyn	0	0	0	0	0
Kelsterton, Golftyn	4	0	0	31	0
Connah's Quay Central and Wepre	0	53	39	40	0
Shotton	1	0	0	64	27
Higher Shotton, Northop Hall	0	50	24	41	21
Mancot, Sandycroft	13	36	22	37	20
Northop, Sychdyn	0	0	2	0	15
Ewloe, Hawarden	0	0	20	0	0
Bryn y Baal, Mynydd Isa	0	48	0	0	16
Broughton, Saltney	0	0	17	59	0
Mold	19	0	0	0	0
Buckley	0	60	14	47	0
Kinnerton, Penyffordd	0	0	1	0	15
Gwernymynydd, Gwernaffield, Pantymwyn	0	14	0	0	20
Caergwrie, Frith	0	39	20	12	12
Total	106	462	185	427	198

While this information may be useful in identifying areas where theoretical gaps exist, as with the broader analysis of childcare gaps, there may not be demand for these services, and a local analysis may indicate that needs are being met in adjacent areas.

Income Gaps

Compared with Wales as a whole, childcare in Flintshire is no more expensive yet, family incomes are slightly higher than the average. This suggests that childcare should be more affordable to more families. Yet higher than average levels of working mean that for many families childcare is more of a necessity.

Around 16% of families in Flintshire have earnings that take them beyond the limits for Child Tax Credit support and therefore, should be able to afford to pay for childcare out of their earnings.

The majority of families in Flintshire are in middle-income bands with two working parents and using formal childcare. Around half of these families (mainly at the lower end of the middle-incomes bracket) said that they could not afford to pay for childcare, yet had to support their work. Some

said that it was a marginal decision whether or not it was worthwhile both partners going out to work. These parents should be getting support through tax credits, but evidence suggests that many do not bother to apply, or are not aware of the benefits. This group of parents are probably the most vulnerable to rises in childcare prices, or adverse economic conditions.

For other families in Flintshire, formal childcare is perceived - and often is - unaffordable. These are parents whose purchasing power is limited either because they do not work, their work is low-paid and part-time, or because they work longer hours in multiple jobs, the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is insufficient to meet their childcare needs, or because they do not access the tax credit system through lack of trust. When they are in work, these parents are more likely to be using informal childcare. If they do not have relatives locally who can provide this, some choose not to work. However, if given the right support and information, some parents in these situations would be able to pay for childcare.

Given the data collected on childcare costs in *Section 5* set against information regarding incomes from *Section 4*, a number of examples can be constructed that illustrate the affordability of childcare in Flintshire.

Example 1: The average Flintshire family with two pre-school children

For the average Flintshire family, with one parent working full-time and the other working part-time (average net weekly income of £586.86 plus £86.42 in Tax Credits) with two pre-school children in part-time daycare (£146) would be spending 21.6% of their family income on childcare.

If they did not claim WTC, childcare would take up nearly 25% of their income.

Example 2: A lone parent with one pre-school child

For a female lone parent working full time will take home on average £363.40 per week plus £131.14 tax credit. Childcare will cost on average £146 per week representing 29.5% of her income.

If she did not claim WTC, childcare would take up 40% of her income.

Example 3: A low-income two-parent family with two school-aged children

For a family, with one parent working full-time and the other working part-time (both earning minimum wage) with two school-aged children using part-time out of school and holiday care costing on average £48 a week would spend 7% of their family income on childcare.

Example 4: A low-paid lone parent with one school-aged child

For a female lone parent working full time earning on minimum wage of £188.66 per week plus £147.09 tax credit. Out of school care will cost on average £39.98 per week during term-time and £85.15 during holidays representing 14% of her income.

It is clear that the proportion of family income spent on childcare is far greater when children require early-years care. Childcare costs as a proportion of family income are also greater for lone parents than couples.

Whether or not childcare is affordable will depend on a range of other factors – including housing and other household costs, as well as individual perceptions of what people find affordable.

To enable more parents to use childcare in Flintshire, strategies are needed that tackle both affordability for parents on low incomes and increase accessibility for parents who can afford childcare but have no access to it. The lack of vacancies for many services – and out of school care in particular - is also a factor that makes it difficult for parents to match work and childcare commitments.

The low level of tax credit take-up is likely to be a factor in the affordability of childcare. If more parents took up their entitlement, the childcare sector and the economy as a whole would benefit.

Specific Needs Gaps

All the evidence suggests that disabled children are not taking up childcare places in proportion to their population, with the parents of disabled children facing additional barriers in accessing childcare. A complicating factor is that the parents of disabled children would often like childcare for respite and social reasons rather than to support work, which takes the responsibility to assure sufficiency away from the Council's statutory duty under the Childcare Act. However, there is some evidence from schemes that have supported disabled children to access childcare (eg. in Oxfordshire) that once they have settled in a childcare setting, their parents often recognise the opportunities that this brings and then feel confident enough to access work or training.

While some parents would prefer additional specialist provision for disabled children, increased accessibility to mainstream services is the main issue that needs to be addressed. However, accessibility to services is also limited by a general lack of spare childcare capacity in Flintshire that affects all parents, but is likely to exacerbate the situation for parents of disabled children.

The gaps in provision for disabled children are often greater as they get older. For many disabled children, developmental differences with their peers become greater and childcare provision becomes less age-appropriate. For disabled children in secondary education, there is no provision that is likely to be able to meet their needs.

Time Gaps

While some group care providers offer longer hours than many across Wales (eg. there is some day nursery, out of school and holiday provision that offers 7am to 7pm), the majority of childcare available in Flintshire operates within fairly 'standard' hours despite the fact that a large proportion of parents work shifts or unusual hours.

Care to cater for parents working unusual hours, shifts, weekends and overnight is available in Flintshire with a small number of childminders. The ability for childminders to provide this service is an important reason to value and nurture a diversity of childcare provision.

It would be helpful for all childcare providers to regularly review their hours in consultation with their customers.

Language Gaps

Taking the estimate of 13.2% Welsh speakers in Flintshire set against the 5% of childcare places currently available in the County through the medium of Welsh or bi-lingually, an additional 488 Welsh medium childcare places would be needed to ensure that all Welsh speaking families had access to Welsh medium or bi-lingual childcare in the same proportion as the English speaking population. Given that Welsh-medium childcare is limited to a small number of Cylch Meithrin, there are likely to be gaps in Welsh-medium or bi-lingual childcare in all types of childcare and most areas of Flintshire.

Age Gaps

2 and under

There is a limited supply of childcare places for this age group and few vacancies for babies, suggesting that more provision could be sustained. However, there were very few comments from parents with children in this age-group to suggest that there is a critical shortage. Most parents seem to recognise that supply is limited and therefore booking their place in advance is critical. The increase in maternity leave entitlement has reduced demand for provision for 6month-12 month old babies.

3 and 4 year olds

Most three and four year old children are in receipt of funded early education places in schools and 'approved' settings, for which there seems to be plenty of supply. An amount of wrap-around care is available in both day nurseries and in playgroup plus / Meithrin +settings. Nonetheless, provision is not universal and there would seem to be limited vacancies indicating unmet demand. More wrap-around care could provide parents of three and four year olds with more choice and flexibility to be able to work. As four year olds enter reception classes they are often using out of school clubs, where there are some issues around supply, and a small number of out of school clubs that have higher age-limits.

5, 6, 7 and 8 year olds

Although Flintshire has a high level of out of school care compared with other authorities, provision is not universal and there would seem to be a number of parents who would like to see more provision, particularly at the schools not currently served by an out school club. In addition, there is a shortage of places in clubs that was highlighted by parents and reinforced by vacancy data.

Holiday care is unavailable in many parts of the County and the number of places available is very limited. There would seem to be a considerable amount of unmet demand expressed by parents for more holiday provision however the existing provision of holiday care reports a reduction in demand and issues of sustainability...

8, 9 & 10 year olds

There is no evidence of any significant difference in the availability of childcare for this age-group that for 5 to 8 year olds, with most out of school care catering for the entire primary-school age-group. However, use of out of school clubs was found to decrease, as children got older. Some parents commented on the quality of some out of school clubs in catering for older primary school children. The appropriateness of provision may be a factor in take-up of places for this age-group.

11 to 14 year olds

As parents increasingly rely on good quality school aged childcare for their children in primary schools, many working parents are unhappy about children being left to go home alone at the end of the school day. Appropriate provision for older children is needed in or around secondary schools during term time and during school holidays. This will become more important in light of planned changes to the benefits system.

Parents are no longer be able to claim Income Support solely on the grounds of being a lone parent. From October 2009 this was extended to parents with a youngest child aged 10 and then from aged 7 or over from October 2010. The Welfare Reform impacts are starting to be felt locally and Shotton is a pilot area for Universal Credit.

Disabled children aged 15 to 17

There is no specific provision, apart from holiday care, available for this age-group of disabled children in Flintshire, and with a limited number of places advertising for children over 11 years of age, childcare for disabled young people aged 15 to 17 is likely to be very limited. While it is possible that should an older disabled young person require a place in an out of school club, they could be accommodated with the right support, for some disabled children, their developmental age might be a barrier in choosing an appropriate setting.

Recommendations

Given the local authorities role in managing the childcare market the following recommendations should be followed to bridge current supply and demand gaps.

Pre-School Childcare

While Flintshire has higher than average levels of childcare for pre-school children, there are a some areas where further development could take place and would be sustainable as indicated by a high demand for services in, for example, the *Talacre, Llanasa / Higher Shotton, Northop Hall / Mancot, Sandycroft / Bryn y Baal, Mynydd Isa / Buckley and Gwernymynydd, Gwernaffield, Pantymwyn* areas. The role of the local authority should be to oversee the operation of the market here through encouraging new group care, and targeting recruitment of childminders, but it should not need to intervene.

In areas where there are low levels of Pre-school Childcare but there is low demand, it is unlikely that additional provision would be sustainable in the short-term. This is true in areas such as *Flint Mount Pleasant, Cornist, Flint Mountain* where there is significant provision in the adjacent area. In the most deprived areas of Flintshire – *Shotton and Flint Castle, Oakenholt*, there is already a high level of early years provision that should be enabling parents to train or work and therefore have an impact on child poverty. However, there are more deprived areas of the County – notably *Greenfield, Bagillt and Mancot, Sandycroft* where supply levels are very low. If provision could be encouraged to develop in these areas (through for example, short-term incentives) it would break down barriers that currently restrict parents' ability to work. In the *Greenfield and Bagillt areas* in particular, the lone parent rate is much higher than the County average and therefore more parents are likely to need childcare support to become economically active.

Childminders in Flintshire provide the backbone of childcare provision for all ages but are the most vulnerable to new group-care developments. They also provide a range of more flexible childcare for parents working unusual hours. The local authority needs to carefully monitor their numbers and should continue to promote childminding services to parents to retain this core level of flexible childcare provision.

Appropriately trained and resourced childminders could also provide the key to enabling more parents of disabled children to access childcare.

Early Years Education

There would seem to be plenty early years education provision to meet existing demand in Flintshire and overall, parents and carers are satisfied with the quality of provision. There is no case for developing any significant number of new places other than to provide parents with more choice in some areas, and more choice of early education and childcare provision that meets the needs of working parents through wrap-around care.

School-aged Childcare

The focus on developing after and before school services should be firstly, around filling the small number of gaps in provision to ensure that all primary schools in Flintshire are adequately served by an out of school club. In many cases this can be achieved as part of Out of School Childcare Programme. Secondly, vacancy levels need to be monitored and where there is insufficient space to meet local needs, the development of additional places should be encouraged.

There is growing demand for the development of specific services for children of secondary school age that also needs to be addressed as part of Out of School Childcare Programme. The appropriateness of care provided needs to be examined to ensure that it is meeting the needs of older children and young people. To this end, young people should be engaged alongside their parents to establish how their needs can be met.

Levels of holiday provision are very low in Flintshire with considerable unmet demand expressed by parents across the County. Only a small number of after school clubs currently offer holiday care and these could be encouraged to work together in clusters to develop larger, more sustainable holiday schemes.

The development of specialist childcare for school-aged disabled children should be supported as well as improving information, training and advice to mainstream out of school clubs to enable them to become more accessible to disabled children and young people.

Flexible Childcare

All childcare providers need to be encouraged to examine the flexibility of their services to meet the needs of parents. Childcare providers in general need to become more customer focused and talk to parents who use their services (and those that don't).

While there are parents who work shifts, weekends and other unusual hours, there are probably not enough of them wanting childcare at the same times to sustain new or extended provision. However, childminders currently provide a range of flexible services that could meet the needs of some parents, but this is not always known by parents.

Information

The profile of Flintshire Family Information Service should continue to be publicised to promote information for parents with which they can make educated choices about childcare. Accessible, accurate information is the key in enabling parents to use childcare that in turn will sustain existing services and stimulate new demand.

A coordinated approach delivered in harmony by a range of agencies (covering childcare, housing, debt advice, Job Centre Plus etc.) is needed to provide parents in hard-to-reach and marginalised groups with information that enables them to overcome the barriers to finding and remaining in work. The Novus/Quest Project has been active in taking this approach, but method needs to be mainstreamed beyond the life of the project. For migrant families, there is likely to be a need for childcare information to be made available in languages other than English or Welsh.

Employers in Flintshire would generally welcome a relationship with FIS and the ability to provide information to their employees or signpost employees to the helpline.

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Flintshire Family Information Service will need to examine the way in which data is collected and held to fulfil the on-going duty to undertake a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. In particular, information on childcare that is not registered but requires inclusion in the Sufficiency Assessment should be gathered and category definitions need examination to account for new services, such as 'playgroup plus / cylch plws'. The categorisation of 'services' rather than 'settings' is would help in the sufficiency analysis.

Sustainability

Because most existing childcare in Flintshire should be sustainable through market forces, local authority intervention and funding to the sector needs to be focused on supporting existing high quality provision to attain sustainable occupancy rates, while recruiting new providers (mainly childminders) to cover natural wastage (the recruitment and retention of

flexible childminders is critical as this is the only option for parents working unusual hours).

Where new services need to be developed to fill gaps identified in this report, in most cases the local authority's role will be in supporting market-led developments. In areas where the market is not functioning, the Council will need to support developing provision as part of Community Focused Schools, Flying Start and Integrated Centre developments.

The sustainability of all childcare provision in Flintshire would be helped by the provision of better support and advice to parents on accessing financial support for childcare, including the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

Welsh Medium Childcare

There is clearly unmet demand alongside limited supply of Welsh medium childcare in Flintshire. There is limited access to both pre-school and school-age Welsh medium childcare. The local authority should encourage new Welsh medium childcare places to be developed to meet what seems to be a demand from not only Welsh speaking parents, but from a wide range of families.

In some areas, parents would like to see more choice of Welsh medium childcare, but additional childcare places are not always needed. There is a danger of unsustainable competition for a limited number of children if parallel Welsh and English medium settings are created in areas where there is no significant demand for additional childcare. This would lead to sustainability problems for both. This could be avoided if more Welsh-medium or bi-lingual childcare options for parents were developed within existing settings, and more Welsh speaking childminders were recruited.

Whereas to date, the local authority has supported Welsh medium *settings*, resources should be re-configured to provide support for Welsh medium *places* in a wider range of childcare settings alongside general Welsh language support accessible to all providers.

Views of Children and Young People

Children and young people reported that they mainly go to childcare because their parents are working. The main messages from the consultation indicated a need to improve access to outside play provision and to encouraging the workers to engage in more outdoor activity with the children.

The Role of the Local Authority

The duties on Flintshire County Council to manage the local childcare market need to be taken seriously and resourced appropriately. Childcare should be recognised as a crosscutting issue that benefits the wider economy and community as much as individual children and families.

This assessment of sufficiency suggests that the childcare market is functioning adequately across much of the County in meeting the needs of most working parents. However, there are areas where there are shortfalls in the volume or type of childcare. Here, childcare is insufficient to meet not only the demands of working parents, but also insufficient to break down the barriers to work or training that a lack of childcare creates for families not in work.

In the majority of areas, the role of the Authority should be in monitoring levels of supply against changing demand; providing information; and ensuring high levels of quality. Additional resources are needed to target hard-to-reach groups of parents who need intensive support, or specific areas where the market is not functioning. This could make a dramatic difference to families and their ability to participate and contribute to the local economy, and to raise children out of poverty.

Information Sources

The most recent data available has been used throughout this assessment and we acknowledge that this may not be as current as we would wish. However data collected will be revised and updated annually to be included in the annual review of this Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Information sources include:

Reports resulting from:

Parents Consultation

Childcare Provider's Consultation

Employer's Consultation

Children and Young People's Consultation

Infobase Flintshire

Flintshire Family Information Service

Daycare Trust

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index 2008

Census 2011

Office for National Statistics: Mid year population estimates

Office for National Statistics: NOMIS

Office for National Statistics: Neighbourhood Statistics

Flintshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014

Local Government Data Unit Wales: Infobase Cymru

Job Centre Plus

Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales

HM Revenue and Customs: Child and Working Tax Credit

Statistics

Department for Work and Pensions

Flintshire Children and Young People's Partnership would

like to thank the children and young people, parents, childcare providers and employers who responded to the consultation process by taking part in various surveys and focus groups.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **15TH JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER – SOCIAL SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **REGIONAL COMMISSIONING OF CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE’S ADVOCACY SERVICE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To seek approval to proceed to tender for a regional independent professional advocacy service for children and young people known to Social Services in North Wales. This collaboration includes the six North Wales local authorities.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Flintshire Social Services Department currently commission an independent professional advocacy service for children and young people, in collaboration with Wrexham and Denbighshire. This contract comes to an end in March 2015.

2.02 In accordance with Welsh Government guidance and recommendations by the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, the six North Wales local authorities are seeking to commission independent professional advocacy on a regional basis.

2.03 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide independent professional advocacy for Looked After Children and Children in Need under the Children Act 2004 Wales and Children Act 1989.

2.04 This report recommends that Flintshire Social Services Department commissions advocacy for children and young people known to Social Services in collaboration with the other five North Wales local authorities.

2.05 Commissioning of the advocacy service on a regional basis in partnership with the six North Wales local authorities. This would require the tendering process to commence in July 2014 with a view to commission the service from April 2015. This option also provides an opportunity to make savings and to address some issues identified through the service specification.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The Welsh Government issued a new model for delivering and commissioning advocacy services. It is statutory guidance issued under section 25(8) of the Children Act 2004. The model includes guidance on the commissioning of Integrated Specialist Advocacy Services through a partnership and regional approach, and states that commissioning agencies should agree to pool budgets for advocacy service with partners.
- 3.02 The Welsh Government guidance lists the vulnerable groups of children and young people which have a statutory right to independent advocacy.
- 3.03 Children's Commissioner for Wales has undertaken a study on the current provision of advocacy for children and young people¹ and makes a number of recommendations for local authorities and the Welsh Government regarding current shortcomings in provision. The Commissioner's report concludes:
- "Services are not effectively promoted to all those they should be reaching. They are not well understood by children and young people and the professionals working with them. There is an inconsistent funding and resourcing of services across Wales. They are ineffectively regulated and inspected"* (All local authorities have responded individually to this report)
- 3.04 In response to the above, a regional project was set up in May 2013, with a task group of members from the six North Wales local authorities, Health and the voluntary sector. An officer from Conwy CYPP is leading on the project and task group, with support from the regional family support officer.
- 3.05 The main aim of the project is to address the gaps which currently exist in statutory provision for vulnerable children and young people. Other aims include improved consistency, parity of access, accessibility, and efficiency
- 3.06 Through a mapping exercise we have identified gaps and duplication in the provision of independent advocacy for vulnerable groups of children and young people as listed in the Welsh Government guidance.
- 3.07 The North Wales Family Support Group was presented with a number of commissioning options to address these. The options were based on monitoring data, population data, mapping, consultation results and evidence gathered during the first stage of the project. The North

¹ Missing Voices: A review of independent advocacy services for looked after children and young people, care leavers, and children in need in Wales (2012)

Wales Family Support Group chose the following commissioning option, as a staged approach with a plan to bring Education on board for April 2016).

Commission advocacy for children and young people known to Social Services across North Wales (merge the North East and North West contracts). In addition, a contribution from Health for advocacy services for children and young people wishing to make a complaint in a hospital or primary care setting (exclusion – Mental health advocacy is commissioned separately by BCUHB).

- 3.08 Work has been undertaken with the North Wales Heads of Children's Services to agree budgets and to develop a service description and specification.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Cabinet is asked to support entering a regional collaboration, on the basis of efficiencies that can be achieved including reduced management costs and shared personnel and resources. In addition collaboration between 6 counties and BCUHB would create a consistent regional service.

- 4.02 On the basis of the business case Flintshire County Council will be assured that high quality advocacy services will continue to be delivered and extended to a broader population of children and young people in North Wales.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 The financial commitment to the current contract between Conwy, Anglesey and Gwynedd is £116,475, which is comprised of:-

- Conwy £38,967
- Anglesey £29,278
- Gwynedd £48,230

The financial commitment to the current contract between Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham is £95,868, which is comprised of:-

- Denbighshire £26,266
- Flintshire £33,652
- Wrexham £25,950

- 5.02 The service was accessed by 58 NYAS children and young people from Flintshire Social Services for Issue Based Advocacy during 2012/13. Figures vary across the other five local authority areas. The advocacy provider also made monthly visits to residential units, supported the Looked After Children's forum, and provided an Independent Visitors service (befriending). Savings have been

identified for the next contract, for example excluding the participation element which can be run in-house.

5.03 A great deal of discussion has taken place regarding funding allocations, based on various formulas. This has proved challenging given the complexity of population, trends, referral trends and calculating a unit cost per case.

5.04 The Heads of Children's Services agreed to a appropriate budget of £100,000 for the contract and base their budget contribution on a percentage of the RSG grant. This means that the following financial commitment will be made by each local authority:

- Anglesey - £10,450
- Gwynedd - £19,220
- Conwy - £16,110
- Denbighshire - £15,770
- Flintshire - £20,440
- Wrexham - £18,020

5.05 This will be clarified through a collaboration agreement between the six counties and will be based on an equitable service, which will be clarified through the tendering process.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None arising from this report

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising from this report

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The eligibility for this service accepts that a child or young person who is Looked After or a Child in Need is eligible to receive the service. There are no other discriminating features and children and young people will not be excluded for any reason based on ethnicity, culture, religion, gender or sexual orientation. A provision of the service specification will be to deliver the service through the medium of Welsh where the child or young person's first language/language of choice is Welsh.

8.02 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and can be found at:-

<http://intranet/doc.asp?cat=10373&doc=32197>

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None arising directly from this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.1 There is an expectation that we would seek the views of children and young people and key partners agencies.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 North Wales Head of Children's Services

11.02 The Clinical Programme Group Lead BCUHB

11.03 A workshop and one-to-one interviews have taken place with looked after children. Their input will be included in the service specification. Young people will be involved in the tendering interviews.

11.04 Officers from Social Services, Health, Education and the voluntary sector are proactively involved in the regional task group.

11.05 Welsh Government Advocacy Unit and the chair of the Ministerial Expert Group on Advocacy.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

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

None

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE**

SUBJECT: **HRAS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 Welsh Government issued a consultation document on 15th May 2014 identifying options to end the HRAS subsidy system by voluntary agreement. This paper describes the content of the document, implications of the various options for Flintshire and seeks support for Flintshire's response submitted on 10th July 2014.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Welsh Government has been in discussion with HM Treasury since 2010 with a view to agreeing a financial settlement that would enable the stock retaining local authorities (11) to exit from the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) system

2.02 In June 2013, Welsh Ministers announced that they had reached agreement with HM Treasury. The key elements of the agreement are:

- Local Housing Authorities (LHA's) are required to "buy" themselves out of the HRAS.
- £73M of annual subsidy payments will be replaced by interest payments of approximately £40m.
- The £40m annual interest payments will be converted to a lump sum settlement figure to enable LHA's to plan their "basket" of borrowing to meet this requirement and other investment needs. Public Works Loans board must be used for all borrowing
- HM Treasury require a housing related borrowing cap to be imposed on each LHA

2.03 The Housing (Wales) Bill is expected to make provision, allowing WG to make a determination for the calculation of the settlement ("buy out") payment.

2.04 The borrowing cap requires UK legislation. UK Government has agreed that exit from the system can take effect from 1st April 2015 but this will require a Voluntary agreement, secured and managed by

Welsh Government. All eleven councils must agree and sign the voluntary agreement.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Welsh Government officials have established a Steering Group and worked with LHA's to consider the principles on which the settlement figure and borrowing cap could be distributed. Key principles on which all have agreed is that "all stock retaining authorities should be "better off", than under the current system.
- 3.02 In order to be able to exit the system by 1st April 2015 a (challenging but achievable) timetable has been established. This requires a response to the consultation document by 10th July. The Ministers decision on the outcome of the consultation is expected by 31st July. Following this the council will need to seek approval for the introduction of self financing on the terms outlined by the Minister to enable officers to complete the work streams necessary for Self Financing to be introduced and for the Council to be able to sign the voluntary agreement described earlier.
- 3.03 The WG consultation document is attached to this report as Appendix A. It identifies a rationale for, and proposal for distribution of the settlement buy out figure, and three options for distribution of the borrowing cap.
- 3.04 The proposal for the settlement figure, which is an annual payment to HM Treasury of £40m per year (to replace the £73m negative subsidy payment), is to use the negative subsidy payments as the basis for apportioning each of the 11 councils share of the £40m annual payment. There is a general (informal) consensus by all councils affected that this seems fair, and in Flintshire's case, based on 13/14 data would result in an annual interest payment of £3,471,379. The negative subsidy payment for the same period was £6,324,826.
- 3.05 A large number of proposals for distribution of the borrowing cap were considered, and the final consultation paper included three of these. Again some overriding principles were agreed informally. The first is that existing borrowing needs to be accounted for when distribution of the cap is considered. Secondly, borrowing needs to achieve the WHQS must take priority over other aspirations. These principles have been supported in principle.
- 3.06 Once these figures had been drawn together based on 13/14 MRA applications, £107m remained for borrowing to meet new build aspirations across the 11 councils. Four councils including Flintshire had well developed plans and aspirations for new build, whilst others, had an ambition but had not identified specific borrowing needs. This area of the work to date has therefore been a little challenging, hence

the 3 options presented in the consultation document.

- 3.07 The first option suggests distributing the new build borrowing on the basis of the plans submitted by each council. In Flintshire's case this would provide (£25m to achieve WHQS and) £20m for new build.
- 3.08 The second option proposes using the SHG formulae for distribution of the £107m across all 11 councils. The rationale for using this is that the formulae utilises data on income levels and house prices to make an assessment of the need for affordable housing across Wales. In this option, this would provide £8,609,555 for new build in Flintshire (and £25m for WHQS).
- 3.09 The third option is for those councils who had submitted plans for new build to receive 50% of the amount they had planned to borrow, with the remainder being split across all 11 councils on the basis of the SHG formulae. This would provide Flintshire with £14, 326,108 for new build (and £25m for WHQS).

In all these options WG propose leaving a contingency of c£5m for distribution later by an unspecified method.

- 3.10 Flintshire Council elected members have been working closely with colleagues in other authorities, and with WLGA, and a consensus has been reached to recommend option 3 for distribution of the borrowing cap. Consensus is vital as all 11 councils need to sign the voluntary agreement for self financing to take effect from 1st April 2015.
- 3.11 Flintshire's response to the consultation document is attached at Appendix B. This needed to be submitted ahead of cabinet meeting. Cabinet were supportive of the response and Housing Scrutiny Committee were happy to recommend option 3.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That cabinet note and support the Flintshire response to the HRAS consultation document

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 Self financing will introduce a number of freedoms for councils, including much greater self determination for the long term planning for investment in council housing services.

Should the proposals supported in this paper for the distribution of the settlement amount and distribution of the borrowing cap be agreed, then Flintshire Council will benefit from increased revenue annual to achieve stock investment and service plan priorities and it will be able to commence a new build housing programme.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 Exiting the HRA subsidy system will provide resources to continue to target those most in need.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Delivery of the WHQS programme will support the council's improvement objective to address fuel poverty and will support reductions in Co2 emissions

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None directly arising from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Exiting the subsidy system by voluntary agreement will require a significant new (additional) workload in 2014. This may require additional finance capacity in Housing for 12 months.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Meetings have been held with both the Scrutiny Committee and Tenants Federation who are supportive of the councils response to the consultation document.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A- consultation document

12.02 Appendix B- consultation response

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

None

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Consultation Paper

New Local Housing Authority Self-Financing System (HRAS Reform)

The distribution of the Settlement Value of HRAS buy-out and the Housing Related Borrowing Cap for individual Stock Retaining Local Housing Authorities

Background

The Welsh Government has been in discussions with HM Treasury since 2010 with a view to agreeing a financial settlement that would enable the eleven stock retaining local housing authorities (LHAs) to exit from the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) system.

The Welsh Ministers were pleased to announce in June 2013 that an agreement had been reached with HM Treasury, which together with the introduction of new self-financing arrangements is expected to generate revenue savings for the eleven LHAs each year. This will allow LHAs to increase their investment in their existing stock and, where possible, support the delivery of additional housing supply. Some LHAs could bring forward improvement works to their properties to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) which will bring real and tangible benefits to their tenants.

Key elements of the agreement are that:

- LHAs are required to buy themselves out of the HRAS;
- The £73m of annual negative subsidy payments will be replaced by interest payments of approximately £40m. This will satisfy HM Treasury's requirement that the agreement is fiscally neutral over the longer term;
- The £40m annual interest payments will be converted to a lump sum settlement value a short period before the agreed implementation date. This will enable LHAs to consider their borrowing requirements in accordance with their local Treasury Management Strategy, to meet current business plan commitments and provide flexibility for LHAs to determine the type and period of loan.
- In order to fund the buy-out, Treasury require LHAs to borrow from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). Failure to comply with this will result in sanctions by Treasury. This will mean the Welsh Budget will be reduced and the reduction passed on to each LHA as appropriate. Interest payments made to the PWLB are effectively received by the exchequer;
- HM Treasury requires a housing related borrowing cap to be imposed on each LHA in order to control public sector borrowing.

The Welsh Government has worked closely with HM Treasury to identify timescales for implementation and the appropriate legislative mechanism for the setting of housing related borrowing cap. HM Treasury has advised that the borrowing cap requires UK legislation and is bringing forward provisions within an appropriate UK Bill. If provisions within the UK primary legislation is not in place HM, Treasury have agreed that Wales can exit from the HRAS system in March 2015 on condition that

Welsh Government secures and manages the borrowing cap as part of a voluntary agreement with all eleven LHAs.

Legislative Background

Housing (Wales) Bill

The Minister for Housing and Regeneration introduced the Housing (Wales) Bill to the National Assembly for Wales in November 2013. The Bill is currently at Stage 2 of the scrutiny process during which the Communities, Equality and Local Government (CELG) Committee will consider, and vote upon, both Government and non-Government amendments to the Bill.

The provisions in Part 5, Housing Finance will, subject to scrutiny, provide:

- for the Welsh Ministers to make a determination providing for the calculation of the settlement payment that each LHA will be required to pay in order to exit HRAS.
- for the determination to be revised only in the event that there has been an error or change in any matter that was taken into account in the original calculation or determination.
- for the Welsh Ministers to determine the timescales and processes that LHAs will need to follow in order to exit HRAS;
- for LHAs to be required to respond to requests for information; and
- for the existing legislation which supports HRAS system to be repealed.

The provisions in Part 5 may be amended

The provisions in Part 4, Standards for Social Housing will, subject to scrutiny, provide for the Welsh Ministers to:

- set standards to be met by LHAs in connection with the quality of accommodation provided by LHAs and the rent and service charges for such accommodation.
- to issue guidance that relates to, and amplifies, the standard.
- consult with bodies representing the interests of LHAs, tenants and other persons Welsh Ministers consider appropriate when setting, revising, or withdrawing standards and related guidance; and
- have powers of intervention where a LHA has failed, or is likely to fail, to meet the quality of accommodation standard.

The provisions in Part 4 may be amended

The Housing (Wales) Bill, explanatory memorandum and the record of passage through the National Assembly for Wales can be found at:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=8220>

Wales Bill

The Secretary of State for Wales published a draft Wales Bill in December 2013. The draft Bill was subject to pre introduction scrutiny by the Welsh Affairs Committee. The Committee reported in March 2014. The UK Government introduced the Wales Bill (along with explanatory notes and the Financial Empowerment and Accountability Command Paper) on 20 March 2014. The provisions in clause 23, provide:

- for UK Ministers to set the maximum amount of housing debt that can be held, in aggregate, by LHAs in Wales;
- for Welsh Ministers to determine the amount of housing debt that is to be treated as held by each LHA, and the maximum amount of housing debt that each LHA may hold;
- powers for Welsh Ministers to obtain such information as Welsh Ministers may specify either generally, or in a particular case, from LHAs to enable them to exercise their functions above.

The Wales Bill, explanatory notes and details of progress of the Bill through Parliament can be found at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/wales.html>

Voluntary Agreement

As the timescales for UK Legislation were unclear, HM Treasury agreed that the 11 Welsh LHAs could exit the HRAS system in March 2015, subject to the Welsh Government securing and managing a borrowing cap through a voluntary agreement between each of the eleven LHAs and Welsh Ministers.

The powers for Welsh Ministers and a LHA to enter into a voluntary agreement are provided in section 80B of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

It is essential that all eleven LHAs agree and sign the voluntary agreement. Failure to do so will result in the HRAS remaining in place in Wales until appropriate UK legislation is passed.. This means that at least £73 million will continue to be paid back to HM Treasury each year.

The voluntary agreement will act as an interim arrangement until the Wales Bill comes into force and as a fall-back position should the Wales Bill fall for whatever reason. Once the Wales Bill receives Royal Assent and the appropriate provisions are commenced Treasury will need to issue a determination to the Welsh Ministers which will set the macro borrowing cap for Wales. This will enable the Welsh Ministers, subject to consultation, to issue a determination to LHAs which will set the borrowing cap for each LA. There is the potential for the legislative process to replace the need for a voluntary agreement.

Welsh Government Priorities

The Welsh Government believes that everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that all LHAs meet the WHQS by 2020 and has worked closely with LHAs to ensure that their business plans demonstrate that they will meet this target date. LHAs must be able to have access to sufficient borrowing to enable them to meet WHQS by 2020.

The Housing (Wales) Bill will, subject to scrutiny, will enable the existing WHQS guidance to be issued as guidance to the quality of accommodation standard for existing properties. Therefore the Bill will place the requirement for LHAs to meet and maintain the WHQS on a statutory basis for the first time.

The Welsh Government is also committed to increasing housing supply and supporting LHAs that wish to undertake new council house building. However, this should not be to the detriment of meeting WHQS

Governance Arrangements

The Welsh Government has put in place robust governance arrangements to manage and oversee the reforms. This comprises a steering group and four technical work-streams. One of the key responsibilities of the steering group is to make recommendations to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration on the methodology to be used for the distribution of the settlement value and the borrowing cap. The steering group includes representatives from LHAs, WLGA, Welsh Tenants, Wales Audit Office and Welsh Government.

The WLGA and LHA representatives on the steering group support and agree the inclusion of all the options within this consultation paper but have differing views on whether a preferred option should be identified.

In the interests of both landlords and tenants it is essential that agreement is reached on the distribution methodologies. This is necessary as the finally agreed methodologies will form the basis of the voluntary agreement that will need to be signed by all 11 LHAs. In light of this, the Welsh Government considers that Borrowing Cap Option 3 provides a compromise between those LHAs that have firm plans for new build while enabling the remaining LHAs the opportunity to consider their capacity for new build.

The Welsh Government therefore considers that the Settlement Value Option 1 and the Borrowing Cap Option 3 are the preferred options. The final distribution methodologies will be subject to consultation and agreement by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

Background

Welsh Government officials have worked closely with appropriate officials from LHA's since June to consider the principles that might underpin the distribution of a settlement figure and a borrowing cap.

There was clear consensus that “**every stock retaining authority should be better off than the current position**”. This includes not only the financial benefits from exiting HRAS but also the benefits of becoming self-financing. The Welsh Government and the steering group are committed to maintaining this as a key principle in the distribution arrangements.

The Directors of Housing and Chief Treasurers of the eleven stock retention authorities met and considered options for the distribution of both the settlement value and borrowing limits. They agreed that, although not perfect, the distribution of the settlement value based on negative subsidy values appeared to be the most pragmatic and transparent way forward.

Members of the steering group have worked closely together to model and consider a wide range of options for distribution of the borrowing cap. The group identified those options which were most suitable for further consideration and narrowed these down to those that should be subject to consultation.

When considering the options which are set out in the following part of this consultation paper, it should be noted that the accounting work-stream, the transaction and debt work-stream and the capacity building work-stream will jointly be considering a range of financial and accounting matters and related guidance which will inform the development of financially sustainable business plans following the buy-out and implementation of the new self-financing arrangements. These matters include, but are not limited to, depreciation, minimum revenue provision, treatment of capital receipts and loan pooling arrangements. The work-streams will also be developing new business plan guidance and parameters and these will be made available to LHAs in due course.

It should be noted that all figures contained within the options and the statistics within this consultation paper are illustrative and remain subject to change for a number of reasons before the final settlement date.

The final figures and methodology will be subject to agreement by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

Exiting from the HRAS system: The Agreement with HM Treasury

The agreement with HM Treasury, which will allow authorities to exit from the HRAS system and become self financing from April 2015 consists of two parts.

Firstly, the eleven stock retaining authorities are required to buy themselves out of the existing HRAS. The agreement is based on £40m interest payments which will replace the existing negative subsidy payment of £73m. The £40m interest will be converted to a buy-out lump-sum (settlement value) a short period before an agreed settlement date and authorities will be required to take out loans with the PWLB to fund the buy-out. This will result in all authorities being better off under self financing.

The second part of the agreement is that HM Treasury require a housing borrowing cap to be set for each of the eleven authorities.

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A borrowing cap of £1.85 billion was agreed with HM Treasury in June 2013. The cap includes the estimated Housing Revenue Account capital finance requirement (HRA CFR) and the estimated settlement value. This leaves potential borrowing headroom of £471 million for authorities to meet their business plan commitments. All estimated figures are subject to change as the HRA CFR will need to be updated¹ and the settlement value will be based on prevailing interest rates when the £40 million is converted to a settlement buy-out value.

Should the figures change significantly it is possible that the headroom will be reduced below £471 million. In the event that the borrowing required by LHAs exceeds the headroom, in order to protect investment in WHQS, the first call will be to reduce the borrowing available for new build.

This consultation considers how the settlement value and the potential borrowing headroom should be distributed given that LHAs need to be able to access sufficient borrowing to enable them to meet WHQS by 2020.

Key Information

The information in Table 1 below has been obtained from each LHA as part of their application for Major Repairs Allowance for 2014/15 and from their Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which was submitted to Welsh Government in December 2013. The Welsh Government carried out a further exercise to obtain confirmation from each LHA on the accuracy of the figures below.

Table 1: Stock numbers, WHQS status and estimated borrowing requirement:

Local Housing Authority	Stock at Dec ² 2013	Met WHQS	Expected to achieve WHQS		Estimated Borrowing Requirement		
			Month	Year	To meet WHQS	For New Build	Total
					£m	£m	£m
Cardiff	13,730	Yes				40.0	40.0
Anglesey	3,802	Yes				21.4	21.4
Pembrokeshire	5,663	Yes				26.0	26.0
Denbighshire	3,454		December	2014	19.6		19.6
Carmarthenshire	9,009		March	2015	14.4		14.4
Vale of Glamorgan	3,940		March	2017	33.9		33.9
Powys	5,419		March	2018	18.2		18.2
Caerphilly	10,900		March	2020	55.0		55.0
Wrexham	11,292		December	2020	118.0		118.0
Swansea	13,590		December	2020	74.0		74.0
Flintshire	7,236		December	2020	25.0	20.0	45.0

¹ The proposed date of the HRA CFR will be considered by the accounting work-stream, be subject to discussion with Wales Audit Office and approved by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

² Stock numbers for tenanted properties obtained from HRA Business Plan submitted December 2013

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All Wales Borrowing Requirement		358.1	107.4	465.5
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The Settlement Value and its Distribution

In order to allow Wales to exit the HRAS system, HM Treasury required LHAs to “buy-out” of the system at a settlement figure that is fiscally neutral to the UK Government. The agreement is based on £40m interest payments which will be converted to a lump-sum (settlement value) a short period before an agreed settlement date. The estimated settlement value is considered to be in the region of £919.5 million, which has been used for modelling purposes. HM Treasury requires local authorities to fund the “buy-out” by borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB).

Options for distribution of the Settlement Value

Settlement Value Option 1 - To distribute the settlement value based on negative HRA subsidy amounts

Local Housing Authority	HRAS settlement amounts (1)	Share of annual interest (2)	Reduction	Reduction	Share of estimated settlement value (3)
	£	£	£	%	£
Isle of Anglesey	1,695,873	930,779	765,094	45.12	21,396,292
Caerphilly	5,978,361	3,281,222	2,697,139	45.12	75,427,087
Cardiff	15,095,807	8,285,330	6,810,477	45.12	190,459,015
Carmarthenshire	6,234,522	3,421,816	2,812,706	45.12	78,658,989
Denbighshire	3,105,081	1,704,223	1,400,858	45.12	39,175,823
Flintshire	6,324,826	3,471,379	2,853,447	45.12	79,798,326
Pembrokeshire	6,373,758	3,498,235	2,875,523	45.12	80,415,686
Powys	5,660,823	3,106,941	2,553,882	45.12	71,420,811
Swansea	5,789,100	3,177,346	2,611,754	45.12	73,039,241
The Vale Of Glamorgan	5,011,706	2,750,673	2,261,033	45.12	63,231,107
Wrexham	11,609,836	6,372,055	5,237,781	45.12	146,477,623
	72,879,693	40,000,000	32,879,693		919,500,000

Notes:

- (1) HRAS settlement amounts obtained from 2013/14 HRAS 2nd estimate claims HRAS 13-02(W)
- (2) Interest payments of circa. £40m required as part of the agreement with Treasury
- (3) Estimated settlement value based on PWLB 30 year Maturity rate at 12 March 2013 of 4.35%

Advantages

- Every LHA would be better off in revenue terms when compared to the existing HRAS subsidy payments
- The method is as transparent and simple as possible given the inherent complexities of the existing HRAS system
- Each LHA has the same percentage reduction when comparing their existing HRAS amount to their share of the £40m
- Would be relatively straightforward to explain to tenants and members
- Would not replace one complex formula with another

Disadvantages

- Reflects the current and complex HRA subsidy system but some might argue that the current system is not fair
- There is no link to the current condition of the housing stock
- There is no link to the resources required to meet and maintain WHQS
- There is no link to housing supply or demand

Other Options Considered

The other option considered for the distribution of the settlement value was to base it on the stock numbers for each LHA. While this appeared to be a simple and transparent methodology, the results of the modelling showed that two authorities would be expected to pay more in annual interest payments than they currently pay in negative subsidy payments. This option was therefore disregarded on the basis it did not result in every stock retaining authority being better off than within the subsidy system.

Summary

The Welsh Government considers that Settlement Value Option 1 is the preferred option. The final decision will be subject to consultation and agreement by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration.

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Options for distributing the Borrowing Cap

Borrowing Cap Option 1 - To distribute the borrowing headroom based on information submitted by each LHA to the Welsh Government in support of their HRA Business Plan for their 2014/15 application for MRA

	Borrowing Cap Allocation			% share of Borrowing
	WHQS	New Build	Total borrowing allocation	
	£	£	£	%
Anglesey	0	21,400,000	21,400,000	4.5
Caerphilly	55,000,000	0	55,000,000	11.7
Cardiff	0	40,000,000	40,000,000	8.5
Carmarthenshire	14,400,000	0	14,400,000	3.1
Denbighshire	19,600,000	0	19,600,000	4.2
Flintshire	25,000,000	20,000,000	45,000,000	9.6
Pembrokeshire	0	26,000,000	26,000,000	5.5
Powys	18,200,000	0	18,200,000	3.9
Swansea	74,000,000	0	74,000,000	15.7
Vale Of Glamorgan	33,900,000	0	33,900,000	7.2
Wrexham	118,000,000	0	118,000,000	25.0
	358,100,000	107,400,000	465,500,000	
Contingency to be retained by Welsh Government	5,585,263		5,585,263	1.2
All Wales	363,685,263	107,400,000	471,085,263	100.0

It is assumed that the information submitted by each LHA reflects what each can “afford” to borrow.

It is further proposed that any balance, between the borrowing requirement identified by authorities and the total borrowing cap, should be retained by the Welsh Government as a contingency (see section on Flexibility below).

Advantages

- Prioritises WHQS by ensuring that LHAs have access to sufficient borrowing to enable them to meet WHQS by 2020.
- Provides access to sufficient borrowing to those LHAs that have included proposals for new build within their existing business plans.

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Disadvantages

- Does not reflect housing need or demand.
- Does not allocate any borrowing headroom to the 7 authorities who have not included new build proposals in their latest business plan.

Borrowing Cap Option 2 - To base the distribution of the borrowing headroom on prioritising WHQS and applying a modified Social Housing Grant (SHG) formula using household projections and affordability index

The illustrative figures are broken down into borrowing required to meet WHQS and borrowing available for new build. This approach uses official Welsh Government statistics and utilises the most recent data for median incomes and median house prices to create an affordability ratio and combines it with household projections. This data is used to calculate the housing need element of the formula that is used by Welsh Government to distribute SHG to Local Authorities.

	Borrowing Cap Allocation			% share of Borrowing
	WHQS	Allocation based on modified SHG ³	Total borrowing allocation	
Authority	£	£	£	
Anglesey	0	4,696,259	4,696,259	1.0
Caerphilly	55,000,000	8,569,648	63,569,648	13.5
Cardiff	0	22,245,524	22,245,524	4.7
Carmarthenshire	14,400,000	9,924,527	24,324,527	5.2
Denbighshire	19,600,000	5,711,302	25,311,302	5.4
Flintshire	25,000,000	8,609,555	33,609,555	7.1
Pembrokeshire	0	8,350,797	8,350,797	1.8
Powys	18,200,000	10,655,999	28,855,999	6.1
Swansea	74,000,000	13,514,579	87,514,579	18.6
Vale Of Glamorgan	33,900,000	8,214,191	42,114,191	8.9
Wrexham	118,000,000	7,492,881	125,492,881	26.6
Total	358,100,000	107,985,263	466,085,263	
Contingency to be retained by Welsh Government	5,000,000		5,000,000	1.1

³ Based on:
 2011 Household Projections published by the Welsh Government
 Median Gross Weekly Pay 2013 Resident Analysis published by ONS and
 Median House Prices 2011 published by HM Land Registry

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All Wales	363,100,000	107,985,263	471,085,263	100.0
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Advantages

- Prioritises WHQS by ensuring that LHAs have access to sufficient borrowing to enable them to meet WHQS by 2020.
- Provides all LHAs with “notional borrowing headroom” to enable them to consider proposals for new build, if affordable within their business plans.
- Distributes borrowing cap headroom after WHQS by an objective measure that is a reasonable proxy for housing need.
- This formula could be applied as and when Treasury agree an uplift to the macro borrowing cap for Wales.

Disadvantages

- Does not provide for the level of new build that is currently included within the business plans for four LHAs.
- Could be perceived to disadvantage those that have met WHQS.
- LHA may not be able to use full borrowing capacity to build by 2018.

Borrowing Cap Option 3 - To base the distribution of the borrowing headroom on prioritising WHQS, 4 LHAs receiving 50% of their new build request with balance allocated to 11 LHAs on an indicative basis using the modified SHG formula.

The illustrative figures are broken down into borrowing required to meet WHQS and borrowing available for new build based on 50% of the figures 4 LHAs requested for new build with the balance being distributed across all 11 LHAs. The latter distribution uses official Welsh Government statistics and utilises the most recent data for median incomes and median house prices to create an affordability ratio and combines it with household projections. This data is used to calculate the housing need element of the formula that is used by Welsh Government to distribute SHG to Local Authorities.

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	Borrowing Cap Allocation				
	WHQS	50% of new build requested	Allocation based on modified SHG ⁴	Total borrowing allocation	% share of Borrowing
Authority	£	£		£	
Anglesey	0	10,700,000	2,360,856	13,060,856	2.8
Caerphilly	55,000,000		4,308,047	59,308,047	12.6
Cardiff	0	20,000,000	11,183,046	31,183,046	6.6
Carmarthenshire	14,400,000		4,989,158	19,389,158	4.1
Denbighshire	19,600,000		2,871,128	22,471,128	4.8
Flintshire	25,000,000	10,000,000	4,328,108	39,328,108	8.3
Pembrokeshire	0	13,000,000	4,198,028	17,198,028	3.7
Powys	18,200,000		5,356,877	23,556,877	5.
Swansea	74,000,000		6,793,913	80,793,913	17.2
Vale Of Glamorgan	33,900,000		4,129,355	38,029,355	8.1
Wrexham	118,000,000		3,766,746	121,766,746	25.8
Total	358,100,000	53,700,000	54,285,263	466,085,263	
Contingency to be retained by Welsh Government	5,000,000			5,000,000	1.1
All Wales	358,100,000	107,985,263		471,085,263	100.0

Advantages

- Prioritises WHQS by ensuring that LHAs have access to sufficient borrowing to enable them to meet WHQS by 2020.
- Provides those LHAs with a percentage share of the borrowing capacity they requested for new build to ensure part of their new build plans are deliverable.
- Provides all LHAs with an "indicative allocation" of borrowing headroom for new build, if affordable within their business plans.
- Distributes remaining borrowing cap headroom after WHQS and initial proportion for new build by an objective measure that is a reasonable proxy for housing need.
- This latter formula could be applied as and when Treasury agree to uplift to the macro borrowing cap for Wales.

⁴ Based on:
 2011 Household Projections published by the Welsh Government
 Median Gross Weekly Pay 2013 Resident Analysis published by ONS and
 Median House Prices 2011 published by HM Land Registry

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Disadvantages

- Does not provide for the level of new build that is currently included within the business plans for four LHAs.
- Could be perceived to disadvantage those that have met WHQS.
- LHA may not be able to use full borrowing capacity to build by 2018.

Summary

A summary of the borrowing capacity that each LHA would obtain from each of the options and the difference between the borrowing capacity each LHA requested and the outcome of options 2 and 3 are shown below:

	Outcome Option 1	Outcome Option 2	Difference between Options 1 and 2	Outcome Option 3	Difference between Options 1 and 3
Authority	£	£	£	£	£
Anglesey	21,400,000	4,696,259	-16,703,741	13,060,856	-8,339,144
Caerphilly	55,000,000	63,569,648	8,569,648	59,308,047	4,308,047
Cardiff	40,000,000	22,245,524	-17,754,476	31,183,046	-8,816,954
Carmarthenshire	14,400,000	24,324,527	9,924,527	19,389,158	4,989,158
Denbighshire	19,600,000	25,311,302	5,711,302	22,471,128	2,871,128
Flintshire	45,000,000	33,609,555	-11,390,445	39,328,108	-5,671,892
Pembrokeshire	26,000,000	8,350,797	-17,649,203	17,198,028	-8,801,972
Powys	18,200,000	28,855,999	10,655,999	23,556,877	5,356,877
Swansea	74,000,000	87,514,579	13,514,579	80,793,913	6,793,913
Vale Of Glamorgan	33,900,000	42,114,191	8,214,191	38,029,355	4,129,355
Wrexham	118,000,000	125,492,881	7,492,881	121,766,746	3,766,746
Total	465,500,000	466,085,263		466,085,263	
Held by WG for future distribution	5,585,263	5,000,000		5,000,000	
All Wales	471,085,263	471,085,263		471,085,263	

Option 1 should be regarded as the baseline as this is what each LHA identified as the borrowing capacity they each required to meet their business plan commitments at a certain point in time. Earlier versions of this data were used to form the basis for the calculation of the borrowing cap and for agreement with Treasury.

Steering group members noted that, for a range of reasons, not all LHAs had included plans for new build in the data submitted to Welsh Government and there were also concerns about whether the data was based on consistent assumptions.

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Therefore some members of the steering group felt that option 1 would not be considered fair and equitable to all LHAs.

Option 2 prioritises the borrowing each LHA requires to meet WHQS in the first instance. The balance of the borrowing capacity is then distributed using the modified SHG statistical formula and provides borrowing capacity to all 11 LHAs. As can be seen, this creates significant differences, particularly for the 4 LHAs that have consistently requested capacity for new build and have developed firm plans for new homes to be built or to demolish and re-develop some of their existing stock. Steering group members recognise that developing plans for new build is a lengthy process and will depend on for example housing need, the availability of land, planning consents and appointment of contractors etc.

It is also possible that some LHAs may not wish to consider new build within the next few years. Alternatively the borrowing capacity under this option may not be "affordable" within the business plan for a LHA.

Some members of the steering group felt that there was a need to match the distribution of the borrowing cap with outcomes and deliverability. Option 2 would not provide 4 LHAs with sufficient borrowing capacity to meet their existing plans for development. It was also noted that the borrowing capacity may not be maximised as some LHAs may not wish or be able to utilise their allocated borrowing cap.

It was therefore considered necessary to develop an option that would provide a compromise that could be supported by all 11 LHAs which appear to fall within two groups, those with firm plans for new build and those that only submitted figures for WHQS for various reasons.

The steering group members were keen to strike a balance between ensuring that the distribution methodology for the borrowing cap could be regarded as fair and equitable to all LHAs whilst ensuring the deliverability of new build plans.

Option 3 again prioritises borrowing for WHQS. It then provides a percentage share of the borrowing 4 LHAs identified as required for new build and distributes the balance to all 11 LHAs on an indicative basis using the modified SHG statistical formula which was used for option 2. The modelling for this option is based on the 4 LHAs receiving a 50% share of the new build capacity they require.

There has been significant discussion as to the potential for future flexibility in the distribution of the borrowing cap as it is considered important that borrowing capability should be fully utilised where possible. However it is also recognised that this should not negate the enormous benefit of self-financing and moving away from annual announcements which will provide LHAs the ability to plan over the medium to longer term and deliver and measure key outcomes and outputs. It is expected that any change to a LHA's borrowing cap, whether temporary or permanent, would need to be accounted for within "a Limit on Indebtedness Determination", subject to the Wales Bill coming into force.

The steering group noted that the flexible approach would need to be taken during both the initial setting of the borrowing cap and during any future reviews and recommended that a review of the borrowing cap should be undertaken every 3

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years, starting in 2018. This periodic review would apply regardless of what option is taken forward.

The Welsh Government are seeking to ensure that the methodology to be applied to the borrowing cap will distribute borrowing capacity to where it can be fully utilised by achieving WHQS and maximising the delivery of new housing supply. It is therefore important that each LHA is realistic about its ability to use their "indicative allocation" by 2018 which will be reflected in its submission to the Welsh Government in October 2014.

One of the consultation questions is seeking views on what sanctions could be used by Welsh Government in the event that there is a significant difference between the LHA's borrowing capacity and what it has utilised. However, if sanctions were to be applied then provision will need to allow for further flexibility during the period prior to the 2018/19 review. This should be on an "exceptional basis" but would enable a LHA to advise the Welsh Government where it is unable to use their borrowing capacity for whatever reason. This surplus borrowing capacity could then be re-distributed to a LHA e.g. those with shovel ready schemes. It is expected that this type of flexibility which would result in the transfer of borrowing capacity from one LHA to another would require a revised "Limit on Indebtedness Determination" to be issued.

The Welsh Government considers that Borrowing Cap Option 3 is the preferred option. The final decision will be subject to consultation and agreement by the Minister for Housing and Regeneration. Option 3 is supported by the following process:

- Each LHA will be allocated an "indicative allocation" of the borrowing headroom" under the methodology set out in option 3.
- Each LHA will need to advise the Welsh Government by end of October 2014 on whether they will take up their "indicative allocation" for new build up until March 2018.
- If a LHA wishes to take up their "indicative allocation", the LHA will need to submit proposals to the Welsh Government by end of October 2014 which sets out how and when they could utilise this for new build and whether this together with their allocation for WHQS and % share for new build was "affordable" within the business plan.
- The LHA's submission will need to set out whether land has been identified, an assessment of housing need, the number and type of properties to be developed, timescales for development (up to 2018) and any potential barriers to deliverability.
- As part of the submission, each LHA to advise if they could afford to, and wish to, take on any further borrowing capacity over and above their "indicative allocation" and, if agreed, what additional units could be delivered and whether these would be shovel ready.

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- Where a LHA is not able, or does not wish, to utilise their “indicative allocation” for new build, this could be re-distributed to those LHAs that wished to take on further borrowing capacity. This could either be re-distributed to those LHAs that have indicated they could deliver more units or to all remaining LHAs using the modified SHG formula.
- Exceptional arrangements will be introduced to enable a LHA that is not able to fully utilise its “actual allocation” of the borrowing cap before March 2018 to notify the Welsh Government and the surplus borrowing capacity will be re-allocated to LHAs.
- New systems and processes need to be developed to allow for the annual monitoring of compliance with the borrowing cap. This work will be undertaken by one of the work-streams and will consider the data that will need to be gathered by, and collected from, LHAs on what has been delivered in terms of all key outcomes and outputs. This is expected to cover all aspects including achievement and ongoing maintenance of WHQS, re-modelling of existing schemes, regeneration and the development of new properties etc. The work-stream will also be looking at ways of collecting data on the community benefits that are achieved and can be evidenced by LHAs in respect of tackling poverty, jobs and growth, apprenticeships, workless households (LIFT project) etc.
- The borrowing cap will be subject to review every three years with the first review being undertaken during 2018/19. Where a LHA makes a decision not to take up their “indicative allocation of the borrowing cap” for new build under this first distribution, this period of review will enable them to develop new build proposals to feed into the 2018/19 review. LHAs may also be able to develop new build from existing resources or any revenue savings arising from exiting the HRAS system.

Other options considered and reasons for being disregarded

Members of the steering group carried out extensive modelling, and considered the outputs, for the distribution of the borrowing cap which reflected both prioritising and not prioritising the borrowing each LHA requires enabling them to meet WHQS. Where borrowing for WHQS was not prioritised within the modelling, in each case, there were between 3 and 6 LHAs that would not receive enough borrowing capacity to enable them to achieve WHQS by 2020. Since this is a shared Welsh Government and Local Government priority and is to be made a statutory obligation, all options where the borrowing required for WHQS was not prioritised were disregarded.

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The options that were considered and which prioritised borrowing capacity for WHQS together with the reason why each option was disregarded are set out in the table below:

Modelled by:	Reason for being disregarded
Data provided by LHAs in response to the Welsh Government's request in July 2013	This data was no longer current as LHAs recently submitted updated data to the Welsh Government (see Option 1)
Existing housing stock /dwelling numbers	Since the borrowing capacity required to achieve WHQS has been prioritised then the existing stock numbers has no bearing on the borrowing capacity required for future new build plans
Housing projection figures for 2020 (published 2011)	The outputs were very similar to the outputs from the modified SHG formula which the steering group considered was a more objective measure and a reasonable proxy for housing need and affordability (see Option 2)
Housing projection figures by the change in housing projections from 2013 to 2020	While this was based on the change in household projections over time, the time period involved was considered too small to be a robust measure of the typical change over a 30 year business planning period.
Each LHA receiving the same percentage headroom over and above the sum of their existing debt plus the settlement figure	This did not reflect future housing need and may also amplify any issues with the distribution of the settlement amount
Each LA receiving the same value headroom (an equal share)	This does not reflect the differences between authorities in terms of size and housing need
Distributing based on current negative subsidy settlement value	This does not reflect future housing need and may also continue any inequalities inherent within the current subsidy system.
Allocating a percentage share to those LHAs that identified a requirement for new build with the balance being distributed to the 7 remaining LHAs using the modified SHG formula	The further modification of the SHG formula to only allocate borrowing capacity to 7 out of the 11 LHAs could impact upon weighting and was not considered to be equitable and fair to all. The setting aside of a percentage for the 4 LHAs for new build and distributing the balance to all 11 LHAs was considered an appropriate compromise option which could be supported by all LHAs (see Option 3)

Contingency and Future Distribution of the Borrowing Cap

The setting of a housing related borrowing cap for each LHA is a Treasury requirement and is new to Wales. As part of the agreement for LHAs to exit the HRAS system Treasury has advised that any breach of the borrowing cap would be supported by sanctions. This means that, in the event that the borrowing cap is breached, Treasury would make a compensatory reduction to the Welsh Government Budget which would be passed on to LHA(s) accordingly. Therefore it is in all of our interest to ensure that the borrowing cap is maintained.

The Welsh Government propose the setting aside of a small part of the borrowing cap as a contingency in the first instance. The amount included in the options is approximately £5 million. This contingency will help to safeguard Welsh Budgets whilst the Welsh Government and LHAs adjust to the new borrowing cap arrangements. Whilst this contingency could provide LHAs with access to additional borrowing in the event of an emergency or a change in circumstances it is expected that LHAs will have prudent plans in place to enable them to act in the event of an emergency

The Welsh Government are currently in discussion with Treasury to ensure that there is equity between LHAs in England and Wales in that any increase to the borrowing cap in England should be replicated in Wales.

This consultation is aiming to identify the methodology that will be used in the setting of the initial borrowing cap for each LHA. Subject to the analysis of consultation responses, and Ministerial agreement, it is the expectation that a defined methodology will be identified.

In the event that Treasury does agree to uplift the borrowing cap, it may be possible for such an amount to be distributed using the defined methodology that arises from this consultation process.

Consultation Questions:

- 1 Do you agree with the proposal to distribute the settlement value based on negative subsidy amounts?
- 2 Do you agree with the proposal to distribute the borrowing cap based upon option 3 to allow for new build commitments whilst also providing potential headroom for new build to every local authority?
- 3 Do you agree that the Welsh Government should retain a small proportion of the borrowing headroom as a contingency?
- 4 What are your views on how we allocate any unallocated borrowing headroom now or in the future?
- 5 Do you agree that the borrowing cap should be reviewed every three years with the 1st review in 2018/19?
- 6 What action should the Welsh Government take on a LHA who has not delivered on their ability to utilise their borrowing cap?
- 7 Do you have any further comments to make?

Consultation Responses

This consultation is only relevant to the eleven stock retaining local housing authorities in Wales who are currently part of the existing Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system.

It would be appreciated if these eleven LHAs could respond to the questions as set out above and email the response to:

Jen Welsby at: Jen.welsby@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Anshu Verma at: Anshumail.verma@wales.gsi.gov.uk and

Michelle Herneman at: Michelle.herneman@wales.gis.gov.uk

by close of business Thursday 10 July 2014

If you have any queries please contact Jen Welsby on 0300 062 8161 or at jen.welsby@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Response to Consultation Document
New Local Authority Self Financing system
Flintshire County Council
10th July 2014

Consultation questions:

1. Do you agree with the proposal to distribute the settlement value based on negativity subsidy amounts?

Flintshire recognises that this potentially reinforces an imperfect historical system, but agrees that this is the fairest method for distribution.

2. Do you agree with the proposal to distribute the borrowing cap based upon Option 3 to allow for new build commitments whilst also providing potential headroom for new build to every authority?

Flintshire does support the proposal to use Option 3 to distribute the borrowing cap. Although this disadvantages Flintshire council where there are developed plans for new build it is recognised by the council as the fairest Option to allow some new build across all 11 councils.

3. Do you agree that the Welsh Government should retain a small proportion of the borrowing headroom as a contingency?

Flintshire council is not supportive of this proposal as it can see no clear rationale or advantage in doing so. We need to maximise the opportunity to meet local housing need.

4. What are your views on how we allocate any unallocated borrowing headroom now or in the future?

As above we do not support leaving any of the headroom unallocated. For the future we would like to see any new additional headroom negotiated based on business plan needs at that time.

5. Do you agree that the borrowing cap should be reviewed every three years with the first review in 2018/9?

Flintshire is agreeable for the cap being reviewed with WG, on the basis of a voluntary "offering up" of any spare capacity.

6. What action should WG take on a LHA who has not delivered on their ability to utilise their borrowing cap?

Flintshire believes that this should be negotiated through with the individual authority rather than there being a need for "sanctions". Each Local Authority is accountable to WG to meet both the WHQS standard and to deliver its

individual new build plans. Failure to achieve either in (a cost effective way and in) accordance with agreed timescales is already part of the annual MRA monitoring process and this will continue under self financing.

7. Any further comments

Flintshire is delighted that self financing can now be introduced in Wales and thanks the Welsh Government for leading this work. There are two further areas of strategic discussion and commitment/actions needed to safeguard business plans over the medium to long term. These are, the need for a clear understanding about the long term funding of MRA and an urgent need for a review of the Right to Buy. Councils all want to build but are concerned that the current suspension system does not provide sufficient safeguard to ensure that newly developed assets can be used in perpetuity to meet social housing need.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

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

SUBJECT: **3 COUNTY REGIONAL PROCUREMENT PROJECT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 For Cabinet to consider and agree the final business case for the 3 County Procurement Project between Flintshire, Denbighshire and Gwynedd County Councils.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At its meeting on 17th September, 2013 Cabinet agreed to support the 3 County Procurement Project to introduce category management in to the 3 Councils, subject to a final business case being agreed.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The 3 County Procurement Project was agreed by the North Wales Leadership Board last year. A bid was submitted to Welsh Government Regional Collaboration Fund for funding of the project. The bid was successful.

3.02 The Institute for Competition and Procurement Service at Bangor University were commissioned to develop the final business case; this is attached at Appendix 1.

3.03 The development of the business case has included the involvement of Procurement staff from the 3 Councils and senior management from several service areas. Workshops were held, questionnaires undertaken and the recommendations reflect the outcomes and results from this exercise.

3.04 The business case, which is available in the Members' Library and on the website, has been agreed by the project board and by Cabinets at Denbighshire and Gwynedd.

3.05 The business case demonstrates how a category management approach to procurement implemented across the 3 Councils could realise major procurement improvements and savings for each Council, supported eventually by a procurement support service which is already in place for Flintshire and Denbighshire.

3.06 The business case recommends a model for a shared service across the 3 Councils. However recognising the major change management implications of a shared service, as a first stage each Council will independently but in a coordinated standard manner implement category management locally prior to moving to a regional shared service with shared implementation support.

3.07 In summary the benefits of implementing category management in this way are:-

- Identification and delivery of procurement savings per individual category of spend – across the 3 Councils in 2012/13 we procured £384 million of goods and services in total, some of the larger spend areas £86 million on social care, £100 million on construction, £26 million on public transport.
- An estimate of potential savings across the 3 Councils of £2.7 million in year 2 rising to £9.2 million in year 5 if we were to implement regional category management.
- Economies of scale when collaborating across spend areas.
- Enhanced procurement capability within the procurement function and across the organisation.
- Reduced costs of procurement through reducing process and staff; from the questionnaires 244 employees across Flintshire are involved in procurement and aggregating their time spent this represents 74 FTE's equating to £2.9 million in salary costs.
- Improvements in procurement planning and demand management.
- Ensuring category purchases are co-ordinated both locally and regionally.
- The project is scalable allowing other partners to join the project at a later date.

3.08 The business case recommends a direction of travel for procurement within the 3 Councils. The next stage will be to engage a commercial category manager partner to develop the category management system for the 3 Councils, and to develop a full implementation plan. It is envisaged that the first stages of implementation will be in early 2015. The remaining Councils in the region have the option to enter the consortium at a later date.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet to endorse the final business case for the 3 County Procurement Project and for the project to move to implementation stage.

4.02 Regular progress reports are provided to Cabinet, the next being in the autumn.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The project costs are being met from the Welsh Government Regional Collaboration Fund.

5.02 Estimated savings are set out in 3.07 above and detailed further in the Final Business Case.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None directly from this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None directly from this report but potential for reduction in employees engaged in procurement activities once category management has been implemented.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Full consultation will continue with the procurement team and service based employees engaged in procurement activities.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Workshops held and questionnaires undertaken with all employees involved in procurement and senior management. All six Councils were involved in the previous work on the project and were given the option to enter into an agreement.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

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

Contact Officer: Chris Guest
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Email: chris.guest@flintshire.gov.uk

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CORPORATE FINANCE MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14 (OUTTURN)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Members with the Capital Programme 2013/14 outturn information (Subject to audit).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council approved a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme for 2013/14 of £10.992m at its meeting of 19th February 2013 and a Council Fund (CF) capital programme for 2013/14 of £29.908m at its meeting of 1st March 2013.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Programme - Changes since Month 9

3.01.1 The table below sets out how the programme has changed since the Month 9 report to Cabinet on 18th March 2014. Detailed cumulative information relating to each programme area is provided in Appendix A and summarised below;-

REVISED PROGRAMME	Original Budget 2013/14	Changes - Month 9	Changes - This Period	Rollover to 2014/15	Revised Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Services	1.613	0.873	0.439	(0.652)	2.273
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	0.025	0.035	0	(0.006)	0.054
Community Services	3.350	0.226	(0.301)	0	3.275
Environment	16.460	(0.625)	(1.097)	(3.282)	11.456
Lifelong Learning	8.460	5.080	(1.703)	(1.890)	9.947
Council Fund Total	29.908	5.589	(2.662)	(5.830)	27.005
Housing Revenue Account	10.992	1.134	0.748	0	12.874
Programme Total	40.900	6.723	(1.914)	(5.830)	39.879

3.01.2 The revised budget is that against which the programme is monitored.

3.02 Changes during this period

3.02.1 Changes during this period have resulted in a net decrease in the programme from that reported at Month 9 of £1.914m (a CF decrease of £2.662m, partially offset by an HRA increase of £0.748m). A summary of the changes, showing any major individual items, is in the table below (further details can be found in Appendix A):-

CHANGES DURING THIS PERIOD	
<u>COUNCIL FUND</u>	
Increases	£m
Flintshire Connects	0.460
Highways	0.206
Other Aggregate Increases	0.582
	1.248
Decreases	
Private Sector Renewals/Improvements	(0.380)
Transportation	(1.563)
Primary Schools	(0.508)
School Modernisation	(1.284)
Other Aggregate Decreases	(0.175)
	(3.910)
Total	(2.662)
 <u>HRA</u>	
Increases	£m
Central Heating	0.400
Kitchen Replacement	0.297
Other Aggregate Increases	0.051
	0.748
Decreases	
Other Aggregate Decreases	0.000
Total	0.748

3.02.2 Reasons for changes in the programme include:-

- An increase/decrease in grant funding from Welsh government (WG) or other external funding providers. This is the case with Highways and HRA Central Heating;
- Expenditure profiles for schemes alter during the year, resulting in budgets needing to be realigned to meet this scenario. This is the case with Primary Schools, School Modernisation and Kitchen Replacement;
- Contributions from partners are only recognised when they are realised in order to exercise prudence. This is the case with Flintshire Connects;
- Houses into Homes, a WG scheme providing recyclable loans for the repair of long term vacant properties with the aim of bringing them back into use, had previously been included within Renewals/Improvements as it represents expenditure within Flintshire. The Council merely acts as an agent for WG and under accounting regulations the budget and any associated expenditure must be accounted for outside of the Council's accounts; and
- Similarly, elements of the Transportation budget and expenditure related to non Flintshire works are accounted for outside of the Council's accounts, this relates to TAITH, the regional transport consortium of which Flintshire is the lead member; whilst those elements relating to works within Flintshire remain in the capital programme.

3.03 Capital Expenditure compared to Budget

3.03.1 Outturn expenditure across the whole of the programme is £37.975m. The breakdown of expenditure is analysed in the following table, along with the percentage spend against budget. The table shows that 95.23% of the budget has been spent across the programme (CF 92.95% and HRA 100%).

EXPENDITURE/OUTTURN	Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance Outturn v Budget (Under)/Over	% Outturn v Budget
	£m	£m	£m	%
Corporate Services	2.273	1.397	(0.876)	61.46
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	0.054	0.053	(0.001)	98.15
Community Services	3.275	2.806	(0.469)	85.68
Environment	11.456	11.260	(0.196)	98.29
Lifelong Learning	9.947	9.585	(0.362)	96.36
Council Fund Total	27.005	25.101	(1.904) →	92.95
Housing Revenue Account	12.874	12.874	0.000 →	100.00
Programme Total	39.879	37.975	(1.904) →	95.23

3.03.2 The detail of the variances for individual programme areas is listed in Appendix B, which includes the reasons where those variances exceed 10% of the budget.

3.04 Rollover to 2014/15

3.04.1 Rollover occurs when schemes due to be completed in a given financial year are delayed, possibly due to procurement issues, weather or if funding from external sources is altered e.g. rephrasing of WG grants and are therefore not completed until the following year.

3.04.2 Cabinet has to date approved rollover of £6.011m into 2014/15 as part of previous monitoring reports, which has been partially offset by £0.181m being returned to 2013/14, leaving a net rollover total of £5.830m. Of the £0.181m, the majority (£0.128m) relates to expenditure on Town Centre Regeneration which was incurred in 2013/14 rather than 2014/15 as previously anticipated.

3.04.3 Further rollover at outturn of £1.904m has been identified and is included in the narrative in Appendix B. This reflects reviewed spending plans across all programme areas; these committed amounts have been identified as now required to meet costs of programme works in 2014/15 and is put forward for Member approval.

3.04.4 Information relating to each programme area is summarised below:-

ROLLOVER TO 2014/15	
	£m
Corporate Services	0.876
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	0.001
Community Services	0.469
Environment	0.196
Lifelong Learning	0.362
Council Fund	1.904
Housing Revenue Account	0.000

3.04.5 If approval is given to the request in 3.04.3 above, the total rollover into 2014/15 will be £7.734m.

3.05 Financing

3.05.1 The capital programme is financed as summarised below:-

FINANCING RESOURCES	General Financing¹	Specific Financing²	Total Financing
	£m	£m	£m
Latest Monitoring			
Council Fund	12.421	14.584	27.005
Housing Revenue Account	5.200	7.674	12.874
	17.621	22.258	39.879
Total Financing Resources	17.621	22.258	39.879

1 Supported Borrowing / General Capital Grant / Capital Receipts / MRA
2 Grants & Contributions / CERA / Reserves / Prudential & Other Borrowing

3.05.2 Capital receipts generated from asset disposals form part of the Council Fund total financed from general (non specific) resources. The continuing harsh economic climate is impacting on the ability to achieve the budgeted level of anticipated capital receipts, a situation that is likely to continue until the economy picks up at some future point. The capital receipts situation is closely monitored as part of overall capital monitoring arrangements.

3.05.3 The final outturn position for capital receipts was £2.470m; this represents a decrease from the original budget of £3.700m of £1.230m, partially offset by the £0.038m of unallocated funding when the 2013/14 budget was set.

3.05.4 The outturn position is shown in the table below:-

FUNDING SHORTFALL OF APPROVED SCHEMES		
	£m	£m
Shortfall from 2012/13		3.028
Increases		
In year receipts shortfall	1.192	
New Pressures	0.195	1.387
Decreases		
20% Budget Holdback	(2.106)	
Funding from AD Waste Liquidation	(0.512)	(2.618)
Projected shortfall to 2014/15		1.797

3.05.5 The table above shows the shortfall in funding on schemes approved in 2012/13 and 2013/14 carried forward into 2014/15. This shortfall was originally generated in 2012/13 and is the shortfall in funding compared with expenditure that would have occurred had all approved core programme schemes been completed on budget and by 31st March. Schemes in 2012/13 and 2013/14 capital programmes were less advanced than anticipated and so the programmes expenditure in both years had sufficient funding.

3.05.6 The projected shortfall of £1.797m represents an increase of £0.745m on the position as at Month 9 and was caused by a further decrease in the level of receipts due to a Planning Appeal decision.

3.05.7 The 2014/15 budget approved by Members earlier in the year assumed a prudent level of capital receipts and a 30% reduction in the core programme in order to address the estimated shortfall at the time. The impact of this increase means that additional receipts over and above the budgeted figure will need to be realised to address this shortfall. The situation will be closely monitored by officers and reported to Cabinet in the quarterly monitoring reports.

3.05.8 The HRA capital resources are ring-fenced and used only for HRA purposes.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet is requested to:-

- Note and approve the report.
- Approve the rollover adjustments in 3.04.5

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 As set out in Section 3 of the Report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Many of the schemes in the programme are designed to improve the environment, infrastructure and assets of the Council.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A - Capital Programme – Changes during 2013/14
Appendix B - Variances

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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APPENDIX A

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2013/14

	Original Budget 2013/14	Rollover from 2012/13	20% Holdback	Changes (Previous)	Changes (Current)	Rollover to 2014/15	Revised Budget 2013/14
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Fund :							
Corporate Services							
Information Technology	0.938	0.935	(0.188)	0	0	(0.452)	1.233
Flintshire Connects	0.500	0.274	(0.100)	0.020	0.460	(0.200)	0.954
Corporate Finance	0.175	0.074	(0.035)	(0.107)	(0.021)	0	0.086
	1.613	1.283	(0.323)	(0.087)	0.439	(0.652)	2.273
Theatre							
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	0.025	0.040	(0.005)	0	0	(0.006)	0.054
	0.025	0.040	(0.005)	0.000	0.000	(0.006)	0.054
Community Services							
Private Sector Renewal/Improvement	3.050	(0.038)	(0.550)	0.990	(0.309)	0	3.143
Children's Services	0.150	0	0	(0.150)	0	0	0
Travellers' Sites	0.150	0	0	(0.026)	0.008	0	0.132
	3.350	(0.038)	(0.550)	0.814	(0.301)	0.000	3.275

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2013/14

	Original Budget 2013/14	Rollover from 2012/13	20% Holdback	Changes (Previous)	Changes (Current)	Rollover to 2014/15	Revised Budget 2013/14
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Environment							
Administrative Buildings	3.785	0.237	(0.302)	(0.124)	0.010	(0.258)	3.348
Sustainable Waste Management	0	0.554	0	0.316	0.042	(0.569)	0.343
Engineering	3.200	0.665	(0.040)	(3.000)	0.090	(0.551)	0.364
General Environmental Enhancement	0	0.002	0	0.003	0	0	0.005
Highways	3.860	0.588	(0.232)	0.035	0.206	0	4.457
Planning Grant Schemes	0	0	0	0.006	0.012	0	0.018
Ranger Services	0.236	0.007	0	0.020	0	(0.232)	0.031
Regeneration	3.679	0.522	(0.061)	(1.459)	0.106	(1.672)	1.115
Transportation	1.700	0.005	0	1.633	(1.563)	0	1.775
	16.460	2.580	(0.635)	(2.570)	(1.097)	(3.282)	11.456

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2013/14

	Original Budget 2013/14	Rollover from 2012/13	20% Holdback	Changes (Previous)	Changes (Current)	Rollover to 2014/15	Revised Budget 2013/14
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Lifelong Learning							
Leisure Centres	0	0	0	0.026	0.026	0	0.052
Swimming Pools	0	0.120	0	0	0	0	0.120
Community Centres	0	0.065	0	0	0.001	0	0.066
Recreation - Other	0	0.034	0	0	0	0	0.034
Play Areas	0	0	0	0.106	0.145	0	0.251
Education - General	3.580	0.403	(0.566)	(1.919)	(0.055)	0	1.443
Primary Schools	0.075	1.129	(0.015)	1.244	(0.573)	(0.183)	1.677
Schools Modernisation	4.745	0.138	0	1.079	(1.284)	(0.665)	4.013
Community Youth Clubs	0	0	0	0.093	0	0	0.093
Secondary Schools	0	0.718	0	0.715	0.037	(0.217)	1.253
Special Education	0	1.138	0	0.578	0	(0.825)	0.891
Early Years	0	0	0	0	0.003	0	0.003
Minor Works, Furniture & Equipment	0.060	0	(0.012)	0	0.002	0	0.050
Schools - Additional Funding	0	0.006	0	0	(0.005)	0	0.001
	8.460	3.751	(0.593)	1.922	(1.703)	(1.890)	9.947

CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2013/14

	Original Budget 2013/14	Rollover from 2012/13	20% Holdback	Changes (Previous)	Changes (Current)	Rollover to 2014/15	Revised Budget 2013/14
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing Revenue Account :							
Housing Revenue Account							
Major Works	5.321	1.196	0	0	(1.366)	0	5.151
Accelerated Programmes	0.300	0.020	0	0	(0.206)	0	0.114
WHQS Improvements	4.061	(0.132)	0	0	1.920	0	5.849
Disabled Adaptations	1.000	0	0	0	(0.468)	0	0.532
Other Services	0.310	0.050	0	0	0.868	0	1.228
	10.992	1.134	0.000	0.000	0.748	0.000	12.874

Totals :

Council Fund	29.908	7.616	(2.106)	0.079	(2.662)	(5.830)	27.005
Housing Revenue Account	10.992	1.134	0	0	0.748	0	12.874
Grand Total	40.900	8.750	(2.106)	0.079	(1.914)	(5.830)	39.879

CORPORATE SERVICES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Information Technology	1.233	0.750	0.750	(0.483)	(39)	(0.154)	The scale of the projects, conflicting priorities and shortage of resources has resulted in projects being unable to keep within the original timescales.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.483m.
Flintshire Connects	0.954	0.647	0.647	(0.307)	(32)	0.000	Work ongoing on site at Connahs Quay due to scheme expansion. Final sum retention for Flint Connects.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.307m.
Corporate Finance	0.086	0.000	0.000	(0.086)	(100)	0.000	Corporate provisions for Feasibility & Health & Safety allocated as required.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.086m.
Total	2.273	1.397	1.397	(0.876)	(39)	(0.154)		
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	0.054	0.053	0.053	(0.001)	(2)	(0.006)	Projects came in slightly under budget, causing the final small favourable variance.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.001m.
Total	0.054	0.053	0.053	(0.001)	(2)	(0.006)		

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Private Sector Renewal/Improvement	3.143	2.674	2.674	(0.469)	(15)	0.000	£155k purchase of Flint maisonettes £138k Group Repair Schemes £49k relocation of 'Shotton Man' £58k DFG's £69k Misc others	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.469m . All schemes will be completed in early 2014/15.
Travellers' Sites	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.000	0	0.000		
Total	3.275	2.806	2.806	(0.469)	(14)	0.000		

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

ENVIRONMENT

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Administrative Buildings	3.348	3.305	3.305	(0.043)	(1)	(0.305)	Planned Works for DDA & Fire Safety Orders delayed into 2014/15. Planned works Ph 2 at Holywell LC pending a review of the building.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.043m.
Sustainable Waste Management	0.343	0.343	0.343	0.000	0	(0.569)		
Engineering	0.364	0.324	0.324	(0.040)	(11)	(0.031)	Majority of land drainage schemes delayed due to re-directing funds to the Mold FAS, which is currently awaiting planning permission to progress.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.040m.
General Environmental Enhancement	0.005	0.005	0.005	(0.000)	(7)	0.002		
Highways	4.457	4.448	4.448	(0.009)	(0)	0.004	Balance of feasibility study costs due in early 2014/15.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.009m.
Planning Grant Schemes	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.000	0	0.012		
Ranger Services	0.031	0.024	0.024	(0.007)	(23)	(0.162)	Wepre Park development started in the final 1/4 of 2013/14 so the majority of spend has been reprofiled into 2014/15	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.007m.
Regeneration	1.115	1.018	1.018	(0.097)	(9)	0.030	These funds are delivering an integrated package of town centre projects. Detailed design & implementation is underway. The process is behind schedule and the majority of the spend is now due to take place in 2014/15.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.097m.
Transportation	1.775	1.775	1.775	(0.000)	(0)	0.004		
Total	11.456	11.260	11.260	(0.196)	(2)	(1.015)		

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

LIFELONG LEARNING

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Leisure Centres	0.052	0.023	0.023	(0.029)	(55)	0.000	£0.025m H&S works at JJP, Flint. £0.004m minor projects on-going.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.029m .
Swimming Pools	0.120	0.120	0.120	(0.000)	(0)	0.000		
Community Centres	0.066	0.064	0.064	(0.002)	(3)	0.000	On-going project at Sealand Manor (demolition work).	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.002m .
Recreation - Other	0.034	0.026	0.026	(0.008)	(25)	0.000	Pitch works in Connah's Quay.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.008m .
Play Areas	0.251	0.250	0.250	(0.001)	(0)	0.000		No Rollover required.
Education - General	1.443	1.443	1.443	0.000	0	0.000		
Primary Schools	1.677	1.582	1.582	(0.095)	(6)	(0.152)	On-going projects across Primary Schools, all projects started 2013/14	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.095m .

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

LIFELONG LEARNING (Cont.)

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Schools Modernisation	4.013	4.013	4.013	0.000	0	0.000		
Community Youth Clubs	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.000	0	0.000		
Secondary Schools	1.253	1.156	1.156	(0.097)	(8)	(0.175)	On-going projects across Secondary Schools, all projects started 2013/14. Includes works at Buckley Elfed and Mold Ysgol Maes Garmon.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.097m.
Special Education	0.891	0.761	0.761	(0.130)	(15)	0.000	On-going projects across all schools. All works started 2013/14. Includes work at Mold Bryn Coch and Hawarden High School.	Rollover - Request rollover of £0.130m.
Early Years	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.000	0	0.000		
Minor Works, Furn & Equip	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0	0.000		
Schools - Additional Funding	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000	0	0.000		
Total	9.947	9.585	9.585	(0.362)	(4)	(0.327)		

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Capital Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - Outturn

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Major Works	5.151	5.151	5.151	0.000	0	(1.179)		
Accelerated Programmes	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0	(0.250)		
WHQS Improvements	5.849	5.849	5.849	0.000	0	1.714		
Disabled Adaptations	0.532	0.532	0.532	0.000	0	0.050		
Other Services	1.228	1.228	1.228	0.000	0	0.009		
Total	12.874	12.874	12.874	0.000	0	0.344		

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CORPORATE FINANCE MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14
(OUTTURN)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account Outturn for 2013/14 (subject to audit) and the impact on the respective level of reserves at 31 March 2013/14 which will be reported to Audit Committee on 16 July 2014.

1.02

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Section 2	Executive Summary
Para 3.01	Council Fund Summary Table
Para 3.04	Overview of the Year
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Section 6	Housing Revenue Account
Appendix 1	Council Fund Movement of Variances from Month 12
Appendix 2	Community Services – Variances Summary
Appendix 3	Environment – Variances Summary
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Appendix 5	Corporate Services – Variances Summary
Appendix 6	Central & Corporate Services – Variances Summary
Appendix 7	Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves Summary
Appendix 8	Housing Revenue Account – Variances Summary
Appendix 9	Achievement of Efficiencies Summary

2.00 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year end position at outturn is as follows:

Council Fund

- Net in year expenditure is £3.387m less than budget.
- Contingency Reserve balance as at 31 March 2014 of £5.328m

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- Net in year expenditure is £0.229m less than budget.
- Closing balance as at 31 March 2014 of £1.662m

CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The table below shows a final outturn positive variation of expenditure against budget of £3.387m

TOTAL EXPENDITURE AND INCOME	Original Budget	Revised Budget	In-Year Over / (Under) spend	
			Month 12	Outturn
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>DIRECTORATES (Service Groups)</u>				
Services for Adults	45.642	44.485	(1.434)	(1.413)
Services for Children	11.906	12.144	1.150	1.128
Housing Services	1.800	1.746	(0.281)	(0.281)
Development & Resources	1.688	1.628	0.013	0.010
TOTAL : COMMUNITY SERVICES	61.036	60.003	(0.552)	(0.556)
Assets and Transportation	6.015	5.139	(0.143)	(0.145)
Planning	1.708	1.717	(0.039)	(0.039)
Public Protection	3.455	3.465	(0.076)	(0.076)
Regeneration	0.715	0.705	0.027	0.027
Streetscene	19.320	20.005	0.306	0.306
Management, Support & Performance	1.088	1.076	(0.030)	(0.030)
TOTAL : ENVIRONMENT	32.301	32.107	0.045	0.043
Culture & Leisure	6.876	6.363	0.279	0.280
Inclusion Services	14.058	13.331	0.080	0.081
Primary School Services	43.374	43.723	(0.174)	(0.174)
Secondary School Services	36.638	37.725	0.003	0.000
Development & Resources	12.118	12.310	(0.264)	(0.264)
TOTAL : LIFELONG LEARNING	113.064	113.452	(0.076)	(0.077)
Chief Executive	2.356	2.303	(0.135)	(0.135)
Finance	14.265	14.225	(1.259)	(1.258)
HR & OD	2.427	2.749	(0.041)	(0.041)
ICT & Customer Services	4.922	5.048	(0.115)	(0.115)
Legal & Democratic Services	3.145	3.142	(0.146)	(0.146)
TOTAL : CORPORATE SERVICES	27.115	27.467	(1.696)	(1.695)
TOTAL DIRECTORATES	233.516	233.029	(2.279)	(2.285)
Central and Corporate Finance	26.236	26.723	(0.873)	(1.102)
Total	259.752	259.752	(3.152)	(3.387)

3.02 The original budget column reflects the budget approved by Council on 1 March 2013. The revised budget column reflects the in year virements which have been approved in compliance with Financial Procedure rules.

3.03 The significant in year variances at final outturn are detailed in Appendices 2 – 6 (Council Fund) and Appendix 8 (HRA). The significant changes for the

Council Fund from Month 12 are detailed in Appendix 1.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

- 3.04 The early projections as at Month 3 for the Council Fund was a positive budget variation with net expenditure forecast to be £2.065m less than budget.
- 3.05 A review was undertaken to analyse service trends and forecasts in key areas. Following this review, it was identified within Social Services for Adults, that there were projected savings of £1.670m and as a result in-year budgets were reduced. As part of this, additional recurring savings of £1.185m were identified and have been included as future budget efficiency within the 2014/15 budget.
- 3.06 As a result of the overall review of Community Services, a budget pressure of £0.250m was identified within the Professional Support budget (Children's Services) due to the increase in the demand for statutory child care support an additional base budget was allocated to this service.
- 3.07 In month 3, challenges remained with regard to the financial sustainability of the leisure service including meeting the capital cost of the refurbished facilities at Flint and Deeside directly from the Leisure budget. The ongoing revenue financing costs of the capital expenditure incurred on the improvements amounted to an annual cost of £1.052m. The budget and expenditure for such costs was moved to the Central and Corporate Finance budget where it was included with all other capital financing repayments.
- 3.08 Following the period of severe weather in March 2013 a delegated powers authority was approved in May for the recovery cost expenditure associated with this event. An initial allocation of £0.518m was ring fenced to be met from the contingency reserve to finance these costs. The actual severe weather costs were £0.473m, and this has been allocated to the appropriate Council Fund service account at the end of the financial year.
- 3.09 During the year there was a significant change in the projected costs for Out of County placements. In the early part of the year the projected position reflected an underspend of £0.755m; although by Month 8 costs had increased and there was a projected overspend of £0.452m with the final outturn position being a £0.646m overspend. Out of County placements are demand led and costs are dependent on service user need, many of these placements are expensive given the severity of need. The numbers of these young people change throughout the year and these changes significantly affected projected expenditure.
- 3.10 In 2013, along with its strategic partners, the Council intervened in relation to the former chemical plant in Sandycroft (Euticals Ltd). At Month 5 the costs were initially estimated at £0.400m, however this figure was revised later in the year to £0.300m and the actual expenditure incurred within 2013/14 was £0.288m.

- 3.11 The projected under spend increased in Month 9 due to the accounting treatment of current year income from Deeside Power (£0.200m). In Lifelong Learning the projected under spend on Primary School Services increased by £0.135m primarily relating to the reduced demand for Early Entitlement services and there was additional one off windfall income (£0.243m) which was received from the Welsh Government in respect of the First Steps Improvement Package.
- 3.12 In the latter part of the year, the positive movement in the variance was due to in part an increase in the underspend within Community Services (£0.344m) which relates to a number of factors including additional income from charging clients for care within residential services through charges on their property (£0.199m) and additional income from the Health Board (£0.046m) within Social Services for Adults as well as lower than anticipated care costs for transition due to the timing of clients entering the service.
- 3.13 Corporate Services (Finance) also reflected an overall improved position (£0.220m) the majority of which related to the net impact of year end changes in relation to the Revenues and Benefits Service, including the level of bad debt provision, subsidy receivable and collection fund surplus. Within Central & Corporate Finance additional rental income was received (£0.134m) together with various year end accounting changes in relation to the Central Loans and Investment Account.

ACHIEVEMENT OF EFFICIENCIES

- 3.14 The 2013/14 budget contains £5.331m of specific efficiencies and the table below summarises the final position in relation to the achievement of these items. The analysis shows that £4.213m (79%) was achieved resulting in a net underachievement of £1.118m. Full details are shown in Appendix 9.

Status of Efficiency	Value of Budgeted Efficiency £m	Value of Projected Efficiency £m	(Under) Over Achievement £m
Already Achieved	3.454	3.454	0.000
Expected to be Achieved	0.451	0.451	0.000
Achievable in Part	0.516	0.308	(0.208)
Not Achievable	0.910	0.000	(0.910)
Total	5.331	4.213	(1.118)

4.00 NON STANDARD INFLATION

- 4.01 The 2013/14 budget included amounts for non-standard inflation for elements where costs were likely to increase by more than the standard rate of inflation. During the year these amounts have been held centrally until the additional requirement could be demonstrated. The final position in relation to these elements is detailed below:

- £0.255m in respect of Energy for Street Lighting
- £0.161m in respect of Energy (electricity and gas for property)
- £0.187m in respect of Fuel
- £0.141m in respect of Food

An amount of £0.036m was not allocated and forms part of the underspend within Central & Corporate.

5.00 UNEARMARKED RESERVES

- 5.01 The 2012/13 final outturn reported to Cabinet on 16 July showed unearmarked reserves at 31 July 2013 (above the base level of £5.564m) of £3.409m after taking into account a commitment in 2013/14 for use of £0.297m to meet one-off time limited costs. In July, Cabinet allocated £0.250m to the Winter maintenance reserve, bringing the level in the reserve to £3.159m.
- 5.02 In accordance with International Accounting Standards (IAS 19), any known costs that are associated with termination benefits in relation to the workforce efficiencies must be accounted for in the current financial year. The Senior Management phase 1 meets the criteria for this requirement due to its advanced stage. A budget provision has been made in the 2014/15 budget for the exit costs associated with this. However to meet the requirements of IAS 19 and to ensure this is accounted for correctly; this is being made from contingency reserve in 2013/14, but will be repaid in 2014/15 from the budgeted allocation.
- 5.03 Appendix 7 details the movement in-year on unearmarked reserves and the level of contingency sum available. As a result of these movements the final level of Contingency Reserve as at the end of March 2014 is £5.328m. This amount will be increased to £6.073m in 2014/15 when the exit costs provision in relation to phase 1 of the senior management review are repaid to the reserve after the need to account for these costs in 2013/14 as reported in the month 12 report. However, this will be offset by projected costs associated with the Organisational Change and Redesign Programme totalling £0.696m which will be incurred in 2014/15 and have been approved via delegated powers. They include essential expenditure in relation to the continuation of various Programme costs and also include costs associated with office relocation.
- 5.04 When the 2014/15 budget was set it was estimated that an amount of £3.7m would be available to contribute to the Investment Strategy. It is recommended that the additional amount of £1.677m be held in the Contingency Reserve and its use considered for in-year and future use in relation to investment in organisational change in the context of the MTFP.

6.00 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 6.01 On 19 February 2013, the Council approved a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2013/14 of £28.259m. The budget provided for a closing balance of £0.903m, which at 3.2% of total expenditure satisfies the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%.
- 6.02 The 2012/13 final outturn reported to Cabinet on 16 July 2013 showed a closing balance at the end of 2012/13 of £1.931m which was £0.861m more than when the 2013/14 budget was set. This had the effect of increasing the opening balance for 2013/14 by the same amount.
- 6.03 The final outturn for the HRA is an underspend of £0.229m which results in a final closing balance (subject to audit) at 31 March of £1.662m which at 5.81% of the total expenditure exceeds the recommended minimum level of 3%.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YEAR

- 6.04 The 2013/14 HRA budget provided a total revenue contribution of £5.942m towards the funding of capital expenditure (CERA) an increase of £1.250m on the previous year.
- 6.05 As detailed in this report, the final position is a surplus of £1.662m. The Council anticipated an opening balance of £1.545m in the HRA budget 2013/14 approved at Council on the 18th February 2014 and therefore accounted for these additional funds within the budget creating additional spend on Welsh Housing Quality Standard works (WHQS). The remaining balance of £0.117m is proposed also to be utilised towards additional investment in meeting the WHQS.
- 6.06 The continued improvement in the financial management of the HRA during 2013/14 has helped to enable delivery of the following service developments and improvements.
- Additional funding for WHQS delivery plan.
 - Voids- turn around 31 days (59 days for majors)
 - Arrears, 25k less at week 41 than same week last year
 - Repairs- all categories out performing target
 - 99.5% of properties with gas safety certificate
 - ASB successes and service improvement
 - Tenant satisfaction improved from 74% to 81%
 - Extended tenant involvement

7.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.01 Members are recommended to:-
- a) Note the overall report
 - b) Note the Council Fund Contingency Sum available as at 31st March 2014

(para 5.03)

c) Note the final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account (para 6.03)

d) Approve that the additional contingency sum of £1.677m be held and its use considered for in-year and future use in relation to investment in organisational change in the context of the MTFP (para 5.04)

8.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.01 As set out in the report.

9.00 ANTIPOVERTY IMPACT

9.01 None

10.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

10.01 None

11.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

11.01 None

12.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

12.01 None

13.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

13.01 None

14.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

14.01 None

15.00 APPENDICES

15.01 Council Fund – Movement in Variances from Month 12 – Appendix 1
Council Fund Variances – Appendices 2 – 6
Council Fund Movement on Unearmarked Reserves – Appendix 7
Housing Revenue Account Variances – Appendix 8
Achievement of Efficiencies – Appendix 9

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

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COUNCIL FUND - REVENUE BUDGET 2013/14
FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Budget Monitoring (Outturn)
Summary of Movement from Month 12

	£m	£m
Month 12		
Service Directorates	(2.279)	
Central and Corporate Finance	(0.873)	
Variance as per Cabinet Report		(3.152)
Outturn		
Service Directorates	(2.285)	
Central and Corporate Finance	(1.102)	
Variance as per Directorate Returns		(3.387)
Change Requiring Explanation		(0.235)
<u>Community Services</u>		
Services For Adults		
• Disability Services (Resources & Regulated Services) - accrual for refund of duplicated recharge to Health Board for a joint funded	0.027	
• Other minor changes of less than £0.025m for Services for Adults	(0.006)	
Subtotal: Services for Adults		0.021
Development & Resources		
• Other minor changes of less than £0.025m	(0.003)	
Subtotal: Development & Resources		(0.003)
Services For Childrens		
• Other minor changes of less than £0.025m	(0.022)	
Subtotal: Services For Childrens		(0.022)
Total: Community Services		(0.004)

Environment**Assets & Transportation**

- Other minor changes of less than £0.010m (0.002)

Subtotal: Assets & Transportation (0.002)

Total: Environment (0.002)

Lifelong Learning**Culture & Leisure**

- Libraries, Culture & Heritage - minor variances 0.001

Subtotal: Culture & Leisure 0.001

Inclusion Services

- Inclusion & Behaviour Services - minor variances due to rounding (0.001)
- Out of County - minor variances due to rounding 0.002

Subtotal: Inclusion Services 0.001

Secondary School Services

- Secondary School Services - minor variances due to rounding (0.003)

Subtotal: Secondary School Services (0.003)

Total: Lifelong Learning (0.001)

Corporate Services

- Finance - minor variances 0.001

0.001

Central & Corporate Services

- Support Services - Additional Income, pension fund recharge (0.229)

(0.229)

Total Changes (0.235)

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Services for Adults Hospital Social Work (Intake and Reablement)	0.405	0.362	(0.043)	(0.043)	The underspend is mostly due to a Hospital Social Worker covering in the Crisis Intervention Team. These costs (£0.038m) are recovered from Health.	One-off.
Resources and Regulated Services (Intake and Reablement)	5.410	4.966	(0.444)	(0.446)	<p><u>Extra Care</u> Projected underspend on Llys Jasmine (£0.351m) is due to an initial delay in opening the facility, less a £0.005m overspend on Llys Eleanor</p> <p><u>In-house Domiciliary Care</u> underspend (£0.082m) due to greater use of reablement and independent sector care providers.</p> <p><u>Client Transportation Service</u> underspend (£0.034m) relates to staff vacancies.</p> <p><u>Day Services</u> underspend (£0.051m) mostly due to vacancies (£0.042m) - plus other minor underspends</p> <p>These underspends are offset by a projected overspend within <u>In-house Residential Service</u> (£0.067m) due to the need to ensure staff cover (£0.195m) additional premises costs (£0.029m) and additional supplies and services (£0.044) offset by client (£0.151m) and Health (£0.050m) income.</p>	<p><u>Extra Care</u> The underspend against is one-off and non recurring and has arisen due to the opening of the facility being part way through the current year.</p> <p><u>Client Transportation Service</u> Underspend adjusted in budget rationalisation.</p> <p><u>Residential Service</u> further work required to determine the most appropriate way to address the overspend.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Locality Teams (Localities)	13.881	13.830	(0.051)	(0.051)	<p><u>Older People Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Locality Teams are together expected to underspend (£0.183m) mostly due to vacant posts. > Purchased domiciliary costs are projected to overspend (£0.094m) due to additional service user costs. > Purchased residential costs are projected to underspend (£0.046m) due to additional service user costs. > Early Onset Dementia is projected to overspend (£0.062m) due to purchased domiciliary care costs. > Minor adaptations overspend (£0.035m) due to increased client demand 	<p>Keep under review.</p> <p>Most of the PDSI elements previously included as part of the locality team budgets are now shown within the Disability Services Heading with only the Occupational Therapy service remaining as part of the locality teams.</p>
Resource and Regulated Services (Disability Services)	15.735	15.339	(0.396)	(0.423)	<p>Learning Disabilities - As previously noted this service includes a budget to help offset the expected impact of a review of joint funded packages between FCC and Health. This accounts for a saving of £0.140m within the net underspend projection, and remains unchanged from month 3. There are some other compensating variances across this large service which reflect the changes in client demand.</p>	<p>The underspend in relation to the negotiations with Health on jointly funded packages is based on current assumptions. These will be kept under review and adjusted if proven necessary.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Transition and Disability Services (Disability Services)	0.658	0.771	0.113	0.113	This is mostly due to overspends against staff pay costs (£0.030m), third party payments (£0.039m), transport (£0.024m), transfer payments (£0.020m), and a shortfall of grant income of £0.028m. (Supporting People), offset by some additional other grant income.	Keep under review.
Disability Services (Disability Services)	1.580	1.493	(0.087)	(0.087)	Reduction in staffing costs	Keep under review.

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Administrative Support (Disability Services)	0.392	0.418	0.026	0.026	This is mostly due to an overspend against staff pay costs (£0.152m) and premises costs (£0.005m)	Keep under review.
Residential and Domiciliary Service (Mental Health & Substance Misuse Service)	0.654	0.559	(0.095)	(0.095)	This underspend is based on current care packages. An additional £0.0259m budget has been added to this area in 2013 to reflect the expectation of the transfer from Health of an individual with a high cost transition package, there has been a delay in transferring this client into the service. The current underspend would therefore be higher but reflects the cost of current care packages including some other new clients.	Keep under review.
Professional Support (Mental Health & Substance Misuse Service)	0.829	0.720	(0.109)	(0.109)	This is mostly (£0.050m) due to a one-off pay cost reduction following an agreed absence with no pay.	One-off.

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Forensic Budget (Mental Health & Substance Misuse Service)	0.305	0.161	(0.144)	(0.144)	Reflects cost of care packages in 2013/14.	Keep under review - potential volatility due to changes in client numbers and demands at short notice from prison or courts. The possibility of re-aligning budget between the two services has been considered and dismissed for now as there are early indications of additional Mental Health clients although at this stage potential costs or start dates are unknown.
Forensic Budget (Learning Disability)	0.482	0.511	0.029	0.033	Reflects cost of care packages in 2013/14.	
Other Services for Adults variances (aggregate)	4.154	3.942	(0.212)	(0.208)	Various minor variances.	Continue to review but not expected to be recurrent.
Subtotal:	44.485	43.072	(1.413)	(1.434)		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Development & Resources						
Vacancy Control	(0.100)	0.000	0.100	0.100		Realignment of vacant posts
Business Systems & Financial Assessments	1.084	1.015	(0.069)	(0.069)	Underspend on IT software and hardware, stationery and unbudgeted Supporting People grant income	
Other Development & Resources variances (aggregate)	0.644	0.623	(0.021)	(0.018)	Various minor variances.	Continue to review but not expected to be recurrent.
Subtotal:	1.628	1.638	0.010	0.013		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Services for Children	1.977	2.361	0.384	0.384	The overspend is mainly as a result of an increase in the number of foster care placements within the service. It is also due to the increasing number of court orders for Residence and Special Guardianship orders which invariably attract an ongoing allowance for the carers.	A review of the Family Placement Team has been undertaken the outcome of which is being considered and will inform future planning and possible efficiencies.
Family Placement (Children's Services)						
Youth Offending Team (Children's Services)	0.334	0.277	(0.057)	(0.057)	The underspend within this area is mostly due to vacant posts.	One-off.
Professional Support (Children's Services)	5.496	5.690	0.194	0.194	Additional numbers of leaving care clients resulting in higher total placement costs.	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Out of County Pooled Budget (Children's Services)	3.178	3.737	0.559	0.577	Costs reflect existing placements up until March 2014, and include transfer of costs for one client who was previously accounted for within the leaving care service.	The focus of high cost placements is now a North Wales project and will continued to be reviewed.
Other Services for Children variances (aggregate)	1.159	1.207	0.048	0.052	Various minor variances.	Continue to review but not expected to be recurrent.
Subtotal:	12.144	13.272	1.128	1.150		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Housing Services						
Homelessness Accommodation (Housing Services)	0.360	0.147	(0.213)	(0.213)	Variance is due to improvements in the service where methods have been put in place to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation. Quay House project has been delayed until 2014/15.	Keep under review. Variance is due to improvements in the service where methods have been put in place to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.
Accommodation Support Team (Housing Services)	1.106	1.101	(0.005)	(0.005)	Service recently undergone a restructure now fully reflected within projection.	Restructure now implemented.
Other variances (aggregate)	0.280	0.217	(0.063)	(0.063)	Various minor variances.	Continue to review but not expected to be recurrent.
Subtotal:	1.746	1.465	(0.281)	(0.281)		
Total :	60.003	59.447	(0.556)	(0.552)		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 12 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Assets & Transportation	5.139	4.994	(0.145)	(0.143)		
Industrial Units	(1.241)	(1.264)	(0.023)	(0.023)	Estimated net income shortfalls across the Industrial Estate portfolio have been offset by the Wales Audit Office recommendation, that a provision for income relating to Deeside Power of £200k due in May 2014, should now be made in 2013/14. The actual income figure was not received until April 2014 and this is £65k less than projected due to reducing energy generation at the plant.	
Property Holdings	0.083	0.056	(0.027)	(0.026)	Lower than anticipated NDR charges	Review of site budgets necessary in line with asset management programme
Property Asset & Development	0.528	0.430	(0.098)	(0.098)	Net Vacancy Savings	
Highways Development Control & Regulatory Services	0.813	0.876	0.063	0.063	Lower than anticipated levels of income for FPN's (based on improving standards of repair by utility companies) & road closures. A commitment of £60k is included as a provision for a potential claim. The improving position at Period 12 is due to additional staff recharge income and lower than anticipated design fee recharges.	
Transportation	1.469	1.410	(0.059)	(0.059)	Bus Subsidy payments to Bus Operators that have reduced due to re-negotiated contract prices.	
Aggregate of other Variances	3.487	3.486	(0.001)	0.000		

Service		Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 12 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Planning		1.717	1.678	(0.039)	(0.039)		
	Planning Control	0.363	0.356	(0.007)	(0.007)	Minor improvement on planning fee income at Period 12.	
Public Protection	Aggregate of other Variances	1.354	1.322	(0.032)	(0.032)	Net Vacancy Savings and staff recharge income for specialist planning advice to neighbouring authorities.	
		3.465	3.389	(0.076)	(0.076)		
	Community Protection	1.243	1.181	(0.062)	(0.062)	Includes a Court Costs award following the successful prosecution of Talacre Park Holiday Park by the Health & Safety Enforcement Team.	
Regeneration	Aggregate of other Variances	2.222	2.208	(0.014)	(0.014)	Net Vacancy Savings	
		0.705	0.732	0.027	0.027		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Period 12 (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Streetscene	20.005	20.311	0.306	0.306		
Waste Disposal & Waste Collection	9.706	10.082	0.376	0.376	Plastic Recycling prices reduced by £100 per tonne between July and September resulting in an estimated income reduction of £50k. Staff backfilling costs as a result of the on-going investigation within waste.	
Winter Maintenance	0.999	0.919	(0.080)	(0.080)	The Sustainable Waste Management Grant (SWMG) has been reduced in-year by up to 5% resulting in a funding shortfall of at least £150k Due to operational issues experienced with the leachate treatment plant, income will be affected slightly due to reduced capacity.	Consider impact on MTFP going forward
Aggregate of other Variances	9.300	9.310	0.010	0.010	Planned winter maintenance turnouts matched an average winter. However, there were no significant snow events so this has resulted in reduced costs and less Rock Salt being required than previous projections indicated. Increased cost of winter flooding events	
Management Support & Performance	1.076	1.046	(0.030)	(0.030)		
Management Support & Performance	1.076	1.046	(0.030)	(0.030)	Net Vacancy Savings ahead of service review implementation and reduced commitments on supplies and services budgets.	
Total :	32.107	32.150	0.043	0.045		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Culture & Leisure	6.363	6.643	0.280	0.279	<p>School Library Service (£0.099m saving) Following an agreement at DMT, to mitigate the Directorate overspend and to contribute towards the value for money programme, a number of measures will be taken to reduce expenditure in the School Library Service.</p> <p>Libraries, Culture & Heritage (£0.047m saving) Minor variances</p> <p>Leisure Services (£0.426m pressure) A pressure of £0.026m relates to Swim Flintshire, this programme ceased in August 2013. A saving of £0.145m relates to reduced salary costs across centres. £0.363m relates to pressures on income across centres. Pressures of £0.115m relate to premises costs. The remaining £0.067m relates to minor variances.</p>	
Inclusion Services & Special Schools	13.331	13.412	0.081	0.080	<p>Inclusion Services & Special Schools (£0.082m pressure) £0.087m relates to existing Out of County placements. Savings of £0.005m relate to Inclusion & Behaviour Support.</p>	
Primary School Services	43.723	43.549	(0.174)	(0.174)	<p>Primary School Services (£0.174m saving) £0.030m relates to controls on expenditure on supplies and services budgets. £0.141m relates to savings on 3 year old placements in maintained and non maintained settings in the Early Entitlement budget. £0.005m relates to additional regional costs for Welsh in Education. £0.008m relates to minor savings on School SLA income.</p>	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Secondary School Services	37.725	37.725	0.000	0.003		
Development & Resources	12.310	12.046	(0.264)	(0.264)	<p>Schools ICT (£0.154m saving) In an effort to reduce the Directorate overspend and to contribute towards the value for money programme, DMT have made the decision to place a hold on uncommitted expenditure in Schools ICT.</p> <p>Service Units (£0.019m saving) Pressures of £0.102m on Pupil Support (Free School Meals, School Trips and Music Remissions) have been offset by estimated savings on Mobile Classrooms (£0.080m), Insurance (£0.035m) and other minor variances of £0.006m.</p> <p>Facilities Services (£0.042m saving) Minor Variances</p> <p>Management & Business Support (£0.049m saving) £0.006m relates to Governor Training, £0.013m to the directorate training budget, £0.014m relates to printing, stationery and other office expenditure. The remaining £0.016m relates to other minor variances (subscriptions, telephones etc.).</p>	
Total :	113.452	113.375	(0.077)	(0.076)		

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Chief Executive	2.303	2.168	(0.135)	(0.135)	£0.017m Corporate voluntary sector contribution to Dangerpoint (£0.094m) Vacancy savings (£0.020m) Corporate Communications efficiencies including Consultation and Public Relations (£0.013m) Community Strategy efficiency (£0.024m) use of LSB Grant to offset in year costs (£0.001m) minor variances	
Finance	14.225	12.967	(1.258)	(1.259)	(£0.201m) net vacancy savings on the service following in year realignment of budget. (£1.057m) efficiency due to a number of factors including a reduced shortfall in Council Tax Reduction Scheme funding and additional surplus on Council Tax Collection Fund and Housing Benefits Subsidy (including overpayments and Discretionary Housing Payments).	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Legal & Democratic Services	3.142	2.996	(0.146)	(0.146)	(£0.013m) net Vacancy savings including the use of Agency/Locums and recharges (£0.036m) Members Services underspend (£0.091m) Members Allowances underspend (inc. training, travel etc.) (£0.012m) reduced Legal Subscriptions expenditure £0.015m reduced Staff recharge for Legal Services (£0.009m) minor variances	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Central Loans & Investment Account	15.283	14.787	(0.496)	(0.495)	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (-£0.060m), impact of change in the capital programme. Internal Interest £0.025m overspend Committed sums higher than expected. Debt management (-£0.012m, staff recharges lower than expected. Sale of claims of Landsbanki (-£0.100m) underspend. Investment Income (-£0.061m) cash balances higher than projected. Other income (-£0.020m) higher than expected.	Continue to monitor in line with Treasury Management Strategy.
Coroners	0.193	0.263	0.070	0.070	Quarter 4 Coroners recharge was an estimated accrual based on data received from Denbighshire County Council, this invoice has now been received resulting in a £0.015m variance	Regular monitoring with Denbighshire County Council undertaken on in year spend
Centrally Held Provisions	3.109	1.993	(1.116)	(1.116)	Net budget adjustments of (£0.680m) as approved in the Month 3 report (Community Services £1.185m, Leisure Management (-£0.505m) Over recovery of corporate windfall income (£0.226m) (First Steps Imp Package) Additional income for Unity House Ewloe (-£0.134m). Other minor variances (£0.024m).	Budgets are considered as part of 2014/15 Council Budget
Central Service Recharges	(1.590)	(1.474)	0.116	0.346	Additional income, pension fund support recharge.	Subject to an overall review of Support Services
Former Euticals Ltd - Sandycroft site	0.000	0.288	0.288	0.288	Costs have been revised for 2013/14.	Ongoing monthly monitoring

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Mass Matrix Contract	(0.315)	(0.192)	0.123	0.123	A review of the rebate on the Matrix Contract has been undertaken. Agency usage has decreased in 2013/4 and the variance projection reflects the up to date position.	Further analysis to be undertaken to consider the impact in 2014/15
Flintshire Futures	(0.051)	0.033	0.084	0.084	Under achievement of efficiency within the Invest to Change programme.	Continued challenge of spend categories will support further efficiencies in 2014/15.
Other variances - aggregate	10.094	9.923	(0.171)	(0.173)	Reduced Carbon Commitment (£-0.045m). Credit for monies held with insurance (-0.021m). Increased Misc Write Offs (-0.034m). Residual balance of (£-0.027m) for Regional Transformation Fund. Post levy receipt of (-0.025m) for MMI from four ex Clwyd constituent Authorities. Other minor variances (-£0.019m).	
Total :	26.723	25.621	(1.102)	(0.873)		

APPENDIX 7

Movements on Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves

	£m	£m
Total Reserves as at 1 April 2013	9.540	
Less - Base Level (inclusive of total increase of £0.270m agreed as part of the 2013/14 budget)	(5.834)	
Total Reserves above base level		3.706
Less - Amount approved by Council on 1 st March for funding of one-off costs in the 2013/14 budget proposals		(0.297)
Less - Amount approved by Cabinet on 16 th July for reinstatement of funding within the Winter Maintenance reserve following utilisation of funding during 2012/13 (late March severe weather event)		(0.250)
Amount available for delegation to Cabinet		3.159
Add underspend as at 31 st March 2014		3.387
Less - Actual severe weather recovery costs		(0.473)
Less – contribution to termination benefits relating to workforce efficiencies – Senior Management Phase 1.		(0.745)
Total Contingency Reserve as at 31st March 2014		5.328

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
HRA Subsidy	6.167	6.328	0.161	0.189	Capital Financing charges amended after budget rounds completed. Further amendments to Capital figures for inclusion in 2nd HRAS return. Under payment on 2012/13 of £0.031m calculated on Advance Final return.	
Rents	(26.946)	(27.182)	(0.236)	(0.202)	Actual bad debt provision saving of £0.226m.	
Repairs and Maintenance	8.393	8.754	0.361	0.255	<p>£0.201m net under spend variance on salaries due to long term vacancies and recruitment freeze in place.</p> <p>£0.159m Increase in the anticipated major works being undertaken in voids resulting in a reduction in the revenue spend projections from previous month.</p> <p>Subcontractor overspend of £0.437m due to adverse weather conditions in March 2013, recent high wind damage in February 2014 and major works on void properties.</p> <p>£0.070m variance is based on the carry forward request for PDA costs which will be purchased in 2014/15.</p>	<p>Housing Asset Management Team is working closely with Travis Perkins on price reductions due to the volume of materials being purchased through the partnership arrangement.</p> <p>An in-house kitchen team is being created to undertake kitchen installations in void properties which will reduce the level of subcontractor spend in this area.</p>

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Finance & Support	2.656	2.197	(0.459)	(0.243)	<p>Support Recharges reflected at 2012/13 actuals, saving £0.106m. Information on 2013/14 has been requested.</p> <p>Pension Fund Strain costs £0.080m lower than anticipated creating saving.</p> <p>Insurance claim non-reimbursement reviewed and reflected at 2012/13 figures, saving £0.034m</p> <p>Variance is based on the carry forward requests totalling £0.125m which are to be actioned in 2014/15</p> <p>£0.110m due to software costs not materialising in 2013/14 but will be purchased in 2014/15.</p> <p>£0.015m due to Maissonette budget not being fully spent in year.</p>	

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Variance Last Month (£m)	Cause of Variance	Action Required
Housing Estates	1.852	1.705	(0.147)	(0.181)	Procurement reimbursement for screening received in amount of £0.058m. Void clearance recharges generating a further £0.017m income. Water commission generated a further £0.034m of income due to early bird discount scheme which offsets the £0.055m variance on the water bill. Cancellation of cleaning contract saving £0.005m on maisonette blocks. Salary savings of £0.067m over all areas.	
Other variances (aggregate)	8.375	8.465	0.091	0.011		
Total :	0.497	0.268	(0.229)	(0.171)		

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Fees & Charges (APPENDIX 7a)					
<i>Community Services</i>					
Residential Charging - Increased Income From Demand	0.100	✓			
Mental Health Service Users	0.018	✓			
TOTAL	0.118				
Service Change (APPENDIX 7b)					
<i>Community Services</i>					
Reablement in the level of extra care	0.100	✓			
Preserved Rights - reduced activity levels	0.053	✓			
External Funding for Existing Post - Children's Services	0.043	✓			
Family Placement Team - revision of existing practices	0.040	✓			
Early Retirement - Non replacement of staff - CSA	0.015	✓			
General Office Administration Review	0.021	✓			
Housing Efficiency Savings	0.028	✓			
Homelessness - Timing of presentations	0.106	✓			

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Youth Justice - Appropriate adult service	0.010	✓			
Legal Fees - Use of solicitors / barristers	0.010	✓			
Children's Services - Transport costs efficiency	0.015	✓			
Children's Services - FAST team budget reduction	0.010				The FAST team is currently showing an overspend of £0.027.
Preventative foster care service - day care	0.005	✓			
TOTAL	0.456				
Procurement (APPENDIX 7c)					
<i>Community Services</i>					
PARIS - post implementation expenditure review	0.030	✓			
Housing Services - Supplies and Services	0.003	✓			
Social Care - Supplies and Services	0.075	✓			
Procurement Hub - regional procurement of high cost low volume placements	0.020	✓			

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position				Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	EFFICIENCY NOT ACHIEVABLE	
Children's Services - out of county placements - improved procurement practice	0.533	✓				As at month 3 this budget was showing an underspend of £(0.344). However due to change in service user circumstances this budget is now showing an overspend of £0.432
Transport Review - revised contracts	0.025	✓				
TOTAL	0.686					
Organisational Design (APPENDIX 7d)						
<i>Community Services</i>						
Review of Supported Living Service	0.350				✓	The efficiency is fully achievable from 2014/15, as a result of implementation of the new structure from April 2014. An extensive consultation achieved a successful outcome, and retention of staff goodwill going forward. Some savings have been made as a result of right sizing.
Service Review of Warden Service	0.018	✓				
Children's Services - Removal of one team manager post	0.040	✓				
Development and Resources - Rationalisation of Management Team	0.050	✓				
TOTAL	0.458					

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Fees & Charges (APPENDIX 7a)					
<i>Environment</i>					
Agricultural Estate rentals	0.008	✓			Agricultural Estates currently reporting a surplus income position.
Public Protection - increase to market rates	0.025	✓			Fees for both Licensing and Bereavement Services were increased from 1st June 2013
Markets Service - increased lettable space	0.019		✓		Markets currently reporting a surplus income position.
Traffic Regulation order Notices	0.013		✓		Budget Reduction met from within Highways Policy Budget
Streetscene - leachate processing	0.075			✓	It is anticipated that the new income target will be under recovered by £.15k due to capacity issues at the leachate treatment plant.
TOTAL	0.140				
Service Change (APPENDIX 7b)					
<i>Environment</i>					
Street Lighting - non-residential areas post midnight turn-off	0.050		✓		The new Street Lighting policy has been adopted and this efficiency will be achieved in full
Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) -rephasing of full implementation	0.225		✓		Previous approved pressure that was not required in 2013/14 and 2014/15 due to Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI)

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position				Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	EFFICIENCY NOT ACHIEVABLE	
Public Conveniences - revisit of strategy	0.050			✓		Tower Gardens, Holywell didn't close until 30th April 2013 and Cilcain and Caerwys have been further delayed with ongoing consultation necessary and under achievement on the efficiency by £21k is likely.
Streetscene - implementation of Part III agreement	0.300				✓	The achievement of this efficiency is dependant on the implementation of Single Status so is anticipated to be achieved in 2014/15. The 2013/14 shortfall is being met from the Single Status reserve.
Waste Services - vehicle savings from full roll out of Saturday collection	0.140				✓	The achievement of this efficiency is dependant on the implementation of Single Status so is anticipated to be achieved in 2014/15. The 2013/14 shortfall is being met from the Single Status reserve.
Business Development team - agile working	0.004	✓				Budget Monitoring Position at Period 4 indicates achievement of this efficiency.
Staff travel - reduced mileage payments	0.003	✓				Budget Monitoring Position at Period 4 indicates achievement of this efficiency.
Directorate Support & Performance - Supplies and Stationery - Streamline current processes	0.008	✓				Budget Monitoring Position at Period 4 indicates achievement of this efficiency.
TOTAL	0.780					
Procurement (APPENDIX 7c)						
<i>Environment</i>						
Waste Services - Tender Transport arrangements for waste disposal	0.050		✓			New Transport arrangements have been awarded as part of a tender process and are now in place.
Transportation Services - Review of subsidised Bus Service Contracts and re-tender	0.036		✓			Efficiency absorbed within service budget

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position				Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	EFFICIENCY NOT ACHIEVABLE	
Reduction in use of consultants	0.013		✓			Efficiency absorbed within service budget
Reduction in influenceable spend	0.025		✓			Efficiency absorbed within service budget
Streamline current processes within Directorate Support	0.020		✓			Efficiency absorbed within service budget
TOTAL	0.144					
Organisational Design (APPENDIX 7d)						
<i>Environment</i>						
Review Management Recharge to the Communities First Programme	0.020	✓				It is anticipated that this will be achieved as part of the Communities First Grant Claim for 2013/14
TOTAL	0.020					
Other Efficiencies (APPENDIX 7e)						
<i>Environment</i>						
Agricultural Estates - balance not required	0.025	✓				Specific Directorate Balance in the Environment Balance Sheet
Licensing / Health & Safety - balance not required	0.025	✓				Specific Directorate Balance in the Environment Balance Sheet
TOTAL	0.050					

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Fees & Charges (APPENDIX 7a)					
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>					
Library Service - Fines	0.001	✓			
Library - Hire charges increase	0.001	✓			
Leisure Services - increased charges	0.175			✓	Tariffs were increased on the 1st January as agreed but as income targets are not expected to be met, the efficiency is also not likely to be fully achieved. Estimated amount achievable £0.162m.
Review of post 16 distance limit	0.030			✓	The amendment to the proposal to continue to provide transport to Colleg Cambria means that only £0.010m of the efficiency can be achieved. Work is ongoing to confirm this. However, we do not anticipate a pressure on the Transport budget at this time.
TOTAL	0.207				
Service Change (APPENDIX 7b)					
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>					
Operational efficiencies	0.025	✓			
Youth Service - reduction of senior area workers	0.032	✓			The budget for area workers had previously been reduced. This efficiency created a budget faw which has been addressed as part of the Youth Strategy by retaining part of the £0.050m below on a recurring basis.

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further Information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVED IN PART	
Youth Service - term time only contracts	0.026			✓	This change is being introduced as part of the Youth Strategy and has not yet been implemented though negotiations have started.
Youth Service - Service reconfiguration	0.012	✓			
Youth Service - Building costs savings	0.011	✓			
Youth Service - Building rationalisation	0.005	✓			
Youth Service - Holding back £50k (CC 1/3/13)	(0.050)	✓			This additional contribution is no longer required during 2013/14.
Facilities - Management / Central Office - structure review	0.015	✓			
Facilities - County Hall revised opening hours - reduced energy / overtime costs	0.025				✓ Although we do not expect a pressure on the Facilities budget this year, the decision to revise the County Hall opening hours has not yet been made.
LL ICT - Interim Service review - post reduction	0.025				✓ The Schools ICT Service Review has now been combined with the Corporate ICT Review. We do not anticipate a pressure on the schools ICT budget at this time.
Leisure Services - removal of swimming subsidy	0.023	✓			
Directorate Management Team Restructure	0.043	✓			
TOTAL	0.192				

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Procurement (APPENDIX 7c)					
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>					
Reduction of Postage within the Library Service	0.001	✓			
Out of County - Improved procurement through framework agreements and monitoring of placements.	0.385	✓			
School Transport Service - Operational efficiencies	0.080	✓			
TOTAL	0.466				

Organisational Design (APPENDIX 7d)					
<i>Lifelong Learning</i>					
Libraries - Flexible retirement	0.015	✓			
Libraries - Library Service Review	0.037	✓			
TOTAL	0.052				

Other Efficiencies (APPENDIX 7e)					
<i>Demographic Change in Schools (pupil numbers)</i>					
Demographic Change in Schools (pupil numbers)	0.132	✓			
TOTAL	0.132				

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Fees & Charges (APPENDIX 7a)					
<i>FINANCE - Corporate Services</i>					
Revenues - increased number of Council Tax fines	0.027			✓	
<i>ICT & CUSTOMER SERVICES - Corporate Services</i>					
Registrars - increased fees	0.019	✓			
Network Services - income from hosting PSBA equipment	0.004	✓			
<i>LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC - Corporate Services</i>					
External Fees - conveyancing / S106 agreements	0.015	✓			
TOTAL	0.065				
Service Change (APPENDIX 7b)					
<i>Chief Executive - Corporate Services</i>					
Corporate Comms - reduced workforce bulletins	0.003	✓			
<i>HR & OD - Corporate Services</i>					
CRB checks - review of options	0.035	✓			
<i>LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC - Corporate Services</i>					
Democratic Services - reduced paper usage	0.010	✓			
Members Allowances (Basic Allowance) - no inflationary increase	0.010	✓			
Members Allowances - Special Responsibility Allowances - reduction of number allocated	0.070	✓			
Members Allowances - NI contributions reduction linked to reduced number of Special Responsibility allowances	0.010	✓			
TOTAL	0.138				

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Procurement (APPENDIX 7c)					
<i>Chief Executive - Corporate Services</i>					
Employee / Residents Consultations - reduction in number	0.003	✓			
Supplies and Services	0.010	✓			
Joint Working - costs reduction	0.002	✓			
Alterations / Improvements reductions - future agile working	0.002	✓			
Employee Safety Measures - reduced demand on budget	0.010	✓			
Conferences/Seminars/Lectures - reduced attendance	0.001	✓			
ICT & CUSTOMER SERVICES - Corporate Services					
Training Budget - Procurement via new solutions	0.001	✓			
Reduced maintenance costs due to new security equipment	0.025	✓			
Networking Hardware - reduced procurement	0.002	✓			
ICT Cabling - reduction enabled by IPT solution	0.002	✓			
Leasing - budget adjustment	0.006	✓			
Software Licensing - Microsoft licences procured through other agreements	0.010	✓			
Hardware Maintenance - letting of MFD contracts	0.001	✓			

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Reduce influencable spend by 3%	0.004	✓			
Reduced ICT Expenditure	0.003	✓			
Rationalisation of third party software costs	0.013			✓	
Avoidance of inflationary rises - software maintenance costs	0.020			✓	
Reduced licence costs - via renegotiation	0.018	✓			
Supplies and Services	0.061	✓			
Training budget reduction - build around training solutions	0.001	✓			
Alterations & Improvements - Datacentres	0.004	✓			
Other Consumables - reduction in expenditure	0.001	✓			
Hardware Maintenance - new technology with warranty	0.015	✓			
Listing Paper - More use of electronic means	0.002	✓			
Enterprise Servers - hardware	0.003	✓			
Services work and Consultancy	0.004	✓			
Supplies & Services	0.009	✓			
FINANCE - Corporate Services					

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further Information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Supplies & Services	0.012	✓			
TOTAL	0.245				
Organisational Design (APPENDIX 7d)					
<i>Chief Executive - Corporate Services</i>					
Reduction in mileage travelled - Emergency Planning	0.001	✓			
TOTAL	0.001				

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
		EFFICIENCY ALREADY ACHIEVED	EFFICIENCY EXPECTED TO BE ACHIEVED IN FULL	EFFICIENCY ACHIEVABLE IN PART	
Service Change (APPENDIX 7b)					
<i>Central & Corporate Finance</i>					
Cwyd Theatr Cymru - agreed reduction to contribution	0.015	✓			
TOTAL	0.015				
Procurement (APPENDIX 7c)					
<i>Central & Corporate Finance</i>					
Flinshire Futures - E-procurement and Improved processes	0.102	✓			
Flinshire Futures - Internal Fleet Review	0.160	✓			
TOTAL	0.262				
Other Efficiencies (APPENDIX 7e)					
<i>Central & Corporate Finance</i>					
Reduced contingencies - one-off investment costs	0.240	✓			
Reduced contingencies - NDR	0.077	✓			
Reduction in Fire Levy due to formula changes	0.027	✓			
Flinshire Futures Assets Workstream - Facilities Management	0.060				✓

Month 12

Efficiency Description	Budgeted Efficiency (£m)	Current Position			Further information to support current position status or other relevant information
Flintshire Futures - Customer Workstream Contact Centre	0.100	✓			Detailed work being undertaken to assess the timing of efficiency
Flintshire Futures - Customer Workstream face to face customer contact	0.100		✓		Detailed work being undertaken to assess the timing of efficiency
Flintshire Futures - Customer Workstream Channel Shift	0.100	✓			Detailed work being undertaken to assess the timing of efficiency
TOTAL	0.704				

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CORPORATE FINANCE MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Members with the first available revenue budget monitoring information for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2014/15.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council Fund budget and the HRA budget for 2014/15 were agreed by Council on 18 February 2014.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 As in previous years, during the early part of the 2014/15 financial year Corporate Finance resources have been dedicated to the closure of the accounts for 2013/14 to ensure that the statutory deadline for completion of the draft statement of accounts by the end of June is achieved. The draft Statement of Accounts is to be presented to the Audit Committee on 16 July and the 2013/14 revenue final outturn report is included on the agenda for this meeting.

3.02 Early reporting of the progress of the annual budget and a forecast for the remainder of the year is given a secondary priority until this key task is completed, although Service Managers and Corporate Finance continue to liaise with regard to any early changes in demand, particularly in known volatile service areas. In addition, in the first couple of months of a new financial year it is more difficult to rely on trends around service demand for forecasting purposes.

3.03 Due to the above, this first budget monitoring report of the year does not provide the level of detail which follows from month three onwards but does highlight any significant budget risks at this very early stage of the year.

2014/15 Emerging Issues and Risks

- 3.04 The following areas have been identified as potential areas of risk at this early point in the year.

Out of County Placements

- 3.05 Combined Out of County costs in Social Care and Health and Education and Youth are currently projected to show a negative variance against budget in the region of £0.227m. Out of County Placements are in their nature volatile areas to manage. They are demand led and costs are dependent on service user need, many of these placements are expensive given the severity of need. The numbers of these young people change throughout the year and any change can significantly affect projected expenditure.
- 3.06 Issues affecting the ability to obtain recoupment and grant income to offset costs for both Out of County and Inclusion services have reduced the pressure on this service in 2013/14, however we are not guaranteed the same level of income in 2014/15. Therefore this remains a risk.

Deprivation of Liberty Assessments (DoLS)

- 3.07 In Social Care and Health there is potential financial pressure in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Assessments (DoLS) (£0.270m) as a result of a recent Supreme Court judgment where we are required to carry out DoLS assessments for a significant number of our current clients and new clients.

Professional Support (Leaving Care)

- 3.08 Also in Social Care and Health there is an existing pressure within Professional Support relating to Leaving Care (CYAST) mainly as a result of ongoing impacts of the Southwark case. The latest estimate of the level of overspend is £0.120m.

Single Status

- 3.09 As reported in the February report the 2014/15 budget assumed an implementation date of 1st April 2014 for Single Status. The actual implementation date of 1st June will result in some efficiencies not being able to be achieved for the first two months of the year. The shortfall will be met from the Single Status/Equal Pay reserve which is consistent with the treatment in previous years.

Former Euticals Site

- 3.10 In 2013, the Council intervened, along with its strategic partners in relation to the former chemical plant in Sandycroft (Euticals Ltd). Expenditure in 2013/14 was £0.288m. No government financial assistance was made available to the Council, therefore it was agreed with Crown Estates to transfer the abandoned site to the Council at a nominal value so that the council could take either responsibility to complete the clearance of the site and recoup most, or all of the costs

from its eventual sale. Tenders are shortly to be invited for the full decommissioning, decontamination and clearance of the site (several functions have already been decommissioned in partnership with Natural Resources Wales) and the position will be reported upon in future monitoring reports. This is a highly specialised industry with few available qualified contractors. Once the full cost of site decommissioning is known through the receipt of tenders then the full cost of managing through to close this public health risk project will be known. Depending on the final cost the Council may need to re-approach Welsh Government for assistance.

Monitoring of Efficiencies

3.11 Corporate and Functional Efficiencies

The 2014/15 budgets include £8.8m of efficiencies relating to Corporate Value for Money (VFM) on Procurement and Back to Basics (£1.3m) and specific Functional VFM efficiencies (£7.5m). These are being monitored closely on a risk based approach and current information indicates that there is one area flagged as red at this stage of the year which has a value of £0.070m (delegation of teaching assistant support to schools) which is due to delays in reaching an agreement with schools. Implementation is now likely to take place in April 2015.

3.12 Workforce Efficiencies

Workforce Efficiencies of £3.1m are included within the 2014/15 budget. A Voluntary Redundancy Programme commenced early in the year which invited invitations for employees to apply. As a result of this, efficiencies totalling approximately 40% of the target have been identified to date in the first phase. Further work is now underway to consider and action the release of a number of deferred VR applications from the earlier programme, to develop proposals for the next phase of the Management Review and to run a further phase of the Voluntary Redundancy Programme.

3.13 The Month 3 report will include a detailed appendix on all efficiencies which will provide information on specific areas in relation to their full or partial achievement.

Housing Revenue Account

3.14 There are no significant variations identified at this stage within the Housing Revenue Account.

4.00 UNEARMARKED RESERVES

4.01 The final level of Council Fund Contingency Reserve brought forward into 2014/15 was £5.328m as detailed in the 2013/14 outturn report elsewhere on this agenda (subject to Audit).

4.02 As referred to in 5.02 of the outturn report, a provision for termination benefits relating to phase 1 of the Senior Management Review had to be made in 2013/14 in order to comply with IAS 19. As a budget provision has been made in 2014/15 for this, it will be repaid to the contingency reserve thus increasing it to £6.073m (subject to final figures being agreed). However, this will be offset by projected costs associated with the Organisational Change and Redesign Programme totalling £0.696m which will be incurred in 2014/15 and have been approved via delegated powers. They include essential expenditure in relation to the continuation of various Programme costs and also include costs associated with office relocation.

4.03 When the 2014/15 budget was set it was estimated that an amount of £3.7m would be available as a contribution to the Investment Strategy.

4.04 As detailed in the Final Outturn report it is recommended that the use of the additional Contingency Reserve of £1.677m is held and considered for any additional in-year and future investment in change in the context of the MTFP.

5.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.01 Cabinet is recommended to note the report.

6.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.01 As set out in the report.

7.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

7.01 None directly as a result of this report.

8.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.01 None directly as a result of this report.

9.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.01 None directly as a result of this report.

10.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

10.01 None directly as a result of this report.

11.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

11.01 None directly as a result of this report.

12.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

12.01 None directly as a result of this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CORPORATE FINANCE MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS - ACTUAL 2013/14**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Members with 2013/14 (actual) Prudential Indicator (PI) figures as required under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The background to this item is provided in the report to Cabinet 18th February 2014 (subject: Prudential Indicators 2014/15 to 2016/17). The Prudential Code has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as a professional code of practice to support local authorities in determining their programmes for capital investments in fixed assets. Local authorities are required by Regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out their duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.

2.02 The framework established by the Prudential Code is intended to support local strategic planning, local asset management planning and proper option appraisal. The objectives of the Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice; the 2013/14 capital programme was prepared on this basis – affordable in terms of implications for Council Tax and housing rents, prudent and sustainable in terms of implications for external borrowing.

2.03 The Prudential Code sets out the indicators that must be used and the factors that must be taken into account in preparing such.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 General

3.01.1 Actual (2013/14) PI's have now been calculated in respect of the following:

- Capital expenditure
- Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream
- Incremental impact of capital investment
- Capital Financing Requirement
- Authorised Limit for External Debt

3.02 Capital expenditure

3.02.1 The PI's for capital expenditure are based on the Council's capital programme (that takes into account the Council's asset management and capital investment strategies), and are supplemented (for capital accounting purposes) by the value of finance leases held. The capital expenditure totals are the starting point for the calculation of the PI's and essentially provide the base financial data from which all other indicators follow.

3.02.2 Prior year (2012/13) actuals and 2013/14 estimate totals are included for information purposes, together with forward totals for 2014/15 (as previously reported in the report of 18th February 2014).

3.02.3 Actual 2013/14 capital expenditure for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is £37.975m as shown in the table below.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Estimate	Actual	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Fund	29.080	29.908	25.101	20.970
Housing Revenue Account	10.742	10.992	12.874	12.381
Total	39.822	40.900	37.975	33.351

3.02.4 Capital expenditure and related funding issues are part of the agenda for meetings of the Corporate Asset Management Group (CAMG). Detailed analysis and commentary regarding 2013/14 actual expenditure is provided in the capital outturn report which is also on this agenda.

3.03 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

3.03.1 The actual ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream for 2013/14 is as follows:

RATIO OF FINANCING COSTS TO NET REVENUE STREAM				
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Estimate	Actual	Estimate
	%	%	%	%
Council Fund	5.660%	5.489%	5.694%	6.004%
Housing Revenue Account	8.238%	7.535%	6.354%	6.755%

3.03.2 The HRA net revenue stream is the amount to be met from Welsh Government grants and from rentpayers, and the Council Fund equivalent is the amount to be met from Welsh Government grants and local taxpayers. The HRA ratio continues to fall in line with reducing capital financing costs attributable to long term debt outstanding, consequent to the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance in Wales in 2004, from which point all new borrowing relates to the Council Fund only.

3.04 Incremental impact of capital investment

3.04.1 The incremental impact of capital investment on the Council Tax reflects planned unsupported (prudential) borrowing charges. During 2013/14 £0.732m of charges were incurred. The table below indicates that the impact of this would be a £12.14p increase in Council Tax levels, however these charges are funded from savings elsewhere within the Council Fund and so the actual effect on Council Tax levels is nil in 2013/14.

ESTIMATED INCREMENTAL IMPACT OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT				
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Estimate	Actual	Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Council Fund	Nil	23.38	12.14	11.86
Housing Revenue Account	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

3.05 Capital Financing Requirement

3.05.1 The actual (average) capital financing requirement for 2013/14 is £185.677m, being the measure of the Council's underlying need to finance capital expenditure by borrowing or other long term liabilities during the year; the reducing HRA debt outstanding total as referred in section 3.03.2 above is evidenced in the table below:

CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT				
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Estimate	Actual	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Fund	155.527	158.454	160.305	166.707
Housing Revenue Account	26.312	25.449	25.373	24.701
Total	181.839	183.903	185.677	191.407

3.06 Authorised Limit for External Debt

3.06.1 Actual external debt for 2013/14 was £179.665m, with separately identified limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities such as finance leases:-

AUTHORISED LIMIT FOR EXTERNAL DEBT				
	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14	2014/15
	Actual	Estimate	Actual	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m
All Borrowing (Cap/Rev)	172.113	202.600	172.113	257.300
Other Long Term Liabilities	8.132	15.600	7.552	22.100
Total	180.245	218.200	179.665	279.400

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet is requested to note and approve the report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None; the financial information provided is retrospective.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None.

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

Final Accounts working papers 2013/14
Various Welsh Government and CIPFA papers

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY 15TH JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE)**

SUBJECT: **ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR THE RECOVERY OF COUNCIL TAX AND NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To advise Cabinet on options and seek approval for future Enforcement Agent action, following the approval of the taking control of goods regulations.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 On 30th July 2013 Parliament approved the Taking Control of Goods Regulations, which were enacted on 6th April 2014, which included the re-designation of Bailiffs as Enforcement Agents (EA's).

2.02 On 9th January 2014 the new fee structure was approved by Parliament and set significant increases on the current fees structure. As the new fee structure is statutory all EA's will be required to comply with these charges which will become payable on the commencement of Bailiff action.

2.03 Legislation relating to the collection of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR), grants powers to use Bailiffs EA's as part of the recovery process once a Liability Order has been granted. In seeking to recover monies owed to the Council, the Revenues Department does examine and implement all other recovery options available before the use of EA's. However, in the previous 12 months it has been necessary to refer 1,745 Council tax and NNDR cases to Bailiffs; this has resulted in £900k (£700k Council Tax and £200k NNDR) of unpaid revenues being collected and paid to Flintshire.

2.04 Flintshire collection rates for Council Tax in 2013/14 were the joint highest in Wales at 97.9% an improved collection of 0.1%, with NNDR being the second highest in Wales at 98.5%

2.05 The Authority has agreed a Fair Debt Policy which has been designed in collaboration with the 3rd sector debt advice agencies to ensure an equitable and positive approach to supporting payment to the Authority.

2.06 Council Tax provides 20% of the income to the Authority which supports the delivery of services and contributes to the calculation of the Tax base for budget setting purposes. NNDR is collected on behalf of Welsh Government and is re-distributed to Council's as part of the annual financial settlement. EA's are an integral part of the Council Tax and NNDR enforcement procedures to maximise the collection rate for both forms of income.

2.07 In addition to Council Tax and NNDR, the use of EA's is also available for the collection of Commercial and Domestic rents, and car parking charges, however the new charging structure for parking will effectively reduce the charges, which under the previous fee structure were criticised as excessive. The collection of Sundry Debts is by collecting agents who are not affected by the changes to the fee structures, the use of EA's is restricted to EA's employed by the County Court once a County Court Judgement has been obtained.

2.08 **Comparison of costs payable**

Action	Old fees	New fees
Bailiff receives order	Nil cost	£75
Bailiff visit to property	£39 plus levy charges	£235
Total cost of Bailiff visit	£39	£310
Bailiff removes goods	£90 plus removal and sales cost	£110
Total cost payable if goods are removed	£129 (additional costs could increase fees to £229)	£420

The increases in fees will have a direct impact on those individuals where EA's action is taken, with a significant increase in fees payable. The new fees will increase debts by a minimum of £75 and it is expected that in most cases these fees will increase by £310. Whilst by the reasons vary why people do not pay amounts due to the Council, some can pay and don't, or won't, there are cases where people do experience financial difficulties. This may have been added to through the current economic downturn and welfare reform.

2.09 The WG have confirmed that the Council tax Reduction Scheme will continue to pay 100% of Council tax liability for the next 2 financial years, however this could be reduced in 2017/18, resulting in vulnerable people on passported benefits being liable to pay an element of Council Tax.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The increase in the potential recovery from people on low incomes requires the provision of EA services to be considered within a context of a recovery process to ensure that collection levels are maximised, whilst supporting people to pay. A review of options available show

Option	Impact	Considerations
No Enforcement Agent action	High risk of loss of income, Bailiffs currently collect £900k Per year Once known that Bailiffs would not be instructed an increase in non payment would be expected.	Reduced cash flow / income Increase in arrears levels Increase in bad debt levels Increase in C.Tax levels NNDR Reductions in collection would be reviewed by WG and WAO
Continued use of external Enforcement Agent	Collection would be expected to remain stable but with slight reductions due to the increased amounts which would have to be paid due to increased fees.	The increase in fees could increase the debt payable by at least £70 over current charges, but there would be a total increase of £305 if a Bailiff visited the property.
Increased collection activity prior to Instructing Enforcement Agent	An increased level of recovery activity of 1. Additional letters 2. Telephone debt recovery 3. Home visits Would reduce the number of liabilities sent to the Bailiff.	Prior to the granting of a liability order at least 4 recovery documents are already sent including a summons. Additional budget cost to resource increased activity Powers of collection are reliant on negotiation skills and customers willingness to pay with no further powers available to enforce debt. Bailiffs would still be required in a high number of cases where no contact can be made or of instances of refusal to pay
Introduce internal	Collection would be expected to remain	New service to FCC, requiring additional staffing

Enforcement Agent service	stable but with slight reductions due to the increased amounts which would have to be paid due to increased fees.	<p>resources</p> <p>Budget set up costs plus ongoing staff costs</p> <p>Service would be income generating through fees</p> <p>Limited number of Authorities in UK has internal EA's, Although a number of LA's are actively considering.</p> <p>Although fees are statutory a decision could be made on a case by case basis to reduce fees payable.</p> <p>Reputation risk if EA's are not managed correctly.</p>
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These options confirm that to maintain collections would require the use of either external or internal EA's however this does not address the issue of the new fees structure.

3.02 The new fee structure is statutory, with payments being offset against charges first. Therefore to be able to mitigate charges for people in genuine need, there must be strong policies and links between the EA company and LA management. The current use of EA's is contractual with agreed service levels and standards to protect vulnerable groups however this is dependant on the actions of the EA, which would be mitigated if fully controlled by the establishment of internal EA's

3.03 A review of the effectiveness of In House EA's services shows the theoretical comparison between External and In House EA's with the known advantages / disadvantages for each.

3.03.1 **Advantages of External EA's**

- Performance incentives to keep Council contract
- No staff employment issues for Authority
- No training costs for Authority
- Experienced staff
- Impact on public as not "the Council" collecting debt
- Economies of scale
- Are first point of contact for complaints
- Provide indemnity

- Enforcement of 'Out of County' cases would be better served by external providers.

3.03.2 **Disadvantages of External EA's**

- Customer Care as we are directing public to an external body
- EA's Costs are discharged first, with any shortfall met by the Authority and potential loss of collection
- Loss of control over recovery e.g. speed and flexibility of recovery.
- As an external supplier there is contractual liaison and cost between EA's and Authority
- Limited future Debt management advice will be given to customers.
- Limited ability to identify and signpost vulnerable customers
- EA's resources not readily available as could be working in another client's area.
- Cash collected only paid over weekly.

3.03.3 **Advantages of In House EA's**

- Authority maintain control
- Local knowledge
- Single set of recovery procedures and training aligned to existing 'in-house' service
- Support of Council policies e.g. anti poverty initiatives
- Increased customer care as "one stop shop" recovery service
- EA's can be multi functional and could support other areas of the Council (eg. Collection of former tenancy arrears, enforcement of Civil Parking Debts)
- Improved cash flow, all cash collected is credited to Authority account immediately
- Speed of recovery, problem areas can be targeted immediately
- Although EA's fees are legislative and as such must be charged, these charges can be mitigated dependant on the circumstances of the customer
- The council will benefit from the substantial surplus generated by fees providing the council with an income stream from fees charged by the EA service. to mitigate budget pressures in the future

3.03.4 **Disadvantages of In House EA's**

- Council image "only the Council"
- Limited resources in terms of staffing and funding
- Limited to Flintshire and immediate area
- There is no performance related pay which is a disincentive
- Familiarity once EA's are known
- Recruitment and training costs.

- 3.03.5 In addition to EA's services an in house EA could also be available for
- Tracing of absconders
 - Discount / exemption reviews including Single Person Discount
 - Identification of new occupiers
 - Identification and support of vulnerable people
 - Supporting the recovery of former tenant arrears
 - Supporting the recovery and enforcement of civil parking debts
- This extra service although not direct income generators against budget would be a Corporate benefit.

3.04 The Options for in House Delivery

Collaboration with Denbighshire who employ their own team would mirror many aspects of using an external EA, albeit with a greater control element over charges recovery.

- 3.05 A costing exercise has been completed for both options for delivery.

3.06 Denbighshire Proposal

The key differences are that the commissioned service from Denbighshire would save 0.5 of a management cost, but would reduce surplus income by 50%, as Denbighshire would share any surplus with Flintshire.

- 3.07 Direct Staffing costs (at top of scale) have been calculated as

2 Enforcement Agents
3 Enforcement Officers (one a Senior)

Total Income	£294,081	£294,081
Expenditure		£196,565
Surplus Income		£97,516

- 3.08 The costing exercise shows that developing an in-house service at Flintshire would result in a significantly higher return, with added re-assurance of maintaining a sound collection rate plus the benefits of added value services for vulnerable customers whilst maintaining full control of the recovery process.

3.09 CONCLUSION

The use of EA's is a high profile area in the collection of revenues. There is a risk of adverse publicity, especially with the increased levels of bailiff charges. These risks can be reduced by the

identification of sensitive cases and a proportionate response, which would be more available with internal EA's. Opportunities for future collaboration in this service area will be considered as appropriate.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Cabinet approve the establishment of internal Enforcement agent team, as described in the report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The current use of Bailiffs contributes to the collection of £64 million income for the Authority; a reduction in the collection of Council Tax would result in increases to Council Tax for all payers or a reduction in services.

5.02 An internal EA service would provide an income surplus over costs of a minimum £97K per year.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The new costs structure will result in adding further debt to those Tax payers who are already experiencing financial difficulties in paying amounts due to the Council.

6.02 Although fees are statutory an internal EA service would allow these costs to be mitigated on collection in identified cases of hardship.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Staff recruitment to posts including external recruitment of Certificated EA's.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Informal talks have taken place with Flintshire CAB, who were supportive of an in house option.

12.00 APPENDICES

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Statutory Instrument 2013 no.1894 The Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2014

Statutory Instrument 2014 no.1 The Taking Control of Goods (Fees) Regulations 2014

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE**

SUBJECT: **GARDEN SERVICE FOR COUNCIL TENANTS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 This report makes recommendations to suspend the implementation of the service charge for the grass cutting and hedge maintenance service in council housing for sheltered housing tenants and those who previously received the service due to a disability/vulnerability. This postponement will be until the 2015/16 financial year and until full consultation has been completed.

2.00 BACKGROUND

Current Service

- 2.01 An Assisted Gardening Service has existed in Flintshire for over 25 years. The service consists of grass cutting and hedge trimming and prior to April 2014 was delivered in house via Street Scene to tenants living in both general needs and sheltered housing stock.
- 2.02 To qualify for the Service, general needs' housing tenants had to be registered blind, over the age of 60 or in receipt of Disability Working Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. Sheltered housing tenants qualified automatically.
- 2.03 Approximately 1,200 households (including sheltered tenants) were in receipt of the Service at a cost of £250,000 per year to the Housing Revenue Account.
- 2.04 In December 2013 following a service review and with the support of Housing Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet agreed to introduce charging for the service. The service had been tendered and a company called Ground Control had won a tender to deliver the service on the council's behalf.
- 2.05 Cabinet agreed a charging mechanism, based on 14 cuts per year for grass and two hedge cuts. Grass collection, (with use of the tenants own brown bin) was included in the contract. The charging policy

agreed by cabinet was for charges to be individual to each property based on garden size, with a minimum charge of £58 for grass cutting for a disabled tenant with a garden of less than 50m², and £464 for the same customer with a garden of less than 400m². (Charges for gardens bigger than this were set at a £1.16 per m² for a disabled customer).

- 2.06 The new service was designed to be available to any tenant who wished to subscribe and in the longer term to be available to private tenants who wished to purchase it too.
- 2.07 Based on the tender received it was reported to cabinet that the council expected to realise a saving of £250k in introducing the new service. This was made up of two elements. The first that the tender price was cheaper than the internal service by £125k and the second that charging would bring in an estimated £125k in income.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

Charging for Services

- 3.01 A service charge is a payment made by a resident, leaseholder, shared owner or freeholder towards the cost of providing and maintaining services and benefits, beyond that of enjoying occupation of their home. Welsh Government has developed a prescriptive list of service charging activities, and requires all Local authorities who have not already done so to commence a policy of introducing charging for services from 2015. The manner and timing for the introduction is at the council's discretion, and the council could agree a staged approach to minimise any adverse impact on tenants.
- 3.02 Flintshire has close to £800k of services provided mainly to sheltered tenants and those living in flats. These include aerial charges, communal heating, cleaning, grounds maintenance, lift maintenance. The only chargeable service at the moment is heating. Most services are eligible for Housing Benefit for those who qualify, with the exception of the individual tenant garden service.
- 3.03 With this in mind the approved Flintshire HRA business plan has been modelled to include the introduction of service charging fully over the next few years. The financial implications section of this report describes the anticipated income in the plan. Any reduction in income, without additional savings, will increase the need to borrow to achieve the WHQS.

Implementation of the new service

- 3.04 This has been extremely problematic and has caused a significant level of complaints to elected members and council staff. It has resulted in a loss of confidence in the service which needs to be

rectified.

3.05 The problems have included:-

- An “opt in” arrangement means that only c400 tenants are now receiving the service. Clearly some tenants may have chosen to make alternative arrangements but others have not (uncut grass leaving some gardens looking unsightly). These tenants may be unwilling to pay the charge or unsure how to request the service.
- Garden measurements were inaccurate in some cases due to historical data on the council data base, i.e. a driveway may have been installed in a property and the garden is now significantly smaller. This has led to large estimated bills and a consequential loss of confidence in the service. This led to a decision to measure all gardens where the service was requested so that accurate prices could be provided. This has caused delays in service commencement.
- Some communal garden areas were recorded as private and therefore cost proposals were sent out when they should not have been.
- Street Scene has continued to manage the communal gardens and spaces; but the data on what is communal and what is private was not fully accurate, leaving some things out of the Ground Control contract and also not part of the ongoing street scene contract. In addition, this has meant that two teams have been sent to the same schemes, one effectively cutting backs, and one fronts. This has caused confusion with tenants.
- Payment cannot be made through the rent this year due to system issues. Discounts have been offered for paying the total in advance but this is a significant change from the way tenants are used to paying the council. Payment can also be made weekly via the payment machine in the Connects offices or by Direct Debit.
- The growing conditions this year which has meant that any service delays while measuring has been organised has led to very long unsightly grass causing challenges for cutting and collection and leading to complaint.

3.06 A number of options have been considered to remedy matters and a number of management actions have been instigated to improve the service.

- 3.07 Street Scene has taken over management of the contract from 9th June. This has provided additional management capacity. A full measure and review is underway to prepare a clearer contract from 2015, with a sensible split between Ground Control responsibility and that of Street scene. This will have a short term cost to the HRA of circa £20k. (An officer had been budgeted for but not appointed to manage the contract so this can be funded with no adverse impact on the budget).
- 3.08 This paper proposes ceasing charging for this financial year for all sheltered tenants, and those previously receiving the service with protected characteristics, whilst a full review of the service is undertaken.
- 3.09 Full and detailed consultation with all tenants who may be affected by the introduction of charging for services is to be commenced starting with general needs properties. Once this is completed, recommendations for a phase introduction will be considered by Cabinet.
- 3.10 For the garden service, It is felt that two charges only would be simpler for the future; one for large and one for small gardens, (and more cost effective to administer and understand). Work needs to be completed to assess what these should be.
- 3.11 The service will still be available as a chargeable service on the terms previously agreed for any new customers who did not receive the service pre April 2014.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Cabinet approve a temporary suspension in service charging for the garden service for sheltered tenants and those with protected characteristics who received the service prior to 1st April 2014.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 The HRA budget approved at Feb 2014 cabinet assumed that the income received for the charging of garden services would fully recoup the yearly cost of the Ground control contract of £126.0k.

- 5.02 The breakdown of this is:-

954 sheltered gardens
521 sheltered hedges
Anticipated income £87.1k

248 general gardens
210 general hedges

- 5.03 Anticipated income £38.6k
- 5.04 In addition administration charges of 15% were to be charged.
- 5.05 Assuming that the majority of general needs tenants who have been accessing the service have protected characteristics, the loss in income to the HRA in 2014/15 should the council not charge either the sheltered tenants or those with these characteristics would be £126.0k.
- 5.06 This will be met through prudent management of the budget ensuring that the budgeted balance at year end of 3.20% is met.
- 5.07 The rent reform policy due to be implemented in 2015/16 requires all local authorities to commence a policy to introduce service charges. The current business plan, approved by Welsh Government therefore assumes a phased implementation of charging from 15/16, generating income of £383.6k (including the assisted gardens income) in that year, and full anticipated service charge recovery in 2016/17 and beyond of £810.5k per year.
- 5.08 Most service charges (but not the individual garden service), are eligible for Housing Benefit.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 Tenants who have paid for the service and now qualify for a free service will receive a refund.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 Keeping gardens in a good condition is a condition of tenancy. The recent introduction of the chargeable garden service has led to a number of gardens not being cut leading to some unsightly areas on council estates.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 Tenants with protected characteristics previously receiving the service would benefit from the changes proposed in this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None other than those described above.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Full consultation with tenants is required to introduce service charging.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None to date.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

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

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE**

SUBJECT: **IMPLEMENTATION OF A RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To advise Members of a proposal to introduce a Risk Based Verification (RBV) process for the administration of Housing Benefit and seek members approval as to the proposed policy.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Following the publication of DWP circular HB/CTB S11/2011 in 2011, Local Authorities are able to implement a 'risk based' approach to verifying Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims.

2.02 RBV has been operating successfully in pilot authorities since 2009. Following the operation of these 'pilots' DWP extended this approach on a voluntary basis to all other local authorities from April 2012.

2.03 The current application process for Housing Benefit requires claimants to provide, Identification, proof of income / capital and proof of rent for verification purposes. In many cases not all proofs are received and the claimant is contacted for additional information, resulting in delays to the payment of Housing benefit.

2.04 RBV is a method of applying different levels of verification checks to benefit claims according to the predicted risk associated with those claims. Local Authorities adopting RBV will still require all claimants to comply with relevant legislation and identified low risk claimants must as a minimum be able to provide National Insurance documentation and evidence of identity, with more extensive verification activity being required on those claims predicted to be at greater risk of fraud and error.

2.05 All Local Authorities opting to apply RBV are required to have in place a RBV Policy detailing the risk profiles and verification standards which will apply including the minimum number of claims to be checked. The Policy must be submitted for Members' approval and sign-off along with a covering report confirming the Section 151 Officer's agreement / recommendation.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The current verification process requires a number of supporting documents (proof of income / capital and proof of rent) which in many cases could be considered excessive and if not available delays the payment of Housing Benefit. e.g. a claimant on JSA living in private rented accommodation will be required to provide proof of rent despite rent levels being fixed by Local Housing allowance.

3.02 RBV is a proven process agreed by DWP which allows a targeted approach to the verification of benefit claims with each application being assessed for the likelihood of fraud or error.

3.03 The introduction of RBV is supported by the use of software which is calibrated to comply with DWP guidelines. There is a risk propensity model embedded within the IT solution which identifies risk groups as

Low (Green) 52%

Medium (Amber) 27%

High (Red) 21%

A lower verification requirement for the 52% low risk group will result in faster processing times, due to the reduction in contact for additional information, which will also release staff resources to improve speed of payments to medium and high risk groups.

In RBV Authorities there has been an average reduction of 2 days (10%) in overall processing time. This speed of delivery could be valuable in gaining the support of private Landlords to make additional investment in the provision of homes for rent which is a key strategic priority for the authority. In addition there would also be improved customer service levels as there will be faster payment of Benefits

3.04 The RBV process will reduce the requirements to contact customers for additional information to comply with verification rules with a resultant reduction in postage and contact costs.

3.05 The identification of which claimant groups will be within these categories cannot be fully predicted due to the propensity model, however it would be expected that most claimants in receipt of passported benefits (Job Seekers Allowance, Pension credit etc) would be classified as "Green" low risk. High risk claimants are likely to be in work but with variable salaries.

3.06 The proposed policy is formulated from the agreed policy guidelines provided by DWP and is based on the software suppliers criteria utilised in current RBV Authorities, which has been accepted by the DWP and Audit bodies.

If agreed the verification process for each group would be

- “Green” claimants are fast tracked due to reduced levels of verification evidence required.
- “Amber” claimants will be required to supply the same verification evidence as currently required.
- “Red” claimants will be required to provide all current verification evidence, but will also be contacted to confirm claim details. In many instances these customers would have been contacted for additional information previously.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Cabinet approve the proposal to implement a RBV process to administer Housing Benefit.

4.02 That Cabinet approve the implementation of the proposed RBV policy as prepared by Community and Enterprise Senior Officers.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 There is an initial cost of £14,250 plus annual maintenance costs of £900 per annum. This can be met from existing budgets.

5.02 There will be improved performance at no additional cost with projected annual savings of £30k from 2015/16 achieved through reduced postage and staff resource savings.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The proposed scheme is specifically designed to fast track claimants who are in receipt of Benefits. With an overall decrease in the time to pay Housing Benefit all groups will benefit from faster payments.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Limited training requirement. Any staff savings will be achieved through natural turnover.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None, although key stakeholder partners will be made aware of the plans.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 The policy was considered by the Audit Committee on 25th June as recommended by the DWP as good practise for an Authority to refer the RBV policy to Audit Committee for consideration.

11.02 Internal Audit has reviewed the RBV process and policy.

11.03 Section 151 Officer has approved the RBV process and policy.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Copies of the Policy are available in the Members Library

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

DWP circular HB/CTB S11/2011

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT)**

SUBJECT: **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ANNUAL REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Cabinet to note the contents of the enclosed Annual Report on the work of the Public Rights of Way Service.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 In October 2008 the Rights of Way Improvement plan (ROWIP) was published by the County Council.

2.02 One of the commitments contained in the ROWIP was the production of an Annual Report (Task 4.7 in the Statement of Action). The report was intended to include articles on specific projects demonstrating progress in the implementation of the ROWIP.

2.03 This is the third Annual Report that the County Council has produced, which is enclosed at Appendix 1.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Annual Report provides an ideal opportunity for the County Council to address this by highlighting its work over the past financial year and focusing on its achievements in this specialist area of work.

3.02 The Report gives a flavour of some of the high-profile initiatives that both the Rights of Way section have been involved in. It should be of interest not only to those who have professional interest in public rights of way, but also the wider general public.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Cabinet note the contents of the Annual Report.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None – the report will be available to download from the Council’s website.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Any publicity about public rights of way should lead to a greater awareness and understanding and hopefully better protection of this valuable asset.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Public Rights of Way Annual Report at Appendix 1

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

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Environment Directorate
Public Rights of Way

Annual Report

Public Rights of Way | 2013-2014



Foreword

This is the third Annual report on the public rights of way service. Once again, the All-Wales coastal path has featured prominently in the work programme, but for very different reasons. Few would have anticipated that less than two years after its official launch sections of the coastal path would have fallen victim to the storms that had such a devastating impact on Britain's coastline during the winter months of 2013 and 2014. Work is already well under way to repair the damage that caused breaches in the path as a result of the severe weather, and several sections of the path have already reopened. Tribute should be paid to Network Rail, Natural Resources Wales, the Council's Countryside Service and all the relevant landowners for arranging the paths to be reinstated so quickly; and to the Rights of Way Team for swiftly organising the closures of the path to protect the public.

In the foreword to the previous Annual Report, brief mention was made of the Burton Point cycleway, which was officially opened in July 2013. This has proved to be a huge success story, with over 10,000 bicyclists using the way in September 2013 alone. The route provides a safe and environmentally sustainable alternative to the A494/A550 trunk road for people living and working on either side of the border, as well as for the many visitors to the area.

The County Council continued to receive grant-aid support from Natural Resources Wales to implement its ROWIP programme, support that is much needed in the current financial climate and is set to continue at the same level for the present financial year. This report contains many examples of improvements that could not have been carried out without this financial assistance.

It is pleasing that even in times of austerity, the County Council remains committed to securing improvements for the benefit of everyone who uses Flintshire's extensive public rights of way network. The network provides important links between communities and hence plays a key role in supporting the Council's Improvement Sub-Priority of Transport Infrastructure and Services which aims to improve access for employment, local services and facilities.

Andrew Farrow
Chief Officer (Planning & Environment)



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Farrow'.

Councillor Bernie Attridge
Deputy Leader of and Cabinet Member for Environment



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'JB Attridge'.

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1 | The Public Rights of Way Section

Staff:- Steve Bartley, Nick Worrall, Natalie Davies, Stuart Jones, Suzanne Jones, Gayle Groves

The public rights of way section is responsible for maintaining the public rights of way network; the review of the definitive map; processing orders affecting public rights of way; and for carrying out enforcement. The workload is large and diverse, and some of the achievements are listed below.

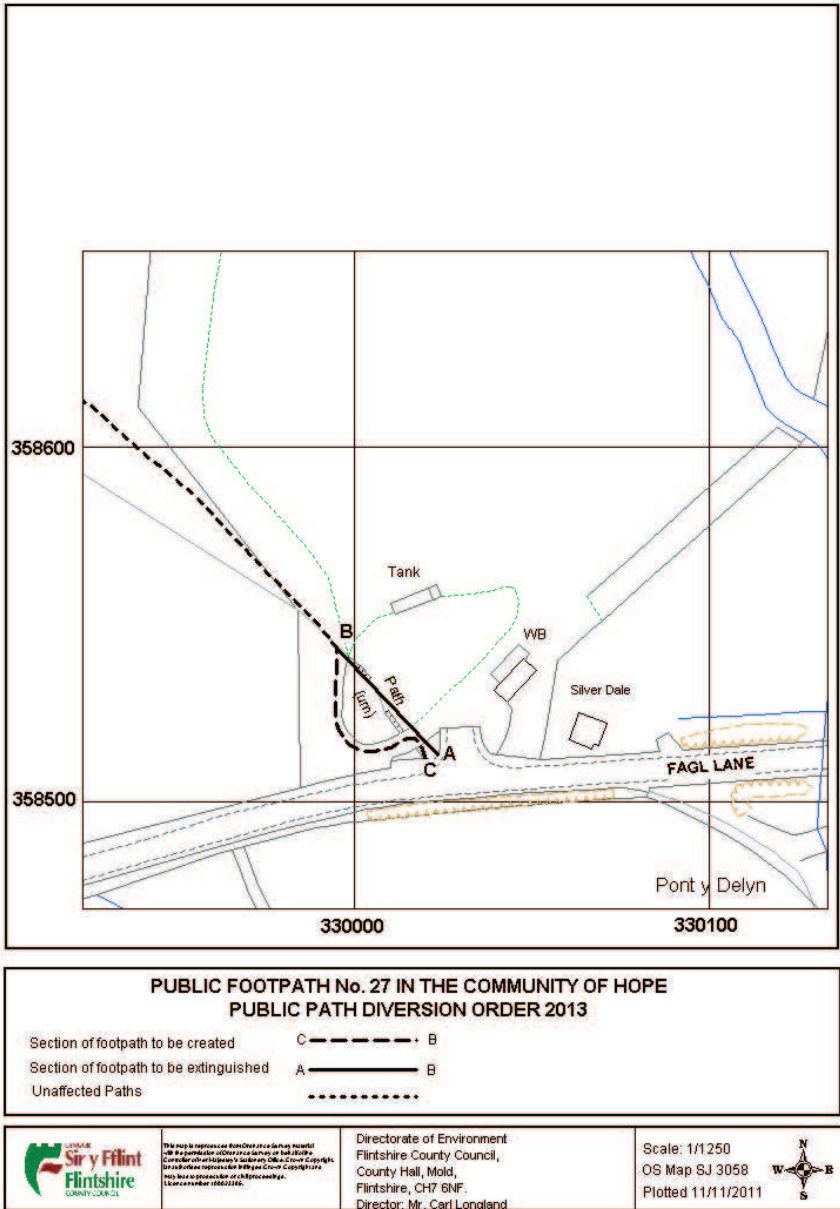
Public Path Orders

The County Council was faced with another problem of a footpath obstructed by several houses, this time in Halkyn, and an extinguishment order was the only viable option. After carrying out a preliminary consultation the order was made on 3 September 2013 and subsequently confirmed as unopposed on 15 October. It is pleasing to note that there were no objections, because this is another example of a long-term obstruction that had the potential to cause severe problems for any of the affected property owners. Unfortunately, not all our orders are unopposed, but where there are objections, the Rights of Way staff do their best to try to attempt to get them withdrawn. For example in Hope, there have been objections to a diversion of a footpath in a former quarry. The County Council is in negotiation with the objectors and is attempting to address their concerns, but if their objections are not withdrawn the order can only be confirmed if it is referred to the Welsh Government. On the edge of the quarry, meanwhile, a diversion order made by the County Council was unopposed. The existing route crosses a large mound of earth, which is not easy to negotiate, particularly for those who are less agile. The alternative follows a flat well-surfaced route around the mound, thereby making it easily accessible for all (please see enclosed map) in keeping with the County Council's commitment to ensuring that more of the network is available to those with mobility problems. On 23 July a diversion order was made in respect of Public Footpath No. 5 Connah's Quay. The footpath had been obstructed by a barn following a DMMO to correct its alignment. The order was confirmed on 3 September thereby opening a path that hitherto been unavailable.

James Dyson

05/06/2013

“Just a quick email to give our thanks and appreciation for the sterling service your lads have given us once more by sorting out the wonky kissing gate at the junction of paths 28 and 31 see attached photo. Your team's efforts are always well appreciated by the Buckley Walkabout Walkers. Thanks once again. Jim Dyson”



Definitive Map Modification Orders

Evidential DMMOS

Following an application in December 2011 to add a footpath via stepping stones across the river Alyn a DMMO was made in October 2103 and subsequently confirmed as unopposed in January 2014. Now that the footpath has been incorporated into the definitive map and statement its future is secure and it forms an important link between two footpaths each side of the river.

During the course of the year, the team managed to correct a number of longstanding anomalies on the definitive map and/ or the accompanying statement. A DMMO to alter the alignment of a footpath in Ysceifiog Community, which was made on 5th November 2013, was confirmed without objection on 7 January 2014. Meanwhile, on 12th November 2013 two DMMOs were made in the community

of Hawarden: one to correct the alignment of a footpath and the other to delete a footpath that had been drafted in error. Both orders were subsequently confirmed without any objections.

Finally, a small section of footpath crossing the Wrexham to Bidston railway line near Penyffordd was omitted from the definitive map when it was prepared in 1978. However, the footpath was recorded in the statement and when the DMMO was made to remedy the situation in December 2013, there were no objections and the order was subsequently confirmed.

Legal Event DMMOs

Progress is continuing in the former Alyn & Deeside District with only six community/town council areas remaining to be done. Some of these contain a large number of legal events requiring modification orders to be made and are being processed in manageable packages.

Other work of the section

Enforcement forms an integral part of the section's work and there has been an increasing focus on it in recent years, particularly in relation to offences associated with ploughing and cropping. To date, these problems have been resolved by persistence, but without the need for formal enforcement action. In August 2013, however, after the occupier had failed to comply with the Council's requirement to remove a crop of barley from a footpath near County Hall, the Rights of Way staff arranged for contractors to go in and remove it and restore the path to a maximum width of 1.8 metres. Hopefully, this approach should ensure that in future the occupier will not allow this situation to develop and will remove the crop as soon as it starts to emerge. In March 2014 a landowner in Sychdyn reinstated a ploughed footpath after the County Council threatened him with enforcement proceedings. The County Council will remain vigilant and will adopt a firm stance in relation to this problem, in the hope that all other occupiers will comply with their legal obligations on the cultivation of land crossed by public rights of way.

All of the section's work would not be possible without the continuing support of colleagues in the legal department, in particular David Davies, Carol Higgins and Debbie Thomas, who provide invaluable advice and assistance on a daily basis.

Work of the Rights of Way Inspectors

Staff:- John Hill, John W Davies, Sam Charlton

The Rights of Way Inspectors, currently based in Halkyn, are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the public rights of way network. They deal with all complaints of minor obstructions such as barbed wire, electric fences and problems such as faulty stiles and gates. They are also responsible for ensuring that signs and way marks are installed wherever a right of way leaves the road and where else they may be needed.

As well as this day-to-day work the Inspectors carry out the annual surveys for the Best Value Performance Indicators and they are heavily involved in identifying schemes for the work-programme for CCW as part of its grant for the implementation of the ROWIP and also for our own works programme. They identify suitable contractors, where the work requires the use of them, and will be responsible for making sure that all the works are carried out in a safe manner and to the standards required.

The strimming schedule is currently in its second year of a 3 year contract. The schedule is split into 2 areas and in total includes 205,000 sq metres of strimming per cut, there being 4 cuts per year. There are over 400 individual sites on the strimming contract spread across the whole of the Rights of Way Network and the Inspectors are responsible for monitoring the contract and ensuring that all sites are cut to the required specifications. It also includes 30,000 square metres per cut of tractor grass cutting.

As with the snow the previous year, the weather produced 2 spectacular occurrences which impacted heavily on the inspectors' work load, these being flooding and heavy gales. The flooding is discussed further in chapter 9. The gales resulting in approximately 150 trees and branches that needed to be removed to reopen paths and ensure the safety of the public.

As well as looking after the Rights of Way Network the staff continue to enhance their personal development through training with all 3 staff having successfully completed level 2 of the City and Guilds Award in Business for the Environment and land based sector.

2 | Performance indicators 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

	2013-2014	2012-2013	Differential
Km length of signs missing on metalled road	9.93	9.29	-0.64
% length of signs missing on metalled road	18.58	17.18	-1.4
No. of signs missing on metalled road	20	28	+8
% of signs missing on metalled road	20	37.8	+17.8
Km length of path obstructions	15.17	14.33	-0.84
% length of path obstructions	28.38	26.94	-1.44
No. of paths obstructed	20	20	0
% of paths obstructed	24.39	27.03	+2.64
Km length of paths where barriers are not in good repair	15.22	17.16	+1.94
% length of paths where barriers are not in good repair	28.48	31.73	+3.25
No. of paths where barriers are not in good repair	20	25	+5
% of paths where barriers are not in good repair	24.39	33.78	+9.39
Km length of paths where waymarking is required	17.58	8.98	-8.60
% length of paths where waymarking is required	32.89	16.60	-16.29
No. of paths where waymarking is required	22	14	-8
% of paths where waymarking is required	26.83	18.92	-7.91

Commentary

The BVPI figures for 2013/14 reveal that 60.86% of the public rights of way network is easy to use – a decrease of 3.01 percentage points from last year's figure of 63.87%. It should be noted that some Local Authorities have now discontinued producing this figure as the results are somewhat unreliable because of the small sample of inspections used.

Performance Indicators 2013-2014

Indicator	Result 2012 – 2013	Result 2013 - 2014
1. Number of complaints received and resolved on an annual basis (by Members, local groups and the public)	Received 394 Resolved 574	Received 394 Resolved 516
2. No. of outstanding Legal Event Modification Orders by 2013	40	30
3. Percentage of future Legal Event Modification Orders made within one month of Legal Event (e.g. public path order) coming into force	100%	100%
4. Number of outstanding applications for Public Path Orders	7	6
5. Percentage of Network signposted where paths leave a metalled road	83.27%	78.92%
6. Percentage of bridges that are in a satisfactory condition within ten years of the ROWIP's publication	84.3%	85.7%
7. Length of public rights of way inspected per annum. Retain and develop a rolling programme of inspection (dependant upon resources)	52.98Kms	53.45Kms
8. Length of new public bridleway and restricted byway created per annum	3.3km	0
9. No. and length of new dedicated cycle routes opened per annum	3Kms	2Kms
10. The percentage of total length of Rights of Way which are easy to use by members of the Public (CMT 001)	63.87%	60.86%
11. Respond to valid section 130A notices (requiring the removal of obstructions) by issuing forms 2 and 3 within one month of receipt of Form 1	100%	100%
12. Percentage of planning applications responded to within 21 days of their receipt	100%	100%
13. Percentage of applications for temporary closures (TROs) determined within one month of their receipt	100%	100%

3 | CAMS (Countryside Access Management System)

We have recently made a number of improvements to the way in which problems and queries relating to public rights of way can be reported. The software package that enables this is known as CAMS (Countryside Access Management System), and uses interactive mapping and map search for easy navigation.

Access to CAMS can be achieved by entering the Rights of Way section on the Authorities website. On entering the system the first page a user will see is a public web map. This will allow the user to explore the Rights of Way network by navigating around the map, to go to selected locations and switch layers off and on. There are differing types of icons on the map which indicate the different types of furniture such as stiles and kissing gates and when these are clicked on information about the furniture will be displayed in speech bubbles. If photographs are available of the furniture thumbnail photos will be displayed in the speech bubble and if clicked on will open a larger web-ready version of the photograph.

If a user wants to report a fault they will need to have registered in CAMS and then be subsequently logged in. To register, the user will be required to provide some basic personal data including an email address for contact purposes. Once logged in they can access the web map where they will be able to identify the location of the problem and enter details from drop-down lists. Once a fault has been submitted, the user will be automatically sent a confirmation email. Checking on the progress of an individual problem can be done via the reference number which will have been issued at the time of reporting on the confirmation email, though we are currently looking at adding a feature which will, if required, list all the reports that have been made by an individual user.

Reporting problems using this system will assist the Rights of Way Team and users of the network to improve the network and build a picture of those areas in need of most attention.

Information provided will assist with the prioritising of programmes of work, targeting effective enforcement and directing the work of the Footpath Inspectors and Rights of Way officers.

It is hoped that at the time of printing the web-based reporting function will be live.

James Dyson

02/09/2013

“We are very busy at the moment getting things ready for our 10th Anniversary of the Buckley Walkabout, to be held this Thursday. We will have approximately 100 individuals turning up to this event and hopefully it will be reported in the press. Please pass on our thanks to all concerned for they are doing a sterling job. Thanks once again on behalf of all the Buckley Walkabout gang. Cheers, Jim and Lyn Dyson”

4 | Linking Flintshire's Communities

The Linking Flintshire's Communities Project aims to enhance, develop and promote a series of footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways within rural Flintshire. It receives financial support from the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Other funding has been provided by the Regional Transport Fund and Flintshire County Council.

Coastal Community Links

Scheme 1. Pegasus Crossing and Bridleway/Footway improvement at Gronant.

In May 2013 works began in Gronant to provide a signal-controlled bridleway over the A548 from Public Right of Way No.48 (Sea Horse Ride) to link with permissive bridleways along the beach at Talacre and also the National Cycle Network. Footways were also widened to provide a multi use bridleway/cycleway/footway. These works were carried out as part of a safety scheme to improve conditions for all road users, and reduce the risk of collisions by reducing the speed limit to 50 mph and reconfiguration of the dual carriageway's road markings. This scheme was completed in Autumn 2013.

Implementation of a safe crossing and link to Gronant Coast from the Sea Horse Ride offers enormous tourism potential. It also offers the potential to boost the economy in the area by attracting riders/ cyclists and walkers from as far as South Wales.

Scheme 2. Enhancement of Public Footpath No. 64 in Mostyn

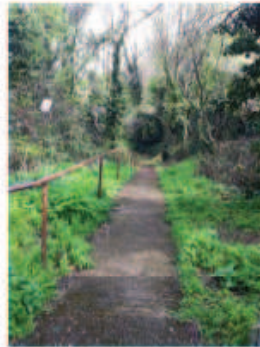
Works to improve the path surface and rectify drainage problems were carried out in Autumn 2013. This completion of this scheme has now provided safe pedestrian access from the Maes Pennant Estate down to the all Wales Coastal Path on the Dee Coast. Information boards and signage have also been provided along the route to the coast to encourage the local residents to visit the Dee



Estuary which is steeped in natural heritage and is an internationally important coastline. The Dee Coast is managed by a park ranger who promotes the diversification and the rich heritage of the coast in this area.

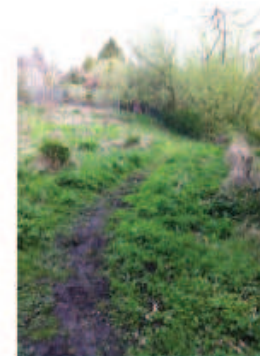
Pre scheme photographs

The footpath leading from Ffordd Ddyfrdwy runs through an open space, then turns in an easterly direction. The surface was extremely mossy and the handrail was unsafe. The path then enters a small copse and continues down a steep incline where the path surface diminished to a muddy track and the handrail was unstable.



Pre scheme photographs

The path became very steep and very muddy due to drainage issues. This location was very hazardous.



Pre scheme photographs

The path continues between a security fence to the left and chain link fence to the right. The path surface at this location was tarmac but had a lot of moss growing from its surface. The path did eventually become slightly drier as it entered open scrub land.



Post Scheme Photographs

Resurfaced path with edging kerbs from ffordd Ddyfrdwy through the open space.



Post Scheme Photographs

A new handrail has been installed in the copse area and a new footpath surface with edging kerbs.



Post Scheme Photographs

The drainage issue has now been resolved and new concrete steps have been installed.



Post Scheme Photographs

A new footpath has been laid through the open scrubland to the junction with the A548.



5 | Sandycroft Cycleway

The Queensferry to Sandycroft cycle path was a Welsh Gov (Taith) funded scheme. The cycle path comprises of a 1.5km of off road cycle provision . The cycle way provides a link between Queensferry and Sandycroft Ind Pk. We are presently looking at the feasibility of phase 2 of the scheme which would be a continuation of the path from Sandycroft linking into Airbus.

6 | Cycle Way Counter Data

1 - Deeside Industrial Park - Zone 4.

Located near the start of the Burton Point walking and cycling path this counter primarily indicates the level of usage along this new path. The path provides a link between the The Wirral/Cheshire and the Flintshire section of the Wales Coastal Path and Deeside Industrial Park. At the height of the holiday period at the end of the summer school holidays over 10,000 cyclists passed this counter point monthly and nearly 1500 walkers.

2 - Deeside Industrial Park - Zone 3 - 4.

This counter is situated adjacent to the railway line which passes under the A548 near the UPM Papermill and leads to the starting point of the Burton point walk. This counter indicates slightly more contacts than that at Zone 4 with over 11,000 cyclists and nearly 2,500 walkers.

3 - Deeside Industrial Park - Zone 2.

Situated on the link between National Cycle Route 5 and Parkway, it has a more consistant level of count during early summer through to early winter which is indicative of its use mainly by workers travelling to and from the employment centre of the Deeside Industrial Park.

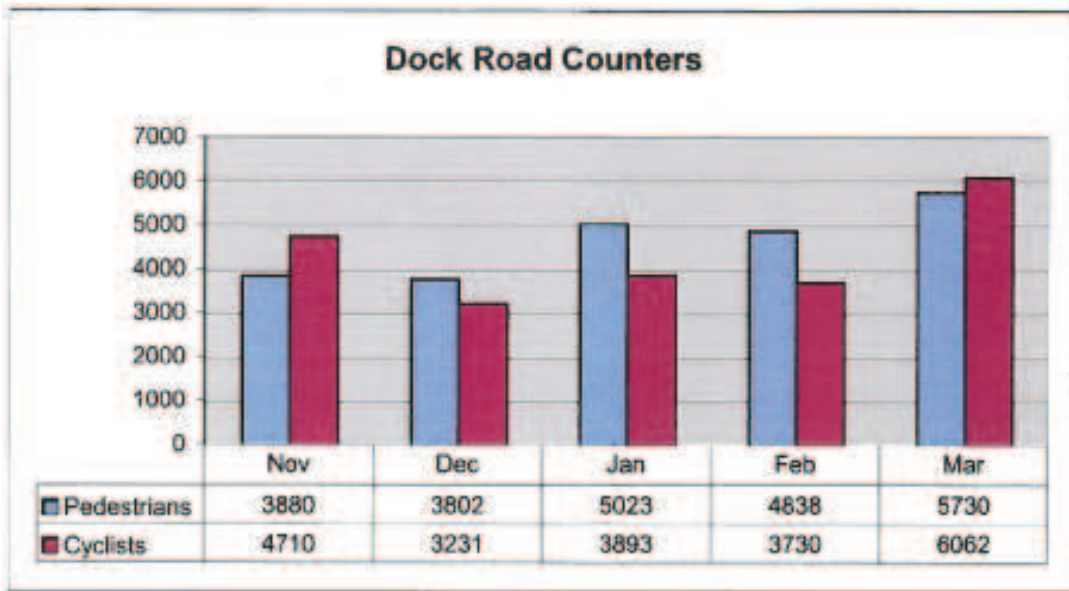
4 - Blue Bridge Counter.

This counter is located on the Deeside Coastal Path, also National Cycle Route 5, between the Blue Bridge and the A494 dual river bridge and has only been in position since November 2013. It attracts a proportionally higher number of pedestrians to cyclists than previous counter sites with nearly 50% walkers to cyclists and catches those travelling to and from Tata Steel.

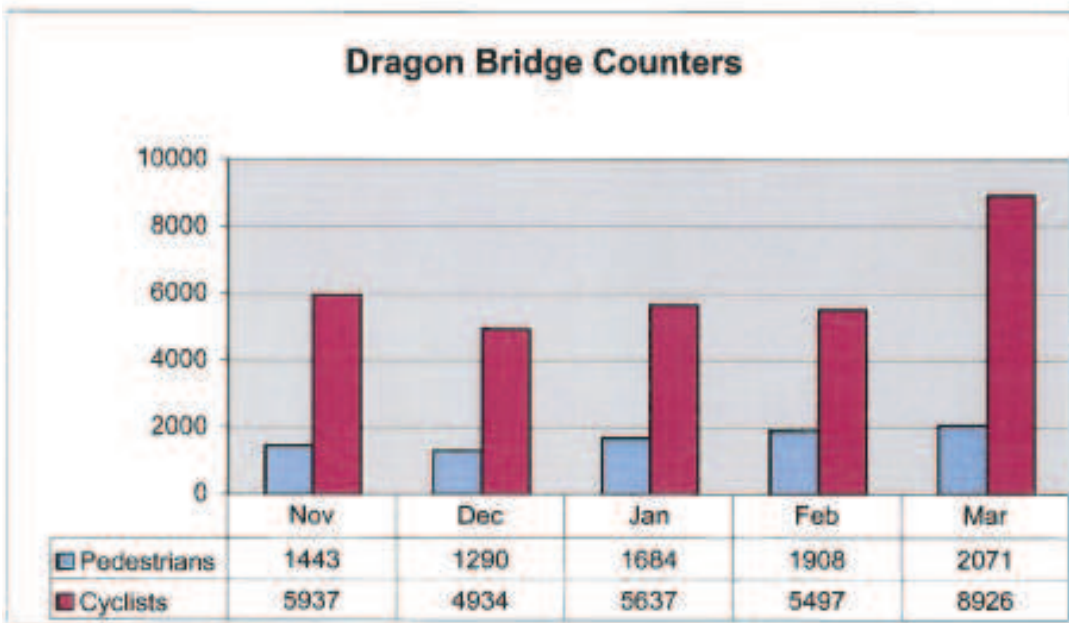
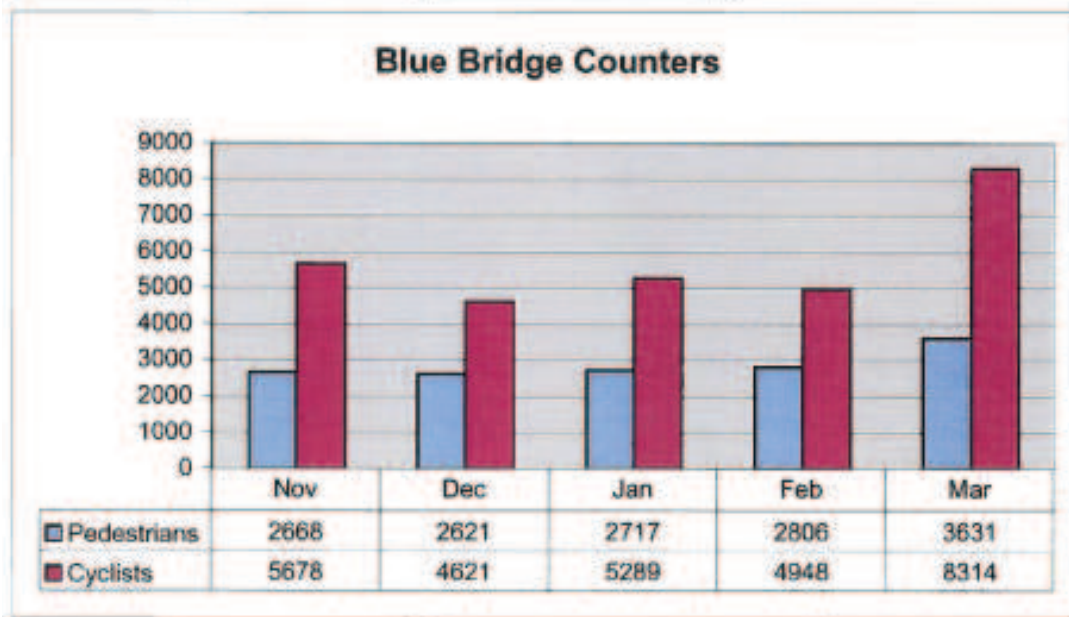
5 - Dock Road Counters.

Found near the car park at the end of Dock Road, Connahs Quay this counter is the only one that currently has a greater count for pedestrians than for cyclists with approximately a third more pedestrians. This is probably indicative of its closeness to the conurbation of Deeside and its use as a walk by local residents along the Dee embankment.

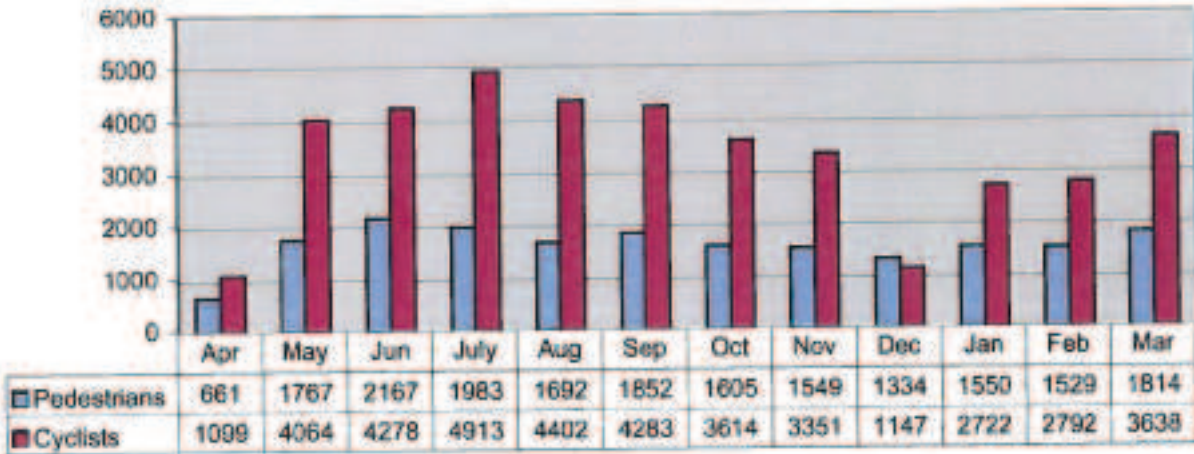
6 - Dragon Bridge (MOD) – Counters



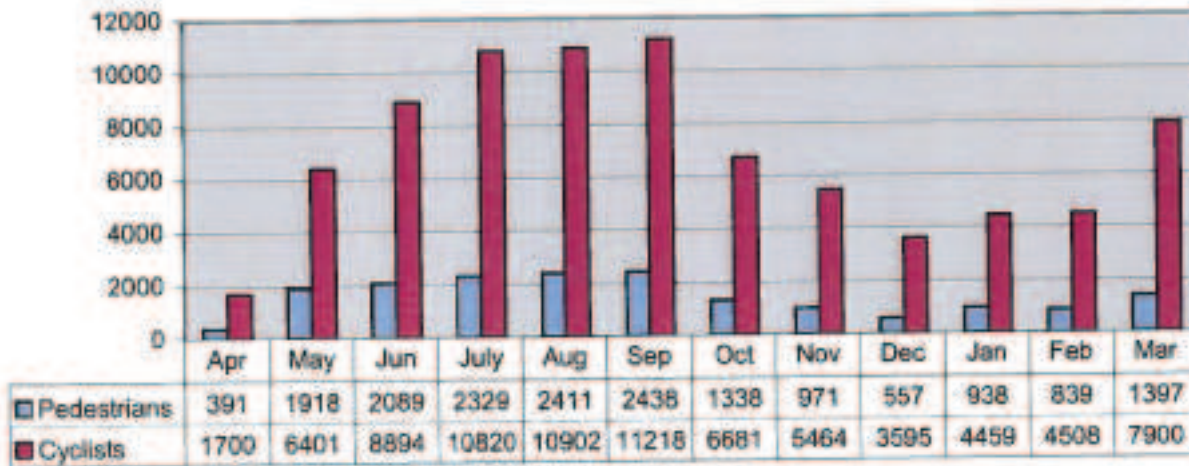
Located on Green Lane East near the old railway bridge over the Sustrans cycleway it has the lowest relative number of pedestrians which is indicative of its rural location. It is situated on a direct link to the Deeside Industrial Park and Burton Point.



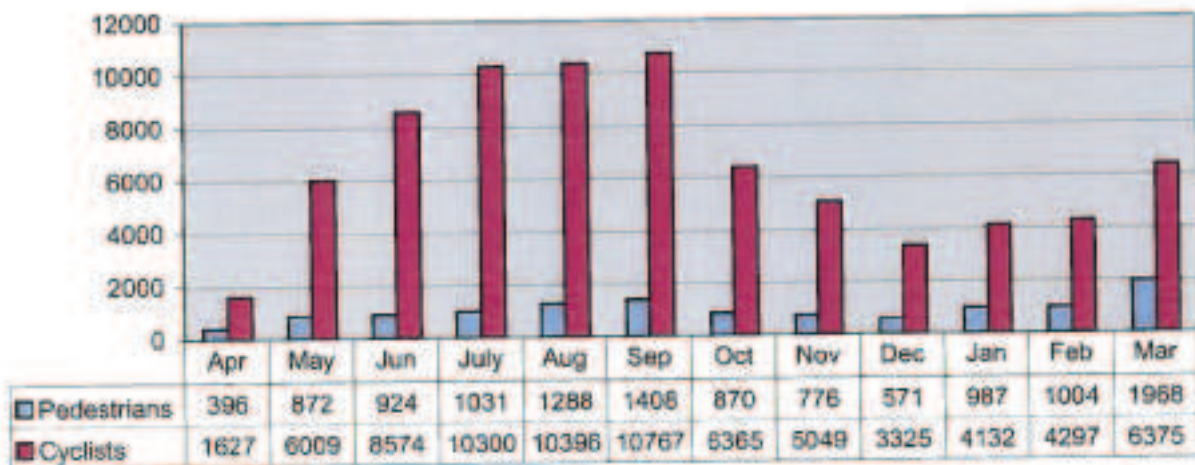
Zone 2



Zone 3-4



Zone 4 - Burton



7 | Details of some projects carried out with internal funding

Footpath 22, Nannerch

The old wooden kissing gate on a popular local walk needed to be replaced as it had fallen into disrepair. It was replaced with a modern stainless steel version and new fencing was erected either side of it. The hand rail along the steps leading to the kissing gate was replaced and the steps were given a general spruce-up.



Footpath 27, Llanasa

This footpath forms part of the coastal path and was severely damaged by the flooding in December 2013. Prior to accessing the location of the damage to investigate the extent of the problem it was necessary for the inspector to undertake a health and safety induction course by BHP on whose land the path is located. It was also necessary to produce a method statement detailing the problem and how it would be resolved.

Footpath 11, Northop Hall

There were 4 locations along the route of this popular path where the stiles needed to be replaced. Discussions were held with the land owner with the offer of replacing the stiles with kissing gates, however, the land owner preferred to replace the wooden stiles with modern stainless steel versions. This path provides a route between Northop Hall and Kelsterton.

At the first location the stile was situated immediately adjacent to the edge of the adjoining carriageway which could lead to someone stepping into the path of a vehicle on the road. The new stile was set back away from the road and a new metal gate was also erected to improve general access into the field.

At the next site which was on the opposite side of the road to the first, the stile had become overgrown by the hedge and walkers had started to access the path by climbing over the field gate. The hedge was cut back and the stile replaced with a metal one.

At the third site the stile and hand rail associated with the decking bridge over a ditch was dilapidated and needed replacing. As well as renewing the stile and hand rail mesh was laid on the decking to improve grip. Finally at the last location a stile in the hedge line was replaced with a metal version.



F.P 11 - Northop Hall.



Footpath 39, Flint

Flooding of the river had seriously undermined the sand bag wall supporting a bridge at a remote location on this path. The remoteness of the site meant that it was difficult to get the materials and equipment needed for the remedial work close to the location and this meant most of what was used had to be manhandled to site. The sand bags were removed and replaced with 8 gabion baskets filled on site with 25 mm stone. The stream had to be diverted away from the site of the work so that a trench could be dug into which the gabions were positioned and this required the bridge to be temporarily removed. Whilst the work took place a structure made from hessian was strung across the stream to trap as much silt as possible to limit any possible pollution.



Footpath 73, Leeswood (Dykes Farm)

There were problems created by water draining from adjacent land across the line of the footpath. Two new manholes were constructed to intercept the flow of water and direct it to an existing drainage system.

Footpath 51, Cilcain

This route is popular with both locals and tourists alike and is extremely well used by those completing various projects under the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Kissing gates were replaced at 2 locations.

Footpath 55, Buckley

This footpath provides a well-used link to the old disused railway embankment and to nearby Watts Dyke Way. The steps up the embankment had fallen into disrepair and were difficult to negotiate. Before work could commence contact had to be made with the County Ecologist as the steps were close to a live badger sett. As a result restrictions were placed on the work which allowed only hand tools to be used to carry out the work. This obviously had a major impact on the job with regard to the length of time to carry it out and with the physical effort required without the use of any form of



mechanization.

Other Work

As well as carrying out work at sites with specific localized problems the section carries out a variety of rolling programmes of work to improve the condition of furniture on the network and general accessibility. This year over 50 finger posts were replaced or repaired at locations throughout the network and 1875 sq. metres of urban paths were slurry sealed which will assist the disabled user and prolong the long term life of the paths. A further example of these ongoing programmes was the continuing erection of directional signs which provide distance and location details with over 100 new ones having been put up.

Method Statement - BHP Billiton / Former Point of Ayr Colliery Site

Client: Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NB.

Location: Former Point of Ayr Colliery Site, Wales Coast Path, Talacre.

Grid Ref: SJ 1206 8376 to SJ 1253 8395

Item: Maintenance Works

Date: 02nd April 2013

Description of the Works

Undertake remedial works to repair the surface on Public Footpath 27 in the Community of Llanasa by nominated Flintshire County Council approved contractor. To include surfacing works consisting of a compacted layer of G.S.B. (granule sub base) to a depth of approx 200mm, with a final surface layer of compacted limestone dust. To raise the level of several identified areas of depressions in the existing stone surface.

Commencing at SJ 1206 8376 and running in a generally north easterly direction for a total distance of approximately 646 metres to a point at SJ 1253 8395. This section of footpath is not within the designated Dee Estuary protected site.

Main Purpose / Reason for the job

The Footpath forms part of the Wales Coast Path which is well used by both locals and visitors and publicised through the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Flintshire County Council.

Due to depressions in the existing stone surface of the route several sections flood following heavy rainfall, which then hold water resulting in restricted access for users.

The surface requires repair as a matter of urgency due to Health & Safety reasons and to ensure that Flintshire County Council statutory obligations and policies with regard to Public Rights of Way are met.

Without maintenance more major and intrusive works may be required.

Method

1. Obtain any permits / permission to carry out specified work affecting the above named site.
2. The nominated contractor will be required to report to the BHP Billiton security office at the beginning and end of the working day.
3. Ensure that the site is secure and that the only people in the working area have been inducted in the site procedures (including this method statement) and are wearing the correct PPE (unless site specific) to include; safety footwear with steel toe caps, Hi- visibility jacket/ waistcoat and gloves.

4. The nominated contractor will be notified of the legal requirements and specified conditions issued by BHP Billiton required to carry out the above operations and will be provided with a copy of these conditions accordingly.
5. The nominated contractor will be provided with contact details of the relevant Authorities to contact in the event of any incident.
6. Access to the site will be along the road via the double gates adjacent to the roundabout, These gates will be kept closed / secured once access has been obtained at the beginning of the working day to prevent unauthorized access. Unless otherwise instructed by BHP Billiton.
7. The work will be undertaken by qualified operatives using a J.C.B. 3 CX digger, 10 ton tipper lorry and 110 roller.
8. Limestone product (G.S.B. / dust) will be transported to the working area using the 10 tonne tipper lorry and will be deposited in the area required.
9. Working of the limestone will be undertaken using the J.C.B. 3CX digger and 110 roller to provide the required level finish and depth.
10. All imported materials to be used on site are locally sourced quarried limestone, which once levelled will be compacted and left to allow for the natural regeneration of the surface vegetation, any surplus excavated materials will be removed from site.
11. A visual inspection of the work area will be undertaken for any potential disturbance to wildlife habitat prior to work being undertaken.
12. The inspection of the work will be undertaken on a daily basis by Flintshire County Council to ensure compliance with all necessary documentation
13. Commencement of works will only be undertaken once written confirmation from BHP Billiton has been received.

Control Measures

- Handling and use of all products will be done in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and safe working procedures.
- All fuel and oil will be stored in an approved container in such a way to protect from accidental damage, contamination or deterioration.
- Spillages will be prevented by minimal amounts of fuel on site, refilling of machinery will be done in a safe manner to prevent accidents and minimising damage or pollution to the natural and surrounding environment.
- In the unlikely event of an incident a spillage kit will be provided on site.
- Number of vehicles on site to be limited.
- In the event of any incident, work on site will cease immediately and the relevant Authorities will be informed.
- The disposal of any waste materials will be done in a safe manner to prevent accidents and minimising damage or pollution to the natural and surrounding environment.

Environmental

The nominated contractor will be requested to ensure the specified works are carried out in accordance with the legal requirements, site conditions and procedures (including this method statement) required to carry out the above operations.

On completion of the work the area will be left in a clean and tidy condition, all debris, materials will be removed and disposed of into skips or removal to a suitably licensed waste management facility in accordance with Environmental good practices.

8 | ROWIP projects carried out with funds from Natural Resources Wales

Footpath 52a Flint

This route provides a popular walk for locals and provides links to Watts Dyke Way. A tree had fallen onto a metal bridge over a local stream causing major damage to the structure. The bridge had to be removed and transported to a specialist contractor for the repairs to be carried out and to be repainted. Whilst the bridge was being repaired it provided the opportunity to strengthen the support for the bridge as the embankment had been undermined. This was achieved by the installation of stone-filled wire gabions. Other work was also carried out on different parts of the path where several stiles were replaced.



Footpath 64, Coed Talon

This path provides access to a local nature reserve and an area of SSSI. A 6 metre board walk was constructed and erected over a point of permanent standing water and two flights of steps of over twenty steps each were constructed to and from the board walk. As the site is within an SSSI permission was required from Natural Resources Wales to carry out the work and a risk assessment had to be prepared.

Method Statement - Coed Talon Marsh, S.S.S.I.

Client: Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NB.
Location: Coed Talon Marsh, S.S.S.I.
Grid Ref: SJ 2720 5841 to SJ 2715 5841
Item: Maintenance Works
Date: 5th February 2013.

Description of the Works

Undertake associated works to improve access on Public Footpath 64 in the Community of Leeswood by nominated Flintshire County Council:

- Removal of existing stock fence from site, approx 45 mtrs.
- Installation of a wooden boardwalk 35mtrs in length by 1.2mtrs in width, using approved treated timber specified in line with BS 8417.
- Removal of a number of self seeded scrub trees to accommodate the construction of the boardwalk and increase clearance height for walkers once the boardwalk is constructed.
- Remove existing wooden hanging post and replace with new, realign existing concrete post and hang 12ft wooden gate.

Commencing at SJ 2720 5841 and running in a generally westerly direction for a total distance of approximately 45 metres to a point at SJ 2715 5841.

Main Purpose / Reason for the job

The footpath is well used locally and has become unsafe due to the area being wet and boggy.

The surface requires repair as a matter of urgency due to Health & Safety reasons and to ensure that Flintshire County Council statutory obligations and policies with regard to Public Rights of Way are met.

Without maintenance more major and intrusive works may be required.

Method

14. Obtain any permits / permission to carry out specified work affecting the above named site.
15. The nominated contractor will be notified of the legal requirements and specified conditions issued by the Countryside Council for Wales required to carry out the above operations and will be provided with a copy of these conditions accordingly.
16. The nominated contractor will be provided with contact details of the relevant Authorities to contact in the event of any incident.
17. Access to the site will be from the adopted highway adjacent The Old Chapel, Coed Talon along the old dismantled railway using a 4x4 vehicle.

18. Use wooden pointed uprights, knocked manually into the ground to attach a wooden frame to enable the boardwalk to be constructed, allowing a 230cm gap underneath to allow for any flow of water.
19. Materials used in the improvement works on Public Footpath 64, Leeswood will be of an all wooden construction, so to be in keeping with the surrounding environment.
20. Existing stock fence to be removed from site and disposed of lawfully.
21. Any existing excavated soil from site that can be used to backfill the works, will be compacted and left to allow for the natural regeneration of the surface vegetation.
22. The cut scrub trees will be cut into lengths and left to one side on site for the landowner.
23. A visual inspection of the work area will be undertaken for any potential disturbance to wildlife habitat prior to work being undertaken.
24. The inspection of the work will be undertaken on a daily basis by Flintshire County Council to ensure compliance with all necessary documentation
25. Commencement of works will only be undertaken once written confirmation from C.C.W. has been received and are to be completed by 31st March 2013.

Control Measures

- Handling and use of all products will be done in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and safe working procedures.
- All materials stored on site will be stored in designated areas, in such a way to protect from accidental damage, contamination or deterioration.
- All fuel and oil will be stored in an approved container in such a way to protect from accidental damage, contamination or deterioration.
- Spillages will be prevented by minimal amounts of fuel on site. In the unlikely event of an incident a spillage kit will be provided on site.
- Refilling of hand held machinery will be done in a safe manner; any fuelling operations will be undertaken away from water courses to prevent accidents and minimising damage or pollution to the natural and sensitivity of the surrounding environment.
- Number of vehicles on site to be limited.
- In the event of any incident, work on site will cease immediately and the relevant Authorities will be informed.
- All reasonable care will be taken to minimise disturbance to the existing banks and to ensure minimum obstruction to flows in the watercourses at all times,
- Any waste materials will be taken from site frequently so as not to allow large quantities to accumulate.
- The disposal of any waste materials will be done in a safe manner to prevent accidents and minimising damage or pollution to the natural and surrounding environment.

Environmental

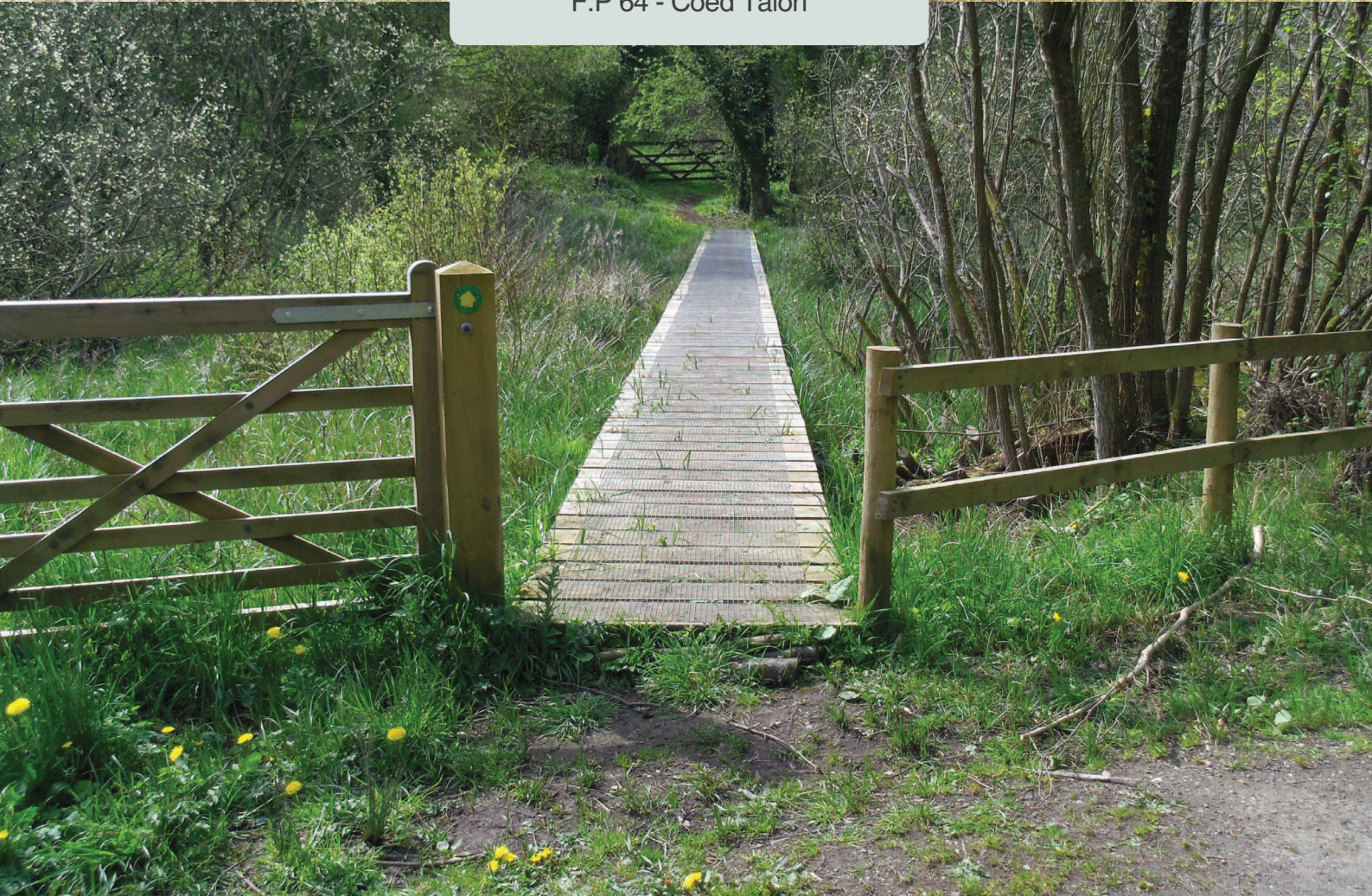
The nominated contractor will be requested to provide a method statement to ensure the specified works are carried out in accordance with the legal requirements and conditions required to carry out the above operations.

On completion of the works the area will be left in a clean and tidy condition, all debris, materials will be removed and disposed of lawfully into skips in accordance with Environmental good practices.

Site at present, removal of scrub trees to right of concrete post.



F.P 64 - Coed Talon



Footpath 29, Nercwys

A 6 metre wooden bridge was erected to replace one that had fallen into disrepair over a local stream. A set of steps were also erected providing access to the bridge.



9| Coastal Path

The coastline and coastal areas of Wales are extremely important to the people, communities, economy and environment of Wales. Many of our towns and cities are located in coastal areas and these are supported by a wide range of local and national infrastructure. A significant proportion of the total national resource of agricultural land is located in areas at risk from the sea. Our coastal areas are an important attraction to visitors from both within and outside of Wales and therefore provide an important contribution to the national economy. 75% of our coastline is formally designated for its environmental importance.

The storms which affected the Wales coastline in December 2013 and January 2014 caused widespread disruption and locally significant impacts, including community evacuation and flooding to property and infrastructure.

In addition to the impacts on people, property and communities, the January storms in particular had widespread impacts on:

- The coastal environment: Significant impacts, such as local erosion and loss of beach has been identified around the coast.
- Infrastructure/utilities: Significant impacts upon Network Rail assets causing ongoing service disruption, plus localised road closures and power cuts.
- The Wales Coastal Path: Damage at over 70 locations along the 870 mile route with repair costs estimated at £340,000.
- Agricultural land: Around 360ha of agricultural land is reported to have been flooded or impacted, the most serious reported impact being to over 200ha at Llanbedr.
- Cultural heritage: New palaeo-environmental and archaeological discoveries have been exposed, such as ancient submerged forest and peat cuttings at numerous locations.
- Environmental change: Nationally and internationally important conservation sites and their features have been affected, with change identified at 37 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 10 Special Areas of Conservation.

The damage and disruption to our coast and coastal communities has been significant and the impact on those who have been affected is extremely distressing. The costs and challenge of restoring our coastline and coastal communities are also significant.

Network Rail infrastructure beside the Dee Estuary was significantly affected during the December 2013 event, including six breaches along the Mostyn Sea Wall and damage to the Mostyn Embankment, Lord Vivian's Embankment and Holywell Embankment. The North Wales line from Holyhead to Chester was temporarily closed as a consequence.

(Information courtesy of National Resources Wales)

As a direct consequence of the flooding the following public footpaths were closed to members of the public, both for safety reasons and to allow remedial works to take place. The current status of these closures is detailed below and on the maps in appendices 4 & 5.

Public Footpath 69 in Mostyn (point A on the map)

The works are now complete and this footpath is open and available for use again.

Public Footpath No. 38 in Holywell (point B)

Contractors working on behalf of Network Rail are currently carrying out remedial work on this breach and should be completed by the end of May 2014. Following completion of the work here the contractors will then move onto working on the breaches on Bagillt 77.

Public Footpath No. 76 in Bagillt (point C)

This path is now open, works having been carried out by a contractor on behalf of the landowners but there are two stretches of the footpath which have been filled which still require some minor improvements to the surface. Users should currently take care using this route.

Public Footpath No. 77 in Bagillt (point D)

This path is still currently closed. Contractors working on behalf of Network Rail will be commencing repair work on this footpath once the remedial works have been completed on Holywell 38. Anticipated to start in May/June.

Public Footpath No. 16 in West Saltney (between Hawarden Railway Bridge and Blue Bridge, Queensferry)

Several breaches of the embankment have been filled in but there is one large excavation still near to Bridge Villas. The landowner is working with our Countryside Services Team to hopefully program the repairs before the summer.

Summary Damage Report

Flintshire Coastal Defences: Known locations of damage/breach 09/12/2013

1. Talacre Dune System
2. Ffynnonngroyw Sea Wall
3. The Marsh, Llanerch Y Mor
4. Greenfield Marsh 2
5. Panton Cop, Lord Vivian's Embankment
6. Flintshire Embankment at Wepre.

1. Talacre Dune System

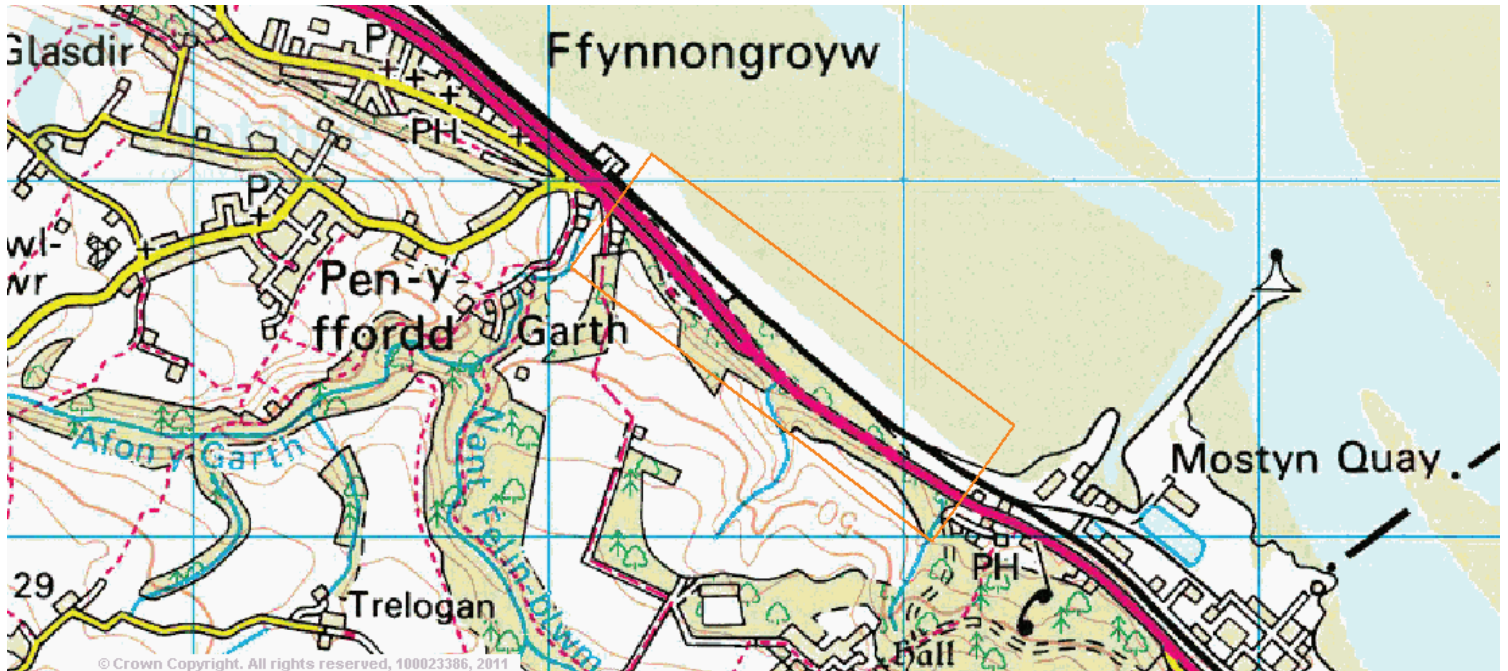
There has been significant damage and disruption to the sand dune system to the west of Talacre with at least one breach to the outer dune system. Ownership and maintenance responsibilities are being confirmed. FCC undertook a beach recharging exercise in conjunction with CCW in 2003. Subsequently, in 2012, further work took place to build up low spots within the rear dune system.

No flooding of property reported.



2. Ffynnongroyw Sea Wall

Multiple breaches and collapses of sea wall. Network Rail currently undertaking emergency repair works to re-open the Chester-Holyhead line. Damage to railway line. No flooding of property reported.



3. The Marsh, Llanerch Y Mor

There is damage to the main (seaward) embankment along its 2.5km length. Overtopping appears to have occurred with rock armour thrown inland. A 15m breach to ground level in the secondary (set back) embankment has occurred approximately halfway along. Extensive flooding to agricultural land but no reported flooding to property.



» Star indicates approx location of breach.



» Breach on secondary embankment approx halfway between Greenfield Dock and Llanerch Y Mor

4. Greenfield Marsh 2

There are at least 3 known breaches to ground level of this embankment. Flooding to agricultural land but no reported flooding to property.

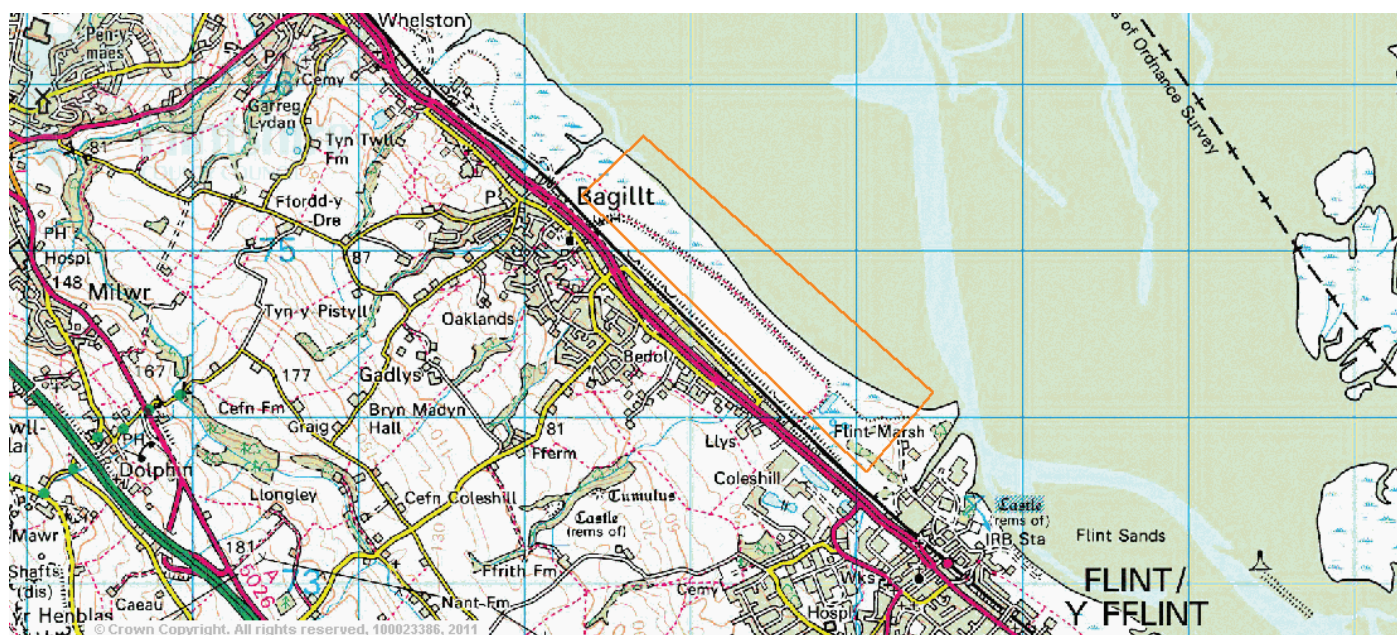




» Main breach approx 15m

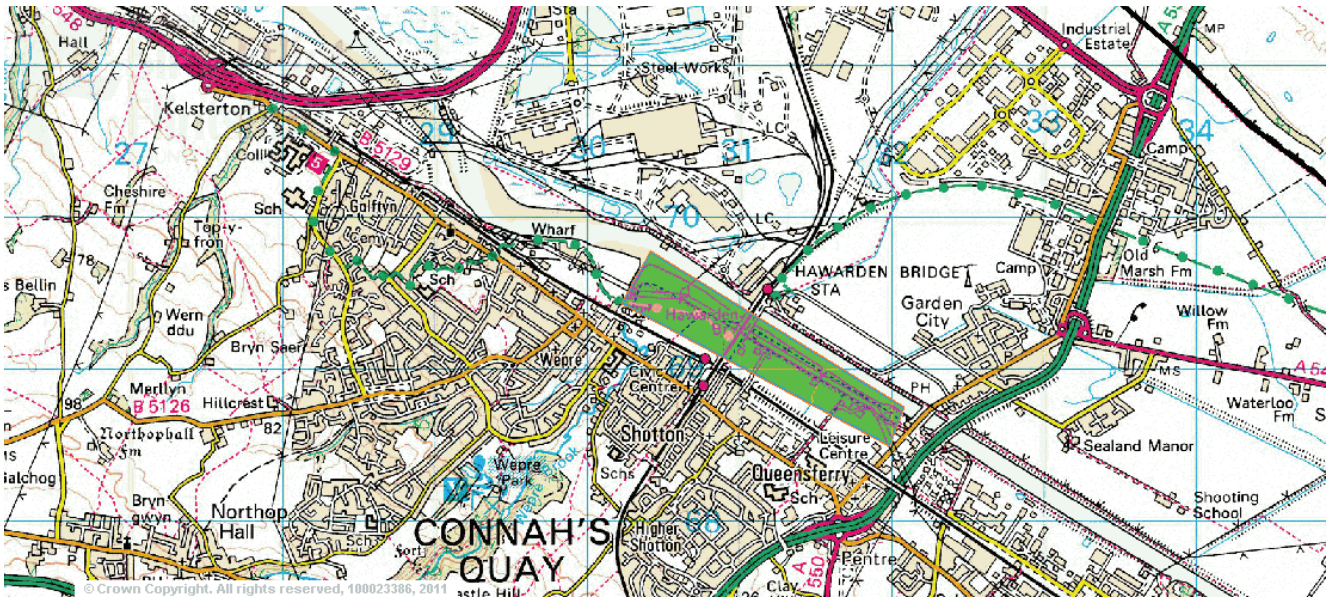
5. Panton Cop, Lord Vivian's Embankment

There is significant damage and numerous breaches along the length of this embankment. Note: Network Rail had only just completed repair works to the crest and rock armour facing on this structure (2013).





6. Coastal Embankments (& Coastal Path) between Wepre and Blue Bridge



» View upstream (looking East) from near Hawarden Bridge. FCC owned embankment up to the fence, private beyond.

There has been overtopping and/or breaches along this section as can be seen in the above photo.

The embankment and land is Flintshire owned in part and the rest is thought to be privately owned.

No flooding to people or property, however the coastal path runs behind this embankment and is presently flooded. Pumping is required to drain area.

10 | Key Priority Areas for 2014-2015

- Implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in the face of reductions in funding.
- Removing the backlog of Legal Event Modification Orders (LEMOS)
- Continue with a robust approach to enforcement.
- Improving opportunities for equestrian and multi-user groups.
- Delivering the capital and revenue work programme.
- Making the rights of way network more accessible.
- Publicising the work of rights of way service.
- Managing the rights of way network more proactively
- Developing a policy for maintenance priorities.
- Timely publication of the Annual Report to highlight the achievements of the section.
- Managing the Strimming Schedule.
- Continue to support on-going development of the various Local Access Forum sub-groups including volunteers.
- Identify easily accessible sites for circular walks with a view to adding to those already in existence.

Appendix 1

Footpath number	Reason for closure
FP 2 Queensferry	Euticals
FP 26 Treuddyn	Landslip
FP 69 Mostyn	Engineering work on behalf of network rail
FP 34 Hawarden	Residential development
FP 16 Saltney	Flood damage – defence work
FP 80 Flint	Three castles trial event
FP 102 Mostyn	Three castles trial event
FP 33 Llanasa	Significant vegetation removal
FP 76 Bagillt	Land breach due to high tide
FP 38 Holywell	Land breach due to high tide
FP 56 Hope	Removal of fallen tree
FP 21 Buckley	Residential development
FP 2 Llanasa	Landslip
FP 3/108 Penyffordd	Residential development
FP 9 Penymynydd	Residential development
FP 58 Treuddyn	Landslip
FP 77 Bagillt	Coastal flood defence works
FP 11 Mold	21 day closure of leete footpath to improve drainage and re-level path
FP 39 Hawarden	21 day closure – urgent excavation works
FP 79 Halkyn	21 day closure – fallen tree
FP10 Halkyn	21 day closure – fallen tree
FP 2 Buckley	21 day closure – drainage works
FP 67 Flint	21 day closure – culvert repairs
FP 4 Mold	3 and a half hour closure – firework display

Appendix 2

Public Rights of Way maintenance work carried out April 2013 – March 2014, Western Area

- 277** Cams issues dealt with and resolved
- 95** Fallen trees and branches removed
 - 3** Bridges repaired, including decking and handrails
- 29** Steps constructed in a steep embankment
- 12** Metres of handrail installed
- 290** 25kg bags of concrete used
- 162** Tons of stone used
- 25** Metres of revetment work undertaken
- 13** Kissing gates installed
- 16** Stiles installed / replaced
- 98** Way markers erected
- 68** Signposts installed / replaced
 - 12** Faded / damaged direction signs replaced on existing signposts
 - 5** Gates installed / replaced
- 26** Rotten / unsafe wooden steps replaced on existing stiles
- 349** Lin metres of wooden rail used
- 158** Wooden posts used for way marking and stile construction
- 937** Lin metres of clearance work undertaken on public footpaths
- 1,555** Lin metres of clearance work undertaken on bridleways
- 196** Sq metres of tarmac footpath slurry sealed
- 3,894** Sq metres of leaf fall removed from surfaced public rights of way

- 10** Metal gate hanging and receiving posts installed
- 13** Gabion baskets installed to prevent erosion
- 30** Various information signs erected, such as: Keep dogs on lead signs / Please close the gate, etc
- 2,402** Lin Metres of Footpath, Bridleway and Byway track repaired and made safe
- 100** Direction signs identified and erected with destination, distance and footpath number on sign

Additional works undertaken on Public Rights of Way have included the following:

- Proving salt heaps
- Removing large stone boulders placed on routes to obstruct or restrict access
- Removal of fly tipping and litter picking
- Drainage investigation
- Making safe potholes
- Undertaking various site inspections and meetings
- Attending to various cropping issues
- Enforcement action to remove obstructions

John Roberts

26/08/2013

“I walked this path today and I’m pleased to report that your prompt action has had the desired effect. The path has been cleared and is now much easier to walk. It’s not perfect, and might still cause problems when the crop is wet, but it’s a big improvement and this will be welcomed, especially by the Sychdyn villagers who use the path regularly. Hopefully there will be no repeat next year, now that the individual concerned is aware that you will take action if necessary.

Thanks again

John.”

Appendix 3

Public Rights of Way maintenance work carried out April 2013 – March 2014, Eastern Area

239 Cams issues dealt with and resolved

70 Fallen trees and branches removed

1 Bridges repaired, including decking and handrails

25 Steps constructed in a steep embankment

25 Metres of handrail installed

71 25kg bags of concrete used

120 Tons of stone used

40 Metres of revetment work undertaken

2 Kissing gates installed

38 Stiles installed / replaced

150 Way markers erected

8 Signposts installed / replaced

20 Faded / damaged direction signs replaced on existing signposts

118 Rotten / unsafe wooden steps replaced on existing stiles

310 Lin metres of wooden rail used

100 Wooden posts used for way marking and stile construction

1,500 Lin metres of clearance work undertaken

1,665 Sq metres of tarmac footpath slurry sealed

5 Metal gate hanging and receiving posts installed

30 Various information signs erected, such as: Keep dogs on lead signs / Please close the gate, etc

2,775 Lin Metres of Footpath, Bridleway and Byway track repaired and made safe

11 Railway Sleepers installed

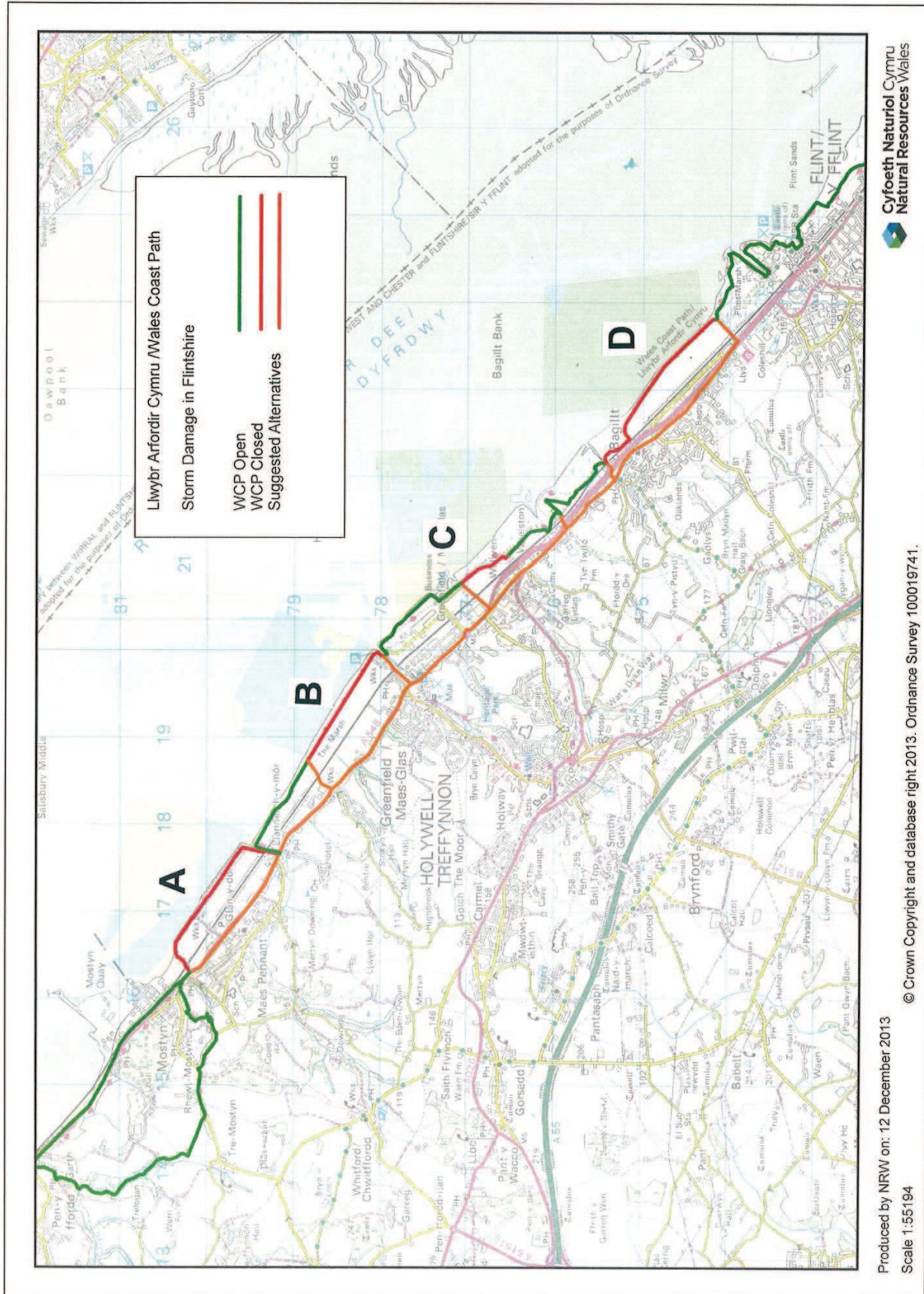
5 Crossing Points constructed

10 Dog Latches Installed

Additional works undertaken on Public Rights of Way have included the following:

- Proving salt heaps
- Removing large stone boulders placed on routes to obstruct or restrict access
- Removal of fly tipping and litter picking
- Drainage investigation
- Making safe potholes
- Undertaking various site inspections and meetings
- Attending to various cropping issues
- Enforcement action to remove obstructions

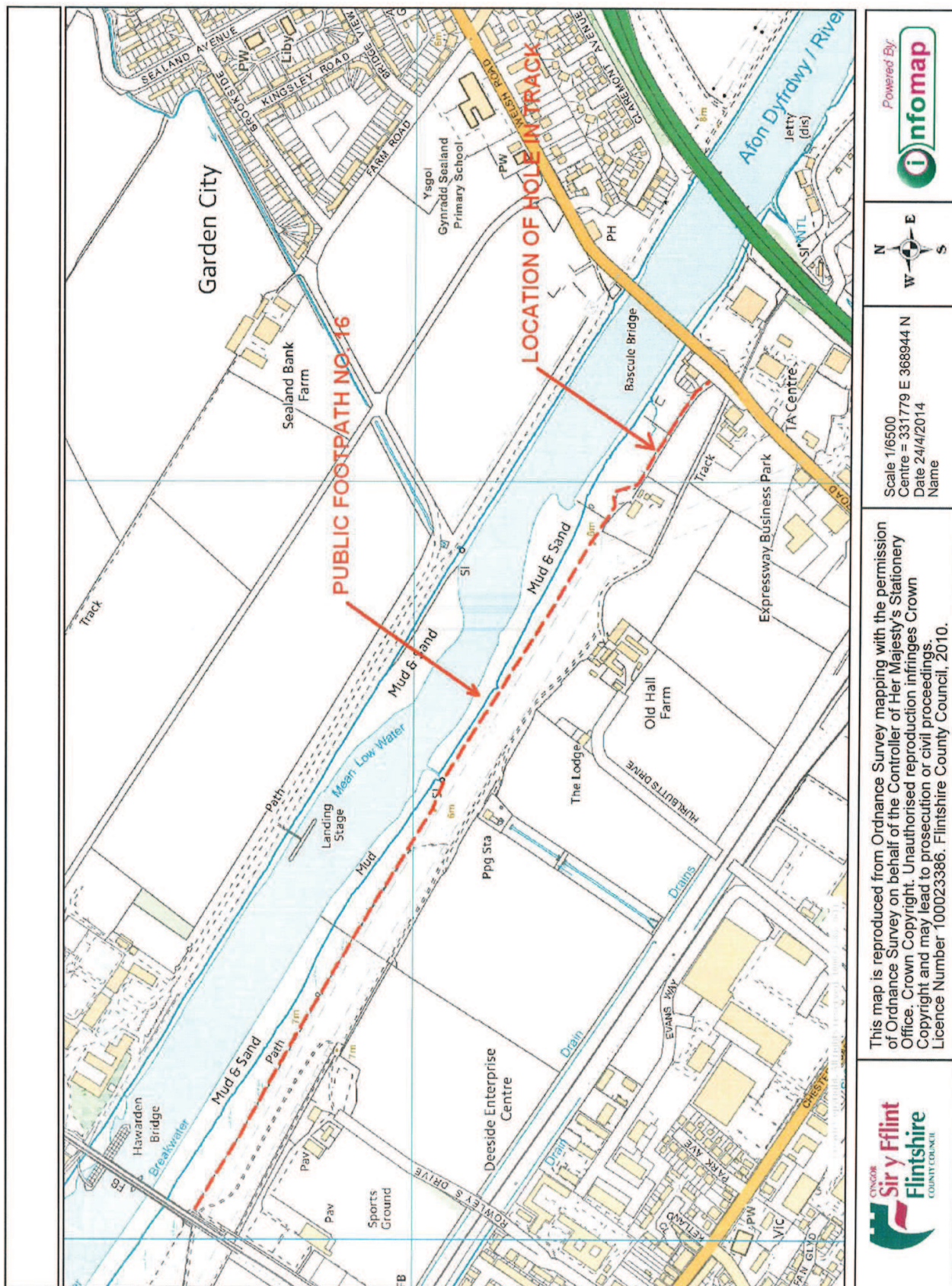
Appendix 4






Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
 Natural Resources Wales

Produced by NRW on: 12 December 2013
 Scale 1:55194
 © Crown Copyright and database right 2013. Ordnance Survey 100019741.

Appendix 5



		<p>Scale 1/6500 Centre = 331779 E 368944 N Date 24/4/2014 Name</p>	<p>This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number 100023386. Flintshire County Council, 2010.</p>	
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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15TH JULY, 2014**

REPORT BY: **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LEISURE
FINANCE TASK & FINISH GROUP**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To present to Cabinet the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to dual use leisure facilities in Flintshire and sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Leisure Finance Task & Finish Group was set up in October 2013 in order to review and address the current level of overspend within the Leisure Service Budget.

2.02 The Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee had also considered setting up a Task & Finish Group to review the Leisure Service Budget. Therefore, the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 10 October, 2014, proposed that the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee be invited to sit on the Task & Finish Group and report back the work of the Group when necessary.

2.03 The Membership of the Task & Finish Group is as follows:-

- Cllr David Mackie (Chairman)
- Cllr Marion Bateman
- Cllr Stella Jones
- Cllr Nancy Matthews
- Cllr Tim Newhouse

2.04 Meetings of the Task & Finish Group are also attended by the following officers who provide specialist advice:-

- Lawrence Rawsthorne, Head of Culture & Leisure
- Mike Welch, Principal Leisure Services Officer
- Paul Jones, Business Improvement Manger
- Carl Jones, Accountant – Financial Services

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 During their second meeting, the Group discussed schools where dual use leisure facilities were provided. Following consideration of detailed information provided by officers to the Group, it was proposed that officers initiate discussions with the schools to assess whether they would consider assuming responsibility for community access of the facilities in the future. This proposal was presented to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 15 May, 2014 where it was supported to be recommended to Cabinet.

3.02 During their last meeting held on the 19 May, 2014, the Group considered the objectives as set out within their terms of reference, and made the following comments:-

- **To consider how best to address the current level of overspend within the Leisure Service budget** – The Group commented that it was pleasing to note that the current Leisure Service budget for 2014/15 had been set in line with realistic customer receipts and had been increased to allow for a balanced budget. This action by the Council's Administration was seen to address the first of the Group's terms of reference.
- **To consider the opportunity available to encourage external funding** – The Group commented that the maintenance of receipts from customers depended on facilities being fit for purpose which depended on maintenance funds being made available. The responsibility from securing other external funding must rest with the Cabinet and Chief Officer Team and be an on-going responsibility.
- **To consider how best to prioritise spend within the Leisure Services budget** – The Group recommended that consideration should be given by Cabinet that the capital receipts received from the sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School be ring-fenced for maintenance works for Leisure Centres in Flintshire.

3.03 During discussion around customer numbers, the Group commented that to maintain and improve customer numbers, leisure facilities across Flintshire must be well maintained but raised concerns around the lack of budget for essential maintenance within the Council's Capital Programme. Previous investment has allowed Deeside Leisure Centre and Flint Leisure Centre to be improved, but their future on-going maintenance costs have not been funded. If a budget for maintenance is not allocated eventually income from customers is likely to diminish.

- 3.04 The Group were informed during the last meeting that the Council was currently conducting a review of assets across Flintshire, where the needs of Leisure Centre maintenance would be considered. Following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, the Group felt it would be inappropriate to continue to review Leisure Services further as this time as this could result in duplication of effort.
- 3.05 In closing the last meeting, the Group recognised the professionalism of the officers who attended the meetings. The officers were able to answer most of the questions asked from the data they had provided and all requested information was presented to Members. Their initial presentation was a succinct evaluation of the situation and the Group wished to express their thanks for the support they had provided.
- 3.06 The proposal of the Group around the use of capital receipts received from the sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School was presented to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 19 June, 2014 where it was supported to be recommended to Cabinet.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Cabinet consider ring-fencing capital receipts received from the sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School for maintenance works for Leisure Centres in Flintshire.
- 4.02 That officers be asked to initiate discussions with schools where dual use leisure facilities were provided to assess whether they would consider assuming responsibility for community access of the facilities in the future.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 None directly 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 None.

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

None.

Contact Officer: Ceri Owen
Telephone: 01352 703205
Email: ceri.owen@flintshire.gov.uk

FOR INFORMATION

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To inform Members of action taken under delegated powers.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 At the Executive Meeting held on 31st October, 2000 it was agreed that one of the standard agenda items at each Executive should be a report on the "Exercise of Delegated Powers".

3.00 RECOMMENDATION

3.01 Members note the details of actions taken under the "Exercise of Delegated Powers".

4.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.01 As detailed in each report.

5.00 ANTI-POVERTY IMPACT

5.01 As detailed in each report.

6.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

6.01 As detailed in each report.

7.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.01 As detailed in each report.

8.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.01 As detailed in each report

9.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

9.01 Not applicable

10.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

10.01 Not applicable

11.00 APPENDICES

11.01 Summary of Decisions taken under Delegated Powers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background documents: See individual report.

Contact Officer: Detailed on the individual reports.

APPENDIX 1

EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS – DECISIONS TAKEN

- Restructure of Library and Arts Service

Copies of the Delegated Powers reports are on deposit in the Team Manager's Room, Committee Services

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**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS
COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
JULY 2014 TO DECEMBER 2014**

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
July					
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Annual Improvement Report from Wales Audit Office Receive Annual Improvement Report from the Auditor General for Wales and note the Council's response		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014	Chief Executive's	WAO Performance Audit Regulatory Programme 2014-15 To note the intended programme for the 2014/15 Performance Audit work and related fees		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Improvement Plan 2014/15 To consider the draft Improvement Plan 2014/15 prior to endorsement by County Council		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 (Month 12) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 report as at Month 12.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014		Workforce Information Report To report workforce information to Members		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 July 2014	Social Services	Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report (Social & Health Care OSC) To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 July 2014	Social Services	<p>Year End Service Performance Report (Social & Health Care OSC) To note and consider the 2013/14 Year End Service Performance Report produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council.</p>		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 July 2014	Social Services	<p>Emergency duty Team Update To receive an update on the joint Wrexham / Flintshire & Denbighshire Emergency Duty Team.</p>		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Social & Health Care Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	<p>Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) system Welsh Government issued a consultation document on 15th May 2014 identifying options to end the HRAS subsidy system by voluntary agreement. This paper describes the content of the document, implications of the various options for Flintshire and seeks support for Flintshire's response submitted on 10th July 2014.</p>		
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	<p>Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (including Flint) Seek approval for the process of progressing Flint Town Centre Regeneration.</p>		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 July 2014		Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 July 2014		Year End Service Performance Report To note and consider the 2013/14 Year End Service Performance Report produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council.		
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 July 2014	Organisational Change	Energy Switching Scheme Update To provide an update to Members of the Results of the Welsh Government pilot scheme		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Chief Executive's	"In Defence of Localism" - Elected Government in Wales and the Impact of Austerity" To consider the WLGA consultation and agree the Council's response.	Strategic	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	15 July 2014	People and Resources	Capital Programme 2013/14 (Outturn) To provide Members with the capital programme outturn information for 2012/13.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	15 July 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 (Outturn) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring outturn information for 2013/14.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	15 July 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Finance	Prudential Indicators - Actual 2013/14 To present proposals for setting a range of prudential indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	15 July 2014	ICT and Customer Services	3 County Regional Procurement Project To consider and agree the final business case for the 3 County Procurement Project between Flintshire, Denbighshire and Gwynedd County Councils.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Reform Draft consultation response to Welsh Government Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Reform	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	Enforcement Action for the Recovery of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates To advise Members of reforms to the Bailiff Regulations and the impact of changes.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	GARDEN SERVICE FOR COUNCIL TENANTS This report makes recommendations to change the charging approach for the garden service for Council tenancies	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Community and Enterprise	Implementation of a Risk Based Verification Policy To seek Members' approval of a policy to enable the introduction of Risk Based Verification for the administration of Housing Benefit	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Social Services	Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) To present the final version of the Social Services Annual Performance Framework to Cabinet for agreement.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Social Services	Flintshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2014 - 2017 To report the main findings of the most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Social Services	Regional Commissioning of Children and Young People Advocacy Service To seek Cabinet approval to proceed to tender for a regional independent professional Advocacy Service for Children and Young People known to social services in North Wales. This collaboration includes the 6 North Wales Authorities.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Social Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Planninig and Environment	<p>Public Rights of Way Annual Report For the Cabinet to endorse a hierarchical approach to public rights of way maintenance, definitive map and public path orders and handling complaints.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment
Cabinet	15 July 2014	Legal and Democratic Services	<p>Recommendations from the Leisure Finance Task & Finish Group To present to Cabinet the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to dual use leisure facilities in Flintshire and sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	People and Resources	<p>Supplementary Financial Information to Draft Statement of Accounts 2013/14 To provide Members with supplementary financial information to accompany the Draft Statement of Accounts 2013/14.</p>		
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	People and Resources	<p>Draft Statement of Accounts 2013/14 To present the Statement of Accounts 2013/14 (subject to audit) for Members' information only at this stage.</p>		
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	People and Resources	<p>Treasury Management Annual Report 2013/14 and 2014/15 Quarter 1 Update To present the Annual Report on the Council's Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and Practices 2013/14 and to provide an update on Treasury Management activity in 2014/15 to the end of May 2014.</p>		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	Legal and Democratic Services	Annual Governance Statement For the committee to consider and approve the draft Annual governance Statement (AGS)	All Report Types	
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Action Tracking To inform the committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Audit Committee meetings.		
Audit Committee	16 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme for the Audit Committee for the next year.		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 July 2014	Education and Youth	Year End Service Performance Report (Lifelong Learning OSC) To note and consider the 2013/14 Year End Service Performance Report produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 July 2014	Education and Youth	Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report (Lifelong Learning OSC) To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 July 2014	Education and Youth	Inclusion Service Review To demonstrate to the Committee how the Inclusion Service review was being implemented in practice.		
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report (CP&P OSC) To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Community, Profile & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24 July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	C P & P Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Partnerships & Profile Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 July 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14 (Outturn) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring Outturn information for 2013/14.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 July 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2013/14		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 July 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report (Corporate Resources OSC) To note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 July 2014	Chief Executive's	Year End Service Performance Report (Corporate Resources OSC) To note and consider the 2013/14 Year End Service Performance Report produced at the Head of Service/Divisional level under the adopted business model of the Council.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
August					
September					
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board To receive an update / presentation from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 September 2014	Social Services	Social Services Act update To provide an update to Members on the Social Services Act		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 September 2014	Social Services	CSSIW Dementia Action Plan To provide an update to Members on the CSSIW Dementia Action Plan		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Social & Health Care Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Community Profile & Partnerships Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Flintshire Council County	9 September 2014	Legal and Democratic Services	Annual Governance Statement For Council to approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)		
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Housing Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 September 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 3) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 report as at month 3.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Cabinet	16 September 2014	Chief Executive's	Auditor General for Wales: Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Flintshire County Council's 2014-15 Improvement Plan To note the compliance certificate for the audit off the 2014-15 Improvement Plan	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Cabinet	16 September 2014	Chief Executive's	Clwyd Theatr Cymru Business Plan Members are requested to endorse the Business Plan as recommended by the Theatre Board of Governors. A full copy of the Business Plan is available in the Members Library and each of the group rooms.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	16 September 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 3) To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 3) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	16 September 2014	People and Resources	Treasury Management Annual Report 2013/14 To present to Members the draft Annual Treasury Management Report for 2013/14.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	16 September 2014	People and Resources	Workforce Information Quarter 1 (April - June 2014) To provide members with an update for the first quarter 2014 / 15	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	16 September 2014	Community and Enterprise	<p>FLINT REGENERATION THE NEXT STEPS, INCLUDING PROPOSALS FOR TENDR EXERCISE TO TAKE FORWARD OTHER KEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>This report seeks Cabinet approval for the next steps required to progress the regeneration of Flint Town Centre, redevelopment of the cleared sites of the maisonettes, and proposas to commence procurement of Council Housing at a number of sites across the County.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	16 September 2014	Planninig and Environment	<p>Food Service Plan 2014-15</p> <p>To obtain approval for the Food Service Plan 2014-15.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	16 September 2014	Transport and Streetscene	<p>Removal of slippery road signs erected prior to the current policy for skid resistance on the adopted road network</p> <p>To seek approval for the removal of slippery road signs erected prior to The Policy for Skid Resistance on the adopted Road Network that was approved on the 19th March 2013.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Environment Forward Work Programme</p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	24 September 2014	People and Resources	Statement of Accounts 2013/14 To present to Members of the Audit Committee the Statement of Accounts for 2013/14, incorporating those changes agreed with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) during the course of the audit.		
Audit Committee	24 September 2014	People and Resources	Certification of Grant Claims and Returns 2012/13 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the grant claim certification for the year ended 31st March 2013	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management
Audit Committee	24 September 2014	Chief Executive's	Auditor General for Wales: Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of Flintshire County Council's 2014-15 Improvement Plan To note the compliance certificate for the audit off the 2014-15 Improvement Plan	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

COMMITTEE		MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Flintshire Council	County	24 September 2014	People and Resources	Statement of Accounts 2014/15 To seek Members' approval of the final Statement of Accounts for 2013/14.		
Flintshire Council	County	24 September 2014	People and Resources	Treasury Management Annual Report 2013/14 To present to Members the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2013/14.		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee		25 September 2014	Education and Youth	Update on School Modernisation To update Members on the progress made with School Modernisation		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee		25 September 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Lifelong Learning Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
October						

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 October 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 4) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 report as at month 4.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Social & Health Care Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Community Profile & Partnerships Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	14 October 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 4) To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 4) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	14 October 2014	People and Resources	Capital Programme 2014/15 (Month 4) To provide Members with the Month 4 (end of July) capital programme information for 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Housing Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	22 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Environment Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23 October 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Lifelong Learning Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
November					
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 November 2014	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 5) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 report as at month 5.		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 November 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 November 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Social & Health Care Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17 November 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Community Profile & Partnerships Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Cabinet	18 November 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 5) To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 5) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26 November 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Housing Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
December					
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	3 December 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Environment Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4 December 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Lifelong Learning Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	10 December 2014	People and Resources	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2014/15 and 2014/15 Update</p> <p>To provide an update on matters relating to the Council's Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and Practices 2014/15 to the end of September 2014.</p>		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 December 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Corporate Resources Forward Work Programme</p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>		
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 December 2014	Finance	<p>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 6)</p> <p>To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 report as at month 6.</p>		
Cabinet	16 December 2014	People and Resources	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2014/15</p> <p>To present to Members the draft Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2014/15 for recommendation to Council.</p>	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	16 December 2014	People and Resources	Council Fund Capital Programme 2015/16 To propose the allocation of funding to the core capital programme for 2015/16.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	16 December 2014	People and Resources	Capital Programme 2014/15 (Month 6) To provide Members with the Month 6 (end of September) capital programme information for 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Cabinet	16 December 2014	People and Resources	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15 (Month 6) To provide Members with the most up to date revenue budget monitoring information (Month 6) for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18 December 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Social & Health Care Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	DIRECTORATE	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18 December 2014	Overview and Scrutiny	Community Profile & Partnerships Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee.		

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