

Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chair)

CS/NG

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, David Cox,
Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies,
Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw,
George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes,
Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece,
Gareth Roberts and Sharon Williams

18 March 2015

Sharon Thomas 01352 702324
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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **TUESDAY, 24TH MARCH, 2015** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

*** Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee have been invited to attend for Agenda Item 4**

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 8)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2015 (copy enclosed).
- 4 **VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES** (Pages 9 - 16)
Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.
- 5 **WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE RIGHT TO BUY AND RIGHT TO ACQUIRE** (Pages 17 - 44)
Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

6 **QUARTER 3 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 45 - 92)

Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

7 **UPDATE ON THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) SUBSIDY**

To receive a verbal update from the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)

8 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 93 - 98)

Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **24 FEBRUARY 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 24 February 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Rosetta Dolphin, Jim Falshaw, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Housing, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) and Team Manager - Advice & Homeless Service

Mr. Shayne Hembrow of Wales & West Housing (for minute number 57)

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

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillor Hilary Isherwood declared a personal interest on all agenda items due to her husband being the Shadow Housing Minister.

56. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 23 January 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

57. WORK OF WALES AND WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Shayne Hembrow of Wales & West Housing and invited him to deliver his presentation to the Committee.

In thanking the Committee for this opportunity, Mr. Hembrow gave an overview of the establishment of Wales & West Housing which now had a portfolio of 10,000 properties across Wales, including 860 in Flintshire. As a major provider of new homes, a diverse range of stock was held to offer a range of accommodation options to customers. The creation of smaller companies under Wales & West Housing, for example to undertake repairs and maintenance, provided a more efficient and controlled way of working, and would continue to expand. An update was given on current/new developments together with investments on energy efficiency measures to combat fuel poverty, provision of free WiFi and the Connect24 telecare service. Details were also shared on the creation of opportunities for training and employment and joint working with the

Council's Housing Options team to support residents in keeping their own homes, prevent homelessness and minimise the impact of the 'bedroom tax'.

Councillor Peter Curtis welcomed the approach taken by Wales & West Housing, particularly in its stance as a 'living wage employer' and its work to help individuals access housing through shared ownership schemes.

Responding to a question from Councillor Mike Reece, Mr. Hembrow explained that Right to Buy only applied to around 1,000 of the company's properties with secured tenancies whilst others had a Right to Acquire under different legislation. He added that no Right to Buy requests had been received over the past three years.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin asked about progress with the housing development taking place in her adjoining ward as she was aware of a number of complaints due to the building work. Mr. Hembrow explained the necessity of moving soil on the site, with steps taken to minimise the impact, and that the scheme was due for completion early in 2016. Individuals who wished to register for the scheme were able to do so via the Council's Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) project.

Councillor Paul Cunningham welcomed the Dementia/disability friendly ethos adopted for services provided by Castell Care and Support.

Councillor George Hardcastle welcomed the provision of free WiFi for residents at Llys Jasmine and asked about the company's policy on rent arrears concerning anti-social behaviour issues. Councillor Dolphin pointed out the effects of anti-social behaviour on neighbouring properties. Mr. Hembrow emphasised that the approach taken by Wales & West Housing was based on values to 'do the right thing' for its customers and make a difference in people's lives, homes and communities. He said that the majority of tenants valued their homes and wanted to keep up their rent payments but required help to do this. Due to the challenges in resolving most anti-social behaviour issues through legal measures, the shift in focus was for direct contact with the tenant to discuss and find a way forward, with lower payments if necessary.

Following a query from Councillor Gareth Roberts on the development near Brignant in Holywell, Mr. Hembrow said that work was expected to start on site during this calendar year.

In response to a question from Councillor David Cox, Mr. Hembrow said that the provision of catering services via Castell Catering was not common for housing associations and that this concept had been instigated through a suggestion made by the Council. He referred to ongoing discussions to deliver support through a partnership with Age Connects.

In thanking Mr. Hembrow for his presentation, the Chairman welcomed the progress made by Wales & West Housing and joint working on extra care schemes, in particular on allocations.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

58. HOUSING ACT 2014 (WALES) - HOMELESSNESS AND POWER TO DISREGARD THE TEST OF INTENTIONALITY

The Team Manager - Advice & Homeless Service introduced the report summarising the new powers to Local Authorities under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to decide whether or not to apply the intentionality test to requests for housing assistance from homeless applicants.

On the key considerations of the report, the Team Manager explained that the focus of this significant change in legislation was to put the individual at the centre of engagement to identify a solution to their housing problem. From April 2015, the Authority had a statutory duty to help anyone at risk of losing their property within 56 days and would have the power to disregard the test of intentionality for any category of homeless applicant (listed in the appendix to the report) rather than on a 'case by case' basis. The Team Manager explained the reasons behind the intentionality test, as set out in the report and advised that the Welsh Government (WG) had granted powers for Authorities to opt back into the use of the intentionality test, if they wished, through a set approach.

As reported to the Committee in November 2014, in preparation for the new legislation, the Housing Options team had been piloting enhanced homelessness prevention to take reasonable steps to help anyone threatened with homelessness within 56 days, irrespective of their priority need status. The Team Manager reported continued positive progress on the pilot however the Authority did not have full powers until April 2015. The recommendation was therefore to take a prudent approach and continue maintaining the intentionality test until a later stage to seek assurance on the cost effectiveness in undertaking the new statutory duty.

In response to a query from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, the Team Manager said that the Authority must be satisfied that the applicant is at risk of homelessness within the given timeframe, ie 56 days. The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) gave an example which detailed the assessment process and preventative work carried out with the individual to help maintain their current accommodation where possible. Following concerns raised by Councillor Dolphin around affordability of private rent, the Team Manager spoke of assistance by the Housing Options team in helping to provide short-term measures or work with the individual on a housing plan for long-term solutions.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood welcomed the proactive approach being taken by the Council and asked about information exchange between departments to plan ahead, for example with Social Services in respect of care leavers. The Team Manager stated that some figures had been identified through the pilot, however as this only represented elements of the legislation, this was not a complete picture. With regard to preventative work, he pointed out the challenges if care leavers chose not to engage with the Authority. The emphasis of the legislation on preventing homelessness as a corporate duty would be shared in a Member workshop to be arranged.

Queries were raised on homeless applicants from outside the county where a history of anti-social behaviour issues had been identified. The Team Manager provided information on the powers of Authorities to refer back those individuals where a local connection could not be identified.

Councillor Ray Hughes felt that consideration should be given to the criteria for a local connection, as the county covered a substantial area. The Team Manager replied that the legislation on local connections applied to local housing authorities rather than towns.

When asked by Councillor George Hardcastle about the allocation points and banding system, the Chief Officer advised that this was currently in transition with the policy due to be implemented from April 2015.

Following comments from Councillor Peter Curtis, explanation was given on work undertaken by the Income team to tackle rent arrears by working with tenants on income expenditure.

Councillor Mike Reece suggested that representatives from Conwy and Denbighshire Councils be invited to attend the workshop as both were proposing to use a similar approach to that of Flintshire.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the proposal that, until it is confident that it is cost effectively undertaking its new homelessness prevention statutory duty, the Authority should still have regard to the homelessness intentionality test and take the appropriate steps to inform the Welsh Minister of this decision.

59. SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN

The Team Manager - Advice & Homeless Service introduced an update on work being undertaken to put appropriate measures in place to manage the reduction within the 2015-2016 Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant to protect service delivery as much as possible.

Table 1 of the report highlighted year on year reductions in the grant for Flintshire, culminating in a 10.4% reduction (£659,026) for 2015/16 with further cuts expected for 2016/17. Major concerns about the negative impact of these cuts on budgets for other services had prompted a review of service provision by remodelling existing services. Table 2 in the report set out identified efficiency savings of £649,000 for 2015/16 across five service areas.

Councillor Peter Curtis requested that the information in Table 2 show the current budget figures for each service area. The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) agreed to provide the Committee with percentage cuts for each area, along with the full commissioning plan once discussions with service providers had been completed.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood asked if there was any rationale behind the more substantial reduction in funding for the grant in 2015/16. The Chief Officer

explained that work in redistributing the grant across Wales had impacted more negatively on North Wales, with similar levels of cuts expected for 2016/17 onwards. She added that this remained a ringfenced budget in Wales and stressed the need for all Council in Wales to make representations to the Welsh Government to highlight the importance of this grant due to the positive effect that these services could have in reducing expenditure on acute services.

Following a request by Councillor Isherwood for a breakdown of Supporting People Programme Grant cuts for Wrexham and Denbighshire Councils, the Chief Officer agreed to provide this information in relation to councils in North and South Wales over the past few years.

RESOLVED:

That the actions being taken by Flintshire's Supporting People team to manage the reduction in the 2015/16 Supporting People Programme Grant to protect, as much as possible, housing support services for vulnerable residents, be noted.

60. UPDATE ON THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) SUBSIDY

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) advised that confirmation had been received that the Welsh Government (WG) had reached agreement with the Treasury of the final settlement amount of £919m to enable the 11 stock-retaining Councils to exit the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) system. Flintshire's share of this amount was just under £80m.

In line with WG requirements on borrowing, there was a need for some remodelling work to be carried out by treasury management colleagues before the agreement could be signed. All 11 Councils were expected to sign the agreement. The Chief Officer praised the team effort by all involved in reaching this stage. A final update would be reported to the next meeting in March 2015.

Councillor George Hardcastle thanked the Cabinet Member, Chief Officer and her team for their hard work.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

61. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. The following changes were agreed:

- Welsh Government consultation on the future of Right to Buy/Right to Acquire to be scheduled for the next meeting on 24 March 2015.
- Draft Improvement Plan 2015/16 to be included for the meeting on 24 April 2015.
- Reports on the Review of Strategic Housing Partnership, Private Sector Housing Renewal and Community Infrastructure Levy to be deferred to an additional meeting to be arranged for May 2015.

Following a request from Councillor Mike Reece, the Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) agreed to include information on solid brick houses within the report on Private Sector Housing Renewal.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

62. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.45 am)

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Chairman

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE)**

SUBJECT: **VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update members on the progress made in delivering the Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme in Deeside.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The VVP programme was launched by Welsh Government in May 2013. The aims of the programme are:

- To revitalise and promote the sustainable development of town centres, coastal communities and Communities First clusters, making the most of their green infrastructure, heritage and historic character;
- To build sustainable and vibrant communities that are more prosperous, better educated and healthier;
- To tackle poverty by creating jobs, encouraging skills development and helping people into work;
- To encourage wider investment in housing; and
- To deliver strategic, regionally important projects of significant scale.

2.02 Cabinet approved the submission of a bid to the programme on 16 July 2013. The final bid was submitted in November 2013 on behalf of the Deeside Partnership for a package of projects that will contribute to the wider regeneration of Deeside.

2.03 The VVP programme is currently approved for the 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/17 financial years.

2.04 Whilst projects within the programme are able to span more than one year the funding allocation in each year cannot be moved from one year to the next. The programme is, in addition, a purely capital programme with no support for revenue costs.

2.05 Flintshire was allocated £6.024m by Welsh Government for the three

years of the programme. A financial breakdown is provided in Appendix 1. The approval was formally granted in July 2014 which has curtailed the period for project delivery in the first year.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Deeside is a major economic hub for North Wales and the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone, which will bring up to 7,000 new jobs, will further strengthen this role. However, Deeside also experiences considerable levels of deprivation, in particular in the areas covered by the Communities First programme. The challenge for the regeneration process is to harness the economic growth to, wherever possible, improve economic opportunities and quality of life.
- 3.02 The VVP programme includes projects to:
- improve the energy efficiency of public sector housing;
 - improve the quality of private sector housing to raise quality of life and encourage people to live in Deeside;
 - encourage the development of residential units over retail premises to improve business viability and increase town centre vibrancy;
 - develop small housing projects on hard-to-develop sites and improve the appearance of poor quality stalled sites;
 - encourage private sector investment in regenerating Deeside;
 - improve the appearance of the town centre public realm and encourage the improvement of shop fronts;
 - provide opportunities for unemployed people to gain skills and work experience; and
 - investigate the feasibility of increasing Wi-Fi access in Deeside town centres.
- 3.03 The programme is overseen by two governance structures. The Deeside Partnership comprises representatives from the main delivery bodies for regeneration in Deeside including the Council, registered social landlords, Deeside Enterprise Zone and the voluntary sector. Welsh Government attend the Deeside Partnership meetings in an advisory capacity. The Deeside Forum includes all Council ward members and representatives from the town and community councils in Deeside. Both structures are scheduled quarterly to review the progress of the programme.
- 3.04 The current progress towards delivering the projects in the VVP programme is set out in Appendix 2. Overall, despite the late start to the programme, the majority of the projects have mobilised effectively and are now delivering in accordance with their planned actions.

In particular:

- WHQS+ - the project has been delivered as planned, installing energy efficiency measures to Council properties.

- Promoting Deeside as a Place to Live and Work – the project has supported the installation of energy efficiency measures to private properties and has overachieved against its original targets. A programme of environmental improvements in Garden City has been tendered and this will be delivered in year two.
- Living Above the Shops – the project has supported the conversion of vacant space above shops into new residential units and has achieved its target for this year of three units.
- Stalled sites – this involves the acquisition of The Old Dairy in Connah’s Quay which is due to complete this year.
- Bringing Vibrancy Back to the High Street – the original intention was to purchase two vacant shops units and run them as business start-up projects, or social enterprises. However, the Council has not yet secured a delivery agent to manage the shops. The alternative option was that VVP would fund the demolition of the Council buildings in Connah's Quay, however, the demolition has been delayed until the end of May 2015.
- Improving the Appearance of Deeside – the project had a number of themes including provision of work opportunities through the Groundwork North Wales Green Team which has had a very successful first year. Other elements of the project, including preparation of the Deeside Plan and environmental improvement projects have been slower to mobilise.
- The Town Centre WiFi project has been delayed in the commissioning phase and will now take place in year two.

3.05 Welsh Government has allowed enough flexibility within the programme to allow the Council to move funding between projects to enable the full funding allocation for this year to be drawn down.

3.06 The outputs achieved to date by the programme are shown in Appendix 2.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the progress in delivering the Vibrant and Viable Places programme is noted.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The programme is largely funded through the Welsh Government VVP funding. Match funding for the programme is drawn from a mixture of Council and external funding sources.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The VVP programme benefits the most deprived areas of the County and will have an impact which will extend beyond Deeside.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 Environmental enhancement is a key outcome of this programme; the Council is expected to see significant benefits for the most environmentally stressed part of the County.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The programme is targeted at some of the most deprived communities in Flintshire and will help tackle economic, social and environmental issues.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Consultation will be undertaken with groups affected by the work of the programme. There will be ongoing dialogue with the Deeside Forum and Deeside Partnership.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Consultation has been undertaken with the Deeside Partnership and Deeside Forum.

12.00 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - VVP project finance summary
Appendix 2 - VVP project progress summary

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

None.

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Appendix 1 - Vibrant and Viable Places projected expenditure

	Original projection - VVP expenditure		March 15 projection - VVP expenditure	
	2014/2015	2014/2017	2014/2015	2014/2017
WHQS+	£400000	£1564000	£400000	£1564000
Promoting Deeside as a Place to Live and Work	£500000	£1360000	£800928	£1360000
Living Above the Shop	£60000	£60000	£60000	£60000
Stalled Sites	£200000	£600000	£188078	£600000
Improving the Appearance of Deeside's Town Centres	£140000	£1564000	£113827	£1564000
Bringing Vibrancy Back to the High Street	£280000	£1650000	£57167	£1650000
Access to free WiFi	£40000	£40000	£0	£40000
Monitoring and evaluation	£5000	£30000	£5000	£30000
TOTAL	£1625000	£6868000	£1625000	£6868000

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Appendix 2 - VVP project progress March 2015		
	Progress	Outputs expected
WHQS+	67 council flats currently have renewable energy generation measures being installed	11 new jobs created 67 flats received solar panels 11 properties receiving external wall
Promoting Deeside as a Place to Live and Work	29 households currently receiving energy performance upgrades. Environmental improvements in Garden City commissioned.	41 households helped towards securing improvement in energy performance 17 new jobs created
Living Above the Shop	3 grants agreed to create new residential units above shops.	3 affordable housing units £45,000 private sector investment
Stalled Sites	This has focussed on the acquisition of The Old Dairy, 2 Mold Road, Connah's Quay which is due to complete by the end of	1 site acquired
Improving the Appearance of Deeside's Town Centres	Deeside Plan commissioned to set strategic direction for regeneration in Deeside. Green Team delivered by Groundwork North Wales to deliver small scale environmental improvements and provide accredited training to unemployed people.	31 traineeships completed 105 qualifications gained 37 economically inactive people engaged by the project
Bringing Vibrancy Back to the High Street	Acquisition of shop units on hold while suitable delivery partner sought. Demolition of civic offices in Connah's Quay underway but delayed whilst awaiting disconnection of telecom services. 2 shop front improvement grants agreed.	£16,000 private sector investment Work space for 3 jobs created
Access to free WiFi	The project to assess the feasibility of improved WiFi access in Deeside is due to commission specialist advice. This is running behind schedule and will now fall into year two.	
Monitoring and evaluation	WG gateway review of the programme due to be undertaken before end of the financial year.	

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **24TH MARCH 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE)**

SUBJECT: **THE FUTURE OF THE RIGHT TO BUY AND RIGHT TO ACQUIRE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To inform Members of the Welsh Government (WG) consultation currently open concerning the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.
- 1.02 To seek Member support for the proposed response to the consultation.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 Currently social housing tenants have the ability to purchase their homes under the Right to Buy for Council tenants, or the Right to Acquire for tenants of a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The tenants of Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) organisations have a preserved Right to Buy.
- 2.02 Tenants have a right to buy their house or flat if it is their only or principal home. Tenants of sheltered housing are not permitted to buy their homes under this right.
- 2.03 The Right to Buy Scheme in Wales gives tenants a discount of up to £16,000 on the market value of their home. The longer the person has been a tenant, the greater discount they can receive up to the maximum limit.
- 2.04 Social housing tenants whose tenancy commenced before 18th January 2005 must have been tenants for 2 years before they can access the discount. Social housing tenants whose tenancy commenced after 18th January 2005 must wait 5 years before accessing any form of discount.
- 2.05 The discount tenants received can be reduced to take account of the work that the Council has undertaken in the repair or maintenance of the property over the last 10 years. This provision is known as the cost floor. If the cost of those repairs over the previous 10 years is greater than the market value of the property, then no discount is provided.

- 2.06 During the last 5 years the Council has sold 33 properties under the Right to Buy, generating a capital receipt of £549,325 from the 25% it is permitted to retain once the remainder is returned to the treasury. The capital receipt is a one off payment the Council receives. By comparison the 33 properties sold reduced the income to the Council by £132,000 each year. It should be noted that under self-financing the Council will be entitled to retain 100% of the market value of the property if sold.
- 2.07 If the purchaser of a Right to Buy property wishes to sell it on, then that is subject to a number of restrictions. If they sell within 12 months of acquiring it from the Council, then the entire discount must be repaid. The amount of repayment then decreases by one fifth each year until year five, when no repayment of the discount would be required.
- 2.08 In addition where a purchaser wishes to sell their home within 10 years, they must offer it first to their former landlord. In this case the Council retain the option to re-acquire it at market value.
- 2.09 When a flat is purchased there are ongoing costs to the Council in terms of maintaining the external fabric of the building and the communal areas. The Council can also make a service charge to the owner to cover maintenance of communal areas and all these costs will be made known to the purchaser through the conveyancing process.
- 2.10 There is a prescriptive process for the tenant when informing the Council that they wish to exercise the right to buy, with definitive timescales for a response. Following this the Council must inform the tenant of the market value of the property. If the prospective purchaser does not agree with the Council's market valuation then the District Valuer will determine the price to be paid.
- 2.11 There is currently provision for Councils to apply to WG to suspend the right to buy in specific areas for an initial five years (with maximum extension to 10 years). A business case must show how local people would be able to access affordable home ownership locally, for a case to be supported, and must demonstrate high levels of demand for social housing in the area.
- 2.12 An application will be submitted over the coming months given that there is an intention to build 200 new Council homes over the next 5 years.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty has opened a consultation on the Right to Buy and right to Acquire on 22nd January 2015, which closes on 16th April 2015.

The consultation contains the following two proposals: -

- To reduce the maximum discount from £16,000 to £8,000. This is viewed as a short to medium term action to reduce sales.
- The development of new primary legislation to suspend the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire for all social housing tenants across Wales.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Scrutiny note the Welsh Government consultation currently open concerning the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

4.02 The Flintshire County Council responds positively to the consultation and supports early implementation of the reduction to the discount, followed by the ending of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The Council receives a proportion of the market value for any property sold. This currently provides a capital receipt of 25% of the value to the Housing Revenue Account. However, every property sold reduces the Council's income by on average £4000 per year and reduces the availability of social housing to meet local need.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The proposals are designed to reduce and then stop the sale of social housing, given more people on low incomes the chance to rent an affordable property.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

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

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 The proposals would be fair and equal to all current and prospective social housing tenants.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 There has been no consultation undertaken to date

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Consultation Document – White Paper – The Future of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire

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

None.

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

Welsh Government

White Paper

The Future of the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

A White Paper for Social Housing



January 2015

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Foreword



Everyone needs a decent, affordable home. It is the foundation for a person's health, wellbeing, quality of life and ability to fulfil their potential. Not everyone can afford to live in the private sector and social housing with its lower rents makes a real contribution to tackling poverty, as well as providing homes.

Right to Buy and *Right to Acquire* have allowed many tenants to buy their homes from their Local Authority or Housing Association.

The number of sales has fallen in recent years, however, purchases are still being made. As a result, the number of homes available for those on lower incomes to rent has substantially decreased.

We know we need more homes. Our current social housing stock is under considerable pressure and is affecting people's ability to find a home they can afford and our ability to help them. We are working very hard to increase the number of homes available, building more affordable homes and bringing increasing numbers of empty homes back into use. At the same time, however, we continue to lose social housing through the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

It is time to consider what more can be done to help meet people's housing needs by protecting our existing social housing stock from further reductions.

This White Paper sets out two proposals. One of the proposals is for action in the short to medium term. This would reduce the maximum discount available to tenants who are eligible to buy their home. The other is for longer-term action, in the form of primary legislation, to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* which could be introduced following the next Assembly election.

Your views are important to me. I urge you to take this opportunity to respond to the consultation. Information on how you can respond is provided at the end of the document. The closing date for comments is 16 April 2015.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Griffiths".

Lesley Griffiths

Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Summary

- A safe, secure, and affordable home helps people to live long, healthy, productive lives in safe, strong and fair communities.
- Some people cannot afford to buy a home or rent a home from a private landlord. They are dependent on social housing or some other form of subsidised provision. Social housing is a particularly important safety net.
- Over the last thirty years or so, the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* have allowed many tenants to buy their homes from their Local Authority or Housing Association.
- This document sets out proposals for changes to the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*. It explains the Welsh Government's thinking behind the proposals. Your views are important. The form in Appendix 1 enables you to comment on the proposals and relevant aspects of them, including alternative options, the impacts and the benefits.

The impact of the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

- Between October 1980 and the end of June 2007, 134,600 Local Authority and 2,400 Housing Association homes were sold to tenants under the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* schemes. Most of these have become owner-occupied but some will have found their way into the private rented sector.
- The peak was in 1982-83, when just over 15,000 homes were sold from the social housing stock in just one year.
- In the last five years, an average of 188 homes has been sold each year through the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*. There was a marked increase last year, when 253 homes were sold; a 49 per cent increase over the previous year.

Addressing housing pressures

- The Welsh Government is working with its partners to increase housing supply. Nearly 70 per cent of the target of 10,000 more affordable homes has been achieved with many more on the way. In addition, the Government is now just 529 short of its target of bringing back into use 5,000 long-term empty private homes.
- In addition to building more homes and tackling empty homes, action also needs to be taken to protect existing social housing stock. This is recognised as an important contribution to tackling poverty.
- The demand for housing exceeds supply. The reduced number of social rented homes which are now available to help people on housing waiting lists is adding to the pressure on housing supply and on people's ability to find a home they can afford.

- Projecting with any degree of accuracy the number of homes lost in future years is a challenge but it is safe to say that social rented housing will continue to be sold.
- Given current housing pressures, which tend to fall on those whose needs cannot be met by housing markets, the time is right to consider more action.
- While action may mean changing the rights of some tenants, it must be balanced by consideration of the needs of people who are on waiting lists for a home they can afford.
- After considering the need to do more to help meet people's housing needs and having looked at different options, the Welsh Government is putting forward two proposals for public consultation. The consultation will close on 16 April 2015.

Reducing the sales discount

- The current limit on the sales discount for the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* is £16,000. In other words, the maximum discount a purchaser may receive on the sale price of the property cannot be more than £16,000.
- The discount for the *Right to Buy*, including the *Preserved Right to Buy* was last reduced in 2003. The discount for the *Right to Acquire* was set at £16,000 in 1997.

The Welsh Government is proposing to reduce the current maximum sales price discount from £16,000 to £8,000. Your views would be welcome on this as short to medium-term action to reduce future sales of social housing in order to protect our social housing stock. Appendix 1 provides a form for you to comment.

Ending the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

- Ultimately, the only way to protect social housing stock from continuing erosion is to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

The Welsh Government is proposing to develop new primary legislation – a Bill – to end the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire*. The draft Bill would be prepared for the new Government to consider as part of its legislative programme in the next Assembly. Your views would be welcome on this as medium to long-term action to prevent the further loss of homes from our social housing stock. Appendix 1 provides a form for you to comment.

1. Introduction

The benefits of a safe, secure, and affordable home extend well beyond putting a roof over people's heads. It helps people to live long, healthy, productive lives in safe, strong and fair communities. It provides children with the best possible start to life, which gives them the best chance of realising their full potential.

We find ourselves in very difficult times. In terms of housing, economic and other factors have combined, causing considerable pressure on the supply of homes. The pressures affect many but the effect on people whose needs cannot be met by the housing market is particularly noticeable. Some people cannot afford to buy a home, or to rent a home from a private landlord. They are dependent on social housing or some other form of subsidised provision. Social housing is a particularly important safety net.

As a Government, we have already done much to help meet people's housing needs. The money we have invested will help achieve our targets of providing 10,000 more affordable homes and bringing 5,000 empty homes back into use in communities across Wales. However, we want to do more to help people and the considerable challenges that lie ahead make us even more determined to do so.

Our approach reflects our values of fairness, social justice and equality. Affordable homes are vital to our goal of reducing poverty. We are continuing to develop innovative ways of helping people to afford a home, which reflect people's different needs and circumstances. We are also developing a more flexible housing system to help people to move more easily between social housing, private rented accommodation, and home ownership to suit their needs at different times of their lives. However, we remain fully committed to the principle of social housing and to helping people whose housing needs cannot be met by the markets.

Over the last thirty years or so, the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* have allowed many tenants in social housing to buy their home from their Local Authority or Housing Association. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in our social housing stock. Much of it has become owner-occupied but some will have found its way into the private rented sector. The reduced number of social rented homes which are available to help people who are on housing waiting lists is adding to the pressures on housing supply and on people's ability to find a home they can afford.

This White Paper puts forward two proposals for public consultation. Both are aimed at protecting the social housing stock from further reduction:

- i. Changing existing legislation – which will reduce the maximum discount available to a tenant who applies to buy their home from their Council or Housing Association landlord, and:
- ii. Developing new legislation – which, if passed by the National Assembly for Wales, will end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

This document

This White Paper sets out the Welsh Government's proposals to change the legislation on the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

Chapter 2 provides information on the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire* while **Chapter 3** explains why change is needed. This provides the thinking behind the proposals.

The proposals are in two parts. **Chapter 4** sets out proposals to reduce the maximum discount that is available to tenants who are eligible to buy their home from their Local Authority or Housing Association landlord. **Chapter 5** proposes new legislation to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

Your views

Your views on the proposals are important. We believe that the changes and developments will do more to tackle the demand and supply pressures on our current stock of social housing. This, in turn, will help meet the housing needs of those who are unable to take advantage of the housing market.

This White Paper is open for public consultation and your comments on the proposals are welcome. You can comment on the proposal to reduce the maximum discount (Chapter 4) or the proposal to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* (Chapter 5), or you can comment on both. Appendix 1 provides information on how you can comment on the proposals.

Comments can be submitted in a number of ways:

Email: righttobuy@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Post: "The Future of the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*",
Welsh Government,
Housing Policy Division,
Rhydycar,
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1UZ

The consultation will close on 16 April 2015.

Data protection: How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by the Welsh Government staff working on the issues covered by this consultation. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them to plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps

to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then block them out.

Names or addresses we block out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decide whether to reveal the information.

2. The *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

The right of a tenant of a Local Authority or Housing Association to buy their home at a discount has been a feature of social housing for over thirty years. The introduction of the *Right to Buy* in 1980 was grounded in UK Government policy at that time. Increasing home ownership was one of the main reasons for its introduction although raising money and reducing the cost on the public purse of maintaining and improving Council housing are also thought to have been factors.

The *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire* are contained in two Acts of Parliament.

The *Right to Buy* is contained in the Housing Act 1985. It gives most tenants who have a secure tenancy, usually those who rent from a Local Authority, the *right to buy* their home at a discount from the market price. It is subject to certain conditions and exceptions. Where the landlord owns the freehold of a house, the tenant has the *right to acquire* the freehold. Where the landlord does not own the freehold or the home is a flat, the right is to be granted a lease on it.

The *Right to Acquire* is part of the Housing Act 1996. It gives a tenant the *Right to Acquire* his or her home if a number of conditions are satisfied. First, the landlord must be a Registered Social Landlord or a Private Registered Provider of Social Housing. This document uses the term "Housing Associations" to cover both. Second, the tenancy must be an assured or secure tenancy. Third, the dwelling was provided with public money and has remained in the social rented sector. The tenant must also satisfy some further qualifying conditions.

In addition to the above, there is also a provision known as the ***Preserved Right to Buy***. This applies to tenants after a transfer of the ownership of a Local Authority's homes to a new Housing Association. The existing secure tenants of the Authority became assured tenants of the new landlord. The Housing Act 1985 provides that they retain a preserved *Right to Buy* despite the change of landlord. This right can continue if the tenant moves to another property owned by the new landlord and it would be also preserved if there was another change of landlord.

Some parts of this paper may use only the term *Right to Buy*. Where this occurs, references to *Right to Buy* should be taken to mean the *Right to Buy*, the *Preserved Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire*, unless the context indicates otherwise.

3. Why is change needed?

At 31 March 2013, there were an estimated 1.4 million homes in Walesⁱ, of which around 223,000 are social housing (16 per cent)ⁱⁱ. Social housing is one element of “affordable” housing and describes homes rented at levels set with regard to national guidelines and benchmarks. They are provided by Local Authorities and by Housing Associations.

Since 2000-01, the total number of homes in Wales has increased by 9 per cent. However, in the same period, the number of social rented homes has fallen by 8 per cent. Some people cannot afford a home from the housing market, whether renting from the private sector or buying their own. They are dependent on social housing or some form of subsidised provision.

Housing demand and need

The pressure on housing supply and its failure to keep pace with demand is well known. Research in 2010ⁱⁱⁱ in Wales reported the need for approximately 14,200 more homes per year, of which around 5,100 were “non-market” homes. The latter includes homes provided by Local Authorities and Housing Associations, and private rented properties subsidised by Housing Benefit.

The estimate was based on rates of household formation. The economic downturn in the years immediately before 2010 and since has had an impact on the assumptions underpinning this. Over and above the general impacts of the economy, the tighter lending market has affected people’s ability to obtain a mortgage. Thus, while the aspiration of many people is to leave home to set up their own household, the chances are reduced.

At 31 March 2013, approximately 70 per cent^{iv} of homes in Wales were owner-occupied. Fourteen per cent were in the private rented sector; slightly lower than social housing at 16 per cent. Despite the rise in the number of people renting from private landlords and efforts to make it a more acceptable option, most people would still like to own their own home.

House prices are sensitive to supply and demand factors, the economic climate, and the cost and availability of mortgages. Rising house prices, although not seen in all parts of Wales, make market housing unaffordable for many people. These days, more household income goes into meeting the costs of housing, thus reducing disposable income and people’s standard of living. This can mean more people becoming dependent on forms of subsidised housing provision. Although the private rented sector provides greater flexibility and choice, unaffordable rent levels and tenancy considerations prevent the more disadvantaged people from taking advantage of it. Subsidies, such as Housing Benefit, can help some people. The excess demand over supply contributes to the increasing pressure on social housing as the best way of meeting some people’s housing need.

Housing supply

The characteristics of the housing system have changed as a result of the reduction in social housing and tighter lending criteria for mortgages. As mentioned, more people are turning to, and in many cases have had to turn to, the private rented sector.

In the last decade, house building peaked in 2006-07 with just over 9,300 new homes built. The average over the decade was approximately 7,000 per year. Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, an average of around 5,700 new homes was built each year. In 2013-14, there were 5,843 completions^v.

The levels of new housing starts and completions over the last five years have been some of the lowest ever. There are, however, signs of recovery, with the number of new homes started last year rising for the second successive year.

The number of new social housing dwellings completed annually contrasts with an average of 188 sales per year through the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*. While the total number completed in 2013-14 was 5 per cent lower than 2009-10, sales of social housing were 45 per cent higher.

Chart 1: Completions of new social housing dwellings and statutory sales of social housing, Wales, 2009-10 to 2013-14



Source: New house building collection from local authorities & NHBC and Annual social Housing sales returns from local authorities and RSLs.

On average, 826 new social housing dwellings have been completed annually in each of the last five years. This compares with the average of 188 sales of social housing sales per year.

The full impact of the past large-scale reduction in social housing to *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* is being seen now, with significantly less social rented housing stock to allocate to people whose needs cannot be met by the housing market.

The impact on social housing stock

The period between 1980 and the middle of 2007 saw considerable *Right to Buy* activity and as a result, a significant shift from social renting to owner-occupation. In this period, some 134,600 Local Authority and 2,400 Housing Association homes were sold to tenants under the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* schemes.

In the ten years or so from March 2003 to March 2013, the proportion of dwellings in the social rented sector has fallen from 21 per cent of total housing stock to 16 per cent. The table below illustrates the pattern of purchases over time and, significantly, the total number of social housing dwellings lost since 2000.

Table 1: Purchases through *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* Wales, 2000-01 to 2013-14

Year	Number purchased
2000-01	3,560
2001-02	3,516
2002-03	4,992
2003-04	6,907
2004-05	4,155
2005-06	1,865
2006-07	1,321
2007-08	873
2008-09	209
2009-10	174
2010-11	172
2011-12	171
2012-13	170
2013-14	253
Total	28,338

The peak was in 1982-83 when just over 15,000 homes were lost from the social housing stock in just one year. Table 1 above shows that over the period from 2000-01 to 2013-14, following a peak of 6,907 sales in 2003-04, the trend in *Right to Buy* sales has been firmly downward. However, even in this fourteen year period, more than 28,000 homes have been sold.

In the last five years, on average, 188 homes have been lost from the social rented stock each year through *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* sales. It is worth noting that in the last financial year, the activity showed a marked increase, with 253 homes purchased; a 49 per cent increase over the previous year.

Projecting with any degree of accuracy the number of homes lost in future years is a challenge but it is safe to say while the *Right to Buy* remains, the social housing stock will continue to reduce. The overall desire of people to buy their home is a constant. It is the factors that affect people's ability to buy, notably the ability to raise the finance, which determine the numbers. There is anecdotal information from contact with tenants that the maximum discount of £16,000 on the purchase price means that some are still unable to raise the finance needed to purchase their home.

Whatever the figures for future homes sold, the sale of homes will impact on people's ability to access social housing from housing waiting lists. Properties sold under the *Right to Buy* are taken out of the stock and those on the waiting list can not be allocated a social rented home unless new replacement homes are built or a vacancy arises.

Action by the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has in hand an ambitious programme of legislation and other action to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the housing system in Wales and to help people to meet their housing needs. It includes improving the practices of private landlords and lettings agents. New legislation to be introduced in the coming weeks – the Renting Homes (Wales) Bill 2015 – will also improve the arrangements for people who rent their home.

More action to boost housing supply is the priority and action is underway with house builders, lenders, Local Authorities and Housing Associations. At one end of the spectrum is help for people to buy their own home through *Help to Buy*. At the other end is affordable housing at below market rental rates, which includes the more traditional social housing, owned by Local Authorities and Housing Associations, and an element of the private rented sector. Between the two are homes built to rent at intermediate rent levels for people who can't quite afford the full rates. The Welsh Government's intermediate rent model *Rent First* is set at 80 per cent of market rents and targeted at, or below, Local Housing Allowance rates.

The Social Housing Grant programme delivers more affordable homes, the target for which was set at 7,500, for this term of Government, has been increased to 10,000. Between 2011-12 and 2013-14, a total of 6,890 additional and affordable housing units were built in Wales. This is 69 per cent of the 10,000 target^{vi}.

Innovative developments include the Housing Finance Grant, the first phase of which will provide approximately 1,000 new affordable homes with another 2,000 homes in phase 2. New developments such as the Ely Mill site, which will result in 700 homes, have been set up to maximise the use of public sector land to create more homes. Since 2011-12, the Welsh Government has invested £15 million in the Welsh Housing Partnership, which has provided over 650 affordable homes for intermediate rent through collaboration with four Housing Associations. The Welsh Government is investing £6 million in the Partnership this financial year, which will provide a further 260 affordable homes.

There is a robust national planning policy framework to support the local delivery of affordable housing, which makes an important contribution to the overall supply of affordable housing.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which abolishes the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system for the eleven Local Authorities still owning their own housing, offers some the prospect to add to housing supply. If finance is available, the result may be the first council house building programme for around 25 years. In the context of the *Right to Buy*, it is fair to say that Local Authorities are apprehensive about investing in new social housing if there is a risk they could lose the homes to sales within a relatively short period.

Over and above building more homes, the best use must be made of existing homes. This means tackling the waste which is seen with homes that remain empty for long periods. The Welsh Government's *Houses into Homes* scheme helped Local Authorities to bring back into use nearly 2,300 long-term empty properties in 2013-14, which is more than double the usual annual figure. This means that 4,471 have been brought back into use in the first three years of this Government, which is only 529 short of the 5,000 target for the whole term.

The need for more action

In addition to building more affordable homes and tackling long-term empty homes, action can also be taken to protect the social housing stock from sale of more homes under the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

Recognising the impact of *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire* and the continuing pressure on social housing, in 2011, the Housing (Wales) Measure was introduced. The Measure allows a Local Authority to apply to the Welsh Government to suspend the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire* in its area.

The suspension, which can be for a period of up to five years, extendable to ten years, may apply to all social housing in the area or parts of the area, or to certain types of social housing, such as those with a particular number of bedrooms for example. Certain conditions must be met. The Authority must consult beforehand and needs to show the demand for social housing within the Authority's area exceeds supply or is likely to exceed supply, and the imbalance is likely to increase as a result of people exercising their *Right to Buy* and related rights.

To date, two Local Authorities – Carmarthenshire and Swansea – have applied to suspend the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire*. In both areas, and as a result of public consultation, there has been an increase in the number of applications and this has translated into an increased number of sales. This is somewhat inevitable but the applications for suspension reflect the desire on the part of both Authorities to halt the continuing loss of social housing in the medium to long-term. After careful consideration, Welsh Ministers have approved the suspension in Carmarthenshire. Swansea's application is in the final stages of consideration.

The opportunity to suspend the *Right to Buy* can help to slow down the reduction in social housing as a result of homes being sold to their tenants. However, its impact depends on how many Local Authorities apply for suspension and how quickly. In over three years, only two Authorities have submitted applications. The Welsh Government therefore considered a number of options to protect social housing from further reductions.

One of the options considered included the provision of assistance to Local Authorities to help them to develop their applications to suspend the *Right to Buy*. This option recognises the work involved for each Authority in preparing its case and for consulting with people locally. Allowing a Local Authority to make its own decision; that is, without an application to the Welsh Ministers, was also considered. The latter was dismissed as it would not lessen the work involved for each Local Authority but the key factors in not selecting either option were effectiveness and equality. As both depend on action by each Local Authority, there is no guarantee every Authority would take action to suspend the *Right to Buy*. Even if they did, it would be some time before the stock is protected in every area. At the same time, suspension of the *Right to Buy* in some areas but not in others would lead to inequalities, with tenants in some areas having different rights to those in others.

The above, together with consideration of what could be done relatively quickly by existing legislation and what would require new primary legislation explains the choice of proposals set out in this document. Reducing the discount can be done by way of existing legislation.

Tackling poverty

The lack of housing supply to meet demand is well documented. The provision of a secure, affordable, home is a key factor in tackling poverty. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation^{vii}, housing costs are the housing sector's most important and direct impact on poverty. The number of people in "housing cost-induced poverty" – those who are not poor before housing costs are taken into account and are poor once housing costs are considered – has increased over the past two decades. It goes on to say that low rents, such as those for Local Authority and Housing Association homes, make an important contribution to reducing "housing cost-induced poverty" and material deprivation amongst social tenants. As social housing is highly targeted on people with low incomes, the Foundation concludes it to be the most "pro-poor" and redistributive aspect of the entire Welfare State. It therefore recommends that if housing policy is to be used to reduce poverty, traditional social housing should be maintained and developed.

The safety net provided by social housing, for those people whose housing needs cannot be satisfied by the housing market, and for vulnerable people, is crucial to the quality of their lives, including their health and well being. It is a core component of tackling poverty.

Given current housing pressures, which tend to fall on those whose needs cannot be met by housing markets, the time is right to consider more extensive action. While this may mean changing the *Right to Buy* of tenants who are eligible to buy the social rented property in which they live, this must be balanced by consideration of the needs of people on waiting lists for a home they can afford.

The approach

As stated earlier, the Welsh Government considered a number of options to achieve its ultimate goal of protecting our social housing stock from further reduction as a result of the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire*.

The continuing use of the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011 allowing Local Authorities to apply for suspension of the rights, with or without assistance to encourage a greater take-up by Local Authorities, is not considered to be effective in stemming the sales of social housing. In addition, the different pace at which Local Authorities apply for suspension, if they decide to apply at all, is likely to lead to differences across Wales, where people in some areas still have the rights while people in other areas do not.

Having considered the matter very carefully, a twin track approach is proposed. It consists of two strands of action, which would run in parallel with one another.

- i. A proposal to reduce the maximum discount from the current figure of £16,000 – short to medium-term impact, achieved by secondary legislation.
- ii. The development of a legislative proposal to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* – medium to long-term impact, achieved by primary legislation.

This consultation covers both of the above, Chapter 4 sets out proposals to reduce the maximum discount on sales from its current level of £16,000. Chapter 5 describes a proposal to develop new legislation to end the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*.

Impacts

We have a duty to consider equality. This includes considering how our policies and change in policies might affect, positively or negatively, different groups within the population.

We have a duty to consider the impact(s) of the action we propose to take. If decisions are made to take forward either or both of the proposals, the impacts of such developments would, be considered as part of Regulatory Impact Assessments. Initial consideration has been given to the impacts on important matters such as the United Nations Convention for the Rights of The Child, equality, the Welsh language and rural matters.

Young people are our future society and workforce. So much depends on giving them the best possible start in life. The Welsh Government is committed to helping children gain a good start in life so they can achieve their full potential. A good home is an essential part of this.

The proposals would contribute to implementing the United Nations Convention for the Rights of The Child, notably Articles 3, 6, and 27.

These refer to children's rights to live healthily and the right to a standard of living good enough to meet physical and mental needs, including Government support for parents who cannot afford to provide it. In this sense, social housing, and the proposals to do more to protect it, would make a significant positive contribution.

The proposals would result in changes which would apply equally to all social housing tenants in all parts of Wales. This is unlike the current position where the *Right to Buy* is only available to tenants not affected by a suspension in their area. The outcome of continuing the current law which allows the suspension of the *Right to Buy* in some areas will result in different rights for some social housing tenants in one area compared to others.

The proposal to end the *Right to Buy* would help to reduce inequalities and thus would promote equality. It would also end the inequality that can arise for some tenants as a result of other restrictions on them being able to exercise the *Right to Buy*, such as renting a home which is exempt, or being unable to raise the money to purchase it. The proposals would apply equally to all social housing tenants so protected groups are not considered to be adversely affected. The same is true for the Welsh language and for rural areas. The application of the changes in all parts of Wales would not have any adverse effects. If anything, it is likely to have a positive impact since protecting the social housing stock in such communities to help meet the housing needs of local people is particularly important. Your comments on anyone you consider would benefit from the proposed changes or anyone who would be adversely affected would be welcome. The consultation form in Appendix 1 will allow you to do this.

4. Reducing the maximum sales price discount

The current limit on the sales discount for the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire* is £16,000. In other words, the maximum discount a purchaser may receive on the sale price of the property cannot be more than £16,000. It may be less, depending on how the discount is calculated. The level of discount is one means of influencing the number of sales of social housing. A relatively low discount is a disincentive to purchasers.

In the case of the *Right to Buy* and the *Preserved Right to Buy*, the limit was last reduced in 2003. The maximum discount for the *Right to Acquire* was set at £16,000 in 1997. Existing legislation allows the Welsh Ministers to adjust the sales price discount. The relevant provisions are sections 129 to 131 of the Housing Act 1985, and these were used to make the Housing (*Right to Buy*) (Limits of Discount) Wales Order 1999 ("the Order"). The Order was amended in 2003 to reduce the maximum discount from £24,000 to £16,000.

Section 16 of the Housing Act 1996 gives tenants of Housing Associations the *Right to Acquire* their homes. This is similar to the *Right to Buy* but there are more exceptions. Section 17 allows discount levels to be set and this power was used to set a maximum discount of £16,000 in the Housing (*Right to Acquire*) (Discount) (Wales) Order 2007.

Reducing the discount can be done by way of an Order of the Welsh Ministers, it is relatively straightforward and could come into effect in the short to medium-term. For example, if after consultation, the decision is made to reduce the discount, the lower discount could come into effect in the summer or autumn of 2015.

Such a development would not change people's aspiration to buy and where some could find a means of affording it, purchases would still go ahead. It would not totally prevent the sale of social housing stock. However, the higher cost of purchasing the property would help to dampen sales of social housing. It would also result in more money for the Landlord in the event of a sale, although the contribution to the cost of building more affordable housing would be relatively small.

Proposal

The Welsh Government is proposing to reduce the current maximum sales price discount from £16,000 to £8,000. Your views would be welcome on this as short to medium-term action to reduce future sales of social housing in order to protect our social housing stock. Appendix 1 provides a form for you to comment.

5. Ending the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

This document has described the impact of the *Right to Buy* on social housing stock to date. This is expected to continue in future. The pressure on housing supply is increasing. Considerably more affordable homes are needed and the Welsh Government has taken steps to increase housing supply. Social housing forms a vital safety net for people whose needs cannot be met by the housing market. Protecting social housing from further reduction is as important as building more homes as part of action to tackle poverty.

For the above reasons, the Welsh Government is considering ending the *Right to Buy* as ultimately, it is the only real way to protect social housing stock from continuing erosion. It isn't the quickest option but it is considered to secure the greatest benefit relative to the investment of time, resources and funding needed to implement.

It is recognised that the proposal to end the *Right to Buy* will probably trigger a potential spike in applications to purchase properties by those who are eligible to do so. The proposed reduction in the sales price discount will, if it goes ahead, help to dampen sales. However, a strategic view is being taken about the longer-term benefits to social housing in Wales. It is also recognised that the removal, albeit in the medium to long-term, of the rights of some tenants to be able to purchase their homes will be for some a sensitive matter. However, and as explained earlier, the Government must balance this against the needs of people who are on waiting lists for a home they can afford and the current difficulties in meeting this demand.

This proposed development would have an effect in the medium-term to long term which is why, subject to the outcome of consultation, the work to develop new primary legislation – a new Bill – would need to commence fairly soon, hence this consultation. The development programme would see the drafting of a Bill, accompanied by the Explanatory Memorandum which needs to accompany it and a full Regulatory Impact Assessment. The latter would explore in detail matters relating to the legislation proposed, financial impacts and implications. The work for this and the Memorandum would be developed with the involvement of key stakeholders.

If after consultation the development proceeds, the new Government would be able to introduce a Bill in the next Assembly should it wish to do so.

Proposal

The Welsh Government is proposing to develop new primary legislation – a Bill – to end the *Right to Buy* and the *Right to Acquire*. The draft Bill would be prepared for the new Government to consider as part of its legislative programme in the next Assembly. Your views would be welcome on this as medium to long-term action to prevent the further loss of homes from our social housing stock. Appendix 1 provides a form for you to comment.

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

We welcome comments on all aspects of the proposals. We are particularly interested in responses to the questions. The first part of the form asks for information about you and/or your organisation

Name:			
Organisation (if applicable):			
E-mail address:			
Telephone:			
Address:			
Are you: (please tick one)	A tenant <input type="checkbox"/>	A Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
If "Other", please give details			

Helping people to meet their housing needs		
1. Should the Welsh Government take more action to help people whose needs cannot be met by the housing market? <i>(please tick one box)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Should the Welsh Government do more to keep the current stock of social rented homes by protecting it from further reductions as a result of <i>Right to Buy</i> sales? <i>(please tick one box)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. If action is taken, would any particular groups of people be affected more than others? <i>(please tick one box)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. If anyone would benefit from changes to the <i>Right to Buy</i> , please say which group(s) of people and what the benefits would be.		
5. If anyone would be affected in a negative way, please say which group(s) of people and what might to be done to mitigate the impact(s).		
Reducing the maximum sales price discount		
6. Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the current discount? <i>(please tick one box)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. In a few words, please say why you answered in this way.		
8. Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the discount to £8,000? <i>(please tick one box)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9. If "No", to what figure do you think the discount should be reduced?		
10. This box is provided for any other comment(s) you wish to make about the proposal to reduce the discount or about the <i>Right to Buy</i> more generally.		

Ending the *Right to Buy* and *Right to Acquire*

11. Do you agree with the proposal to develop new legislation to end the *Right to Buy*? (please tick one box)

Yes

No

12. In a few words, please say why you answered in this way.

13. If you answered "No" to Question 11, should the Welsh Government simply continue with other options, such as the opportunity a Local Authority currently has to apply to suspend the *Right to Buy* in its area?

Yes

No

14. This box is provided for any other comment(s) you wish to make about the proposal to develop new legislation to end the *Right to Buy* or about the *Right to Buy* more generally.

If you are responding on behalf of your organisation, please tick the box.

Appendix 2: References

- i. Holmans A and Monk S, (2010) Housing Need and Demand in Wales 2006 to 2026, GSR 03/2010 Cardiff: Welsh Government
- ii. Census 2011
- iii. Holmans A and Monk S, (2010) Housing Need and Demand in Wales 2006 to 2026, GSR 03/2010 Cardiff: Welsh Government
- iv. StatsWales 2012-13
- v. StatsWales, New Dwellings completed 2004-05 to 2013-14
- vi. StatsWales, New Dwellings completed 2004-05 to 2013-14
- vii. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) The Link Between Housing and Poverty: an Evidence Review: York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **TUESDAY 24TH MARCH, 2015**

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

SUBJECT: **IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To note and consider elements of the 2014/15 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report covers the period October – December 2014.

1.02 To note the following:-

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

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The new style Improvement Plan adopted by Council in June 2013 which is aligned to the new three year Outcome Agreement, focuses on the priorities which are expected to have the most impact during 2014/15.

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

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the Committee consider the 2014/15 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report, highlight concerns and feedback details of any challenge to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 There are no specific anti poverty implications for this report, however poverty is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2014/15.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There are no specific environmental implications for this report; however the environment is a priority within the Improvement Plan 2014/15.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 There are no equalities implications for this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 There are no personnel implications for this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 The Chief Officer Team and the Performance Leads from across the Authority have contributed to help shape the new approach to reporting.

12.00 APPENDICES

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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APPENDIX 1

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

We said in 2014/15 that we would:

1. Develop and agree plans to extend our extra care provision to provide units in Flint and Holywell, providing 60 units in each location.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Flint:

- Full planning application has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
- An archaeology survey is being carried out on the identified site.
- Linking into the BCUHB Delivery Group for the Primary Health Care Centre.

Holywell:

- An outline planning application has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
- Further discussions regarding the preferred model, layout and design to take place.

Achievement will be measured through: -

- Agreed Business Model and funding for the developments
- Firm plans agreed with Social Housing partners for both schemes
- The new schemes and business model developed and supported by sound consultation

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Business Model agreed by March 2015
- Funding for the developments agreed by March 2015
- Agreement with Social Housing Partners for both schemes by December 2014

Risks to Manage

How we can switch revenue resources from more traditional to new housing and care service models.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)		
Page 50	H	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of telecare and telehealth Use of step up/step down facilities to avoid permanent Care Home admissions funded by Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) Working with the Care Home market to ensure there is an appropriate supply of good quality residential care Extending specialist dementia care in the community, reducing the need for care home placements and hospital admission and help facilitate hospital discharge through the availability of specialised support for vulnerable people with dementia, 	M	M	A	Dementia RED (Respect Empathy Dignity) Project to be rolled out in GP Practices across Flintshire. The Project will be run by the Alzheimer's Society and provide people with dementia and their carers with advice, information and signposting to support.	Chief Officer – Social Services	↔	M	M	A	Jun '14

Keeping up with demand and aspirations for alternative housing models for independent living

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	H	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop two new extra care housing schemes Enhance wellbeing activities to help residents remain independent at home for longer Manage expectations in new extra care housing due to changes in the funding regime and consequent elimination of capital subsidy. 	H	H	R	Launch community exercise programmes for people with dementia and their carers to support their wellbeing and independence in the community	Chief Officer: Social Services	↑	M	M	A	June 2015

Keeping up with specialist demand such as meeting the specific needs of those with dementia and physical and learning disabilities.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)		Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)				Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)	Target Date
H	H	R	12 week 'All about dementia' training piloted and programme to be rolled out Work commenced on developing dementia friendly communities initially focussing on Flint Dementia reminiscence pods and packs available for use in Care Homes and by community groups	H	H	R	Establish an e-learning package for carers, family and extended family about dementia and good dementia support Develop a programme to make Flintshire County Council a dementia friendly organisations supporting people with dementia in all our contacts with the public	Chief Officer: Social Services	↑	M	M	A	Oct '15

APPENDIX 2

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

We said in 2014/15 that we would:

1. Implement a wider range of models of private finance to deliver increased numbers of affordable homes through the newly formed North East Wales Homes.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The company continues to increase the numbers of properties in management. Since the last quarter it has reviewed its marketing strategy and agreed a new website will be developed and further promotion of the company and its services will be carried out. Whilst there has been interest in the Over 55's lease option, progress in this area has been delayed whilst a suitable legal agreement is drawn up for use in this complex area. A model lease agreement should be available for use in Q4 and leases will be entered in to thereafter. The council continues to manage 15 gifted units of accommodation and is awaiting confirmation of when further properties will be transferred to NEW Homes. 				
<p>Achievement will be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business plan measures: for year 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of a management service for 26 private rented sector properties Entering into a lease agreement for 10 over 55's properties Receive the freehold for and manage 19 units of gifted accommodation Approval for the Flint Town Centre regeneration plan which includes new housing provision 				
<p>Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the Flint Town Centre regeneration plan including new housing provision by March 2015 				

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Provision of a management service for 26 private rented sector properties	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	N/A – new measure	26 properties	TBC	9	A	G
Entering into a lease agreement for 10 over 55's properties		N/A – new measure	10 properties	TBC	0	R	R
Receive the freehold for and manage 19 units of gifted accommodation		N/A – new measure	19 units	TBC	15	A	G

2. Implement the strategy to grow and sustain the private rented sector through the North East Wales Homes business plan.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
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- The council continues to bring long term vacant homes back in to use and has allocated all of the existing funding provided through the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme. Further WG funding is awaited.
- The service is in discussion with a number of other empty property owners and is working with 4 owners through the Vibrant & Viable Places Living Over The Shops (LOTS) Scheme. Confidence is high that the annual target of 30 homes returned to use will be met.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Business plan measures:
 - Provision of a management service for 26 private rented sector properties
 - Entering into a lease agreement for 10 over 55's properties
 - Receive the freehold for and manage 19 units of gifted accommodation
- Bringing of 30 empty homes back into use for residential living

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Provision of a management service for 26 private rented sector properties	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	N/A – new measure	26 properties	TBC	9	A	G
Entering into a lease agreement for 10 over 55's properties		N/A – new measure	10 properties	TBC	0	R	R
Receive the freehold for and manage 19 units of gifted accommodation		N/A – new measure	19 units	TBC	15	A	G
IPH2M1 - Number of empty homes brought back into use		32 homes	30 homes	120 homes (cumulative)	18	A	G

3. Develop a county wide housing register and implement a single allocations policy for Flintshire with partners.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Housing Access Team is operational and is providing advice to all applicants about their housing options. Previously, the team were receiving 30 applications a week and these were all registered (even where applicants had little or no points or were choosing areas with very few vacancies and very high demand). Customers now receive clear information about their choice of areas and can be assisted to explore other options that may be more suitable including the private rented sector and affordable housing. The register has been developed and is ready for applicants to be transferred across. However, it is proposed that this transfer is managed over a period of time so that each applicant can be dealt with individually and offered a triage service over the phone or in person to ensure all the information collated for the new register is correct and applicants with low priority can be offered information, support and assistance to explore alternative options. 				
<p>Achievement will be measured through:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A county wide housing register and single allocations policy in place by Autumn 2014. 				
<p>Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A county wide housing register and single allocations policy in place by December 2014. 				

4. Agree the Local Development Plan's vision, objectives and options to accommodate growth.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	R	Outcome RAG	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is processing and assessing in excess of 700 candidate sites under consideration as part of the LDP process, this has resulted in slippage compared to the delivery agreement timetable. 				
<p>Achievement will be measured through:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with the timetable of the Delivery Agreement; by November 2014 				
<p>Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the Local Development Plan's vision, objectives and options to accommodate growth in accordance with the delivery agreement by November 2014. 				

Risk to Manage - Maximising our joint resources with our partners.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	1. A joint approach has been taken on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) project (the common housing register for the county) to deliver activity to deliver the ICT and operational implementation delivering efficiencies. Developing strong relationships with private landlords supporting growth of the sector.	L	L	G	1. Performance and financial monitoring of NEW homes will help to ensure that the company delivers on its desired objectives	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↔	L	L	G	Dec 2014

Risk to Manage - Maximising the availability of private finance

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	H	R	<p>North East Wales Homes provides the council with greater financial and commercial freedoms to operate akin to a private company to meet its social objectives around affordable housing. A successful SHARP procurement process with sufficient developer interest will provide 300+ additional units of affordable housing in Flintshire.</p> <p>The council must ensure that it follows a robust and compliant procurement process in an area for which it has no recent background. External expertise will be required has part of the procurement exercise and has been appointed with Cabinet approval</p>	L	H	A	<p>The objectives of the company will remain under review to ensure business viability.</p> <p>The successful developer will be appointed following a legally complaint OJEU tender process.</p>	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↔	L	M	G	Jun 2015

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

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<p>The council has introduced a variety of models which allow developers to satisfy their Section 106 agreements according to the viability of the site involved. These models include gifted units of accommodation and/or providing the council with an equity share in properties. This has stimulated development across the county whilst providing the council with a capital asset.</p> <p>A joint housing market assessment with Wrexham County Borough Council has also been commissioned to help understand which models are most appropriate in each area of the county</p>	L	H	A	<p>The council will continue to utilise these alternative delivery models to develop affordable housing.</p> <p>The process for the use of commuted sums for affordable housing will be formalised alongside a review and refresh of Local Planning Guidance (LPG) No. 9</p> <p>The evidence provided through the joint housing market assessment will be used to inform housing policy.</p>	Chief Officer: Community & Enterprise	↔	L	M	G	May 2015

Risk to Manage - Unclear about the implications of the changes proposed through the Planning Bill on timing of the progress of the Local Development Plan

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)		Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)				Likelihood (L)	Impact (I)	Gross Score (LxI)	Target Date
M	M	A	Evidence gathering and background studies currently being assessed to ascertain if any changes to the delivery agreement will be required to take on board any changes arising from Wales Planning Bill.	M	M	A	Production of a pre-deposit plan by the end of the year.	Chief Officer: Planning Strategy Manager	↑	L	L	G	TBC

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

We said in 2014/15 that we would:

1. Deliver the housing revenue account business plan to achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2020

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
<p>Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised Asset Management strategy has been developed and agreed at the Scrutiny and Cabinet committees • A revised Stock Condition Survey has been commissioned and completed, including verification of previous Stock Condition Survey reports • Detailed work undertaken to maximise efficiencies and reduce costs in the HRA Business Plan • Initial discussions with Tenants and Members on the development of a revised delivery programme • Detailed analysis of Stock Condition Survey information to ensure accuracy and alignment of HRA Business Plan • Consultation on development of a revised delivery programme to meet WHQS • Development of proposals and costings for a revised programme • Existing programme continues to be delivered • Collate feedback from consultation and develop a revised programme • Proposals and report presented to the Scrutiny committee • Continue to Collate information to finalise WHQS Programme • Establish a list of properties from the new WHQS Programme to complete initial validation surveys. <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design new WHQS Survey Sheet • Arrange appointments with established list of properties to compete surveys • Complete WHQS Validation Surveys • Publish Final version of WHQS Programme • Procure Contracts utilising Framework Providers • Procure Contractors via various Tendering options • Organise & Complete Contractor Interviews with Tenants Federation • Implement WHQS Survey work detailing exact Property work schedules 				

Achievement will be Measured through:

- Investing in improving the housing stock
- Tenant satisfaction of work completed
- Performance measured against commitments made to tenants at the housing ballot
- Managing expenditure within or below budget to maximise available financial resources.

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Capital Works Target – Heating Upgrades	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	977	600	TBC dependant on WHQS Plan	907	G	G
Capital Works Target – Kitchen Replacements		1118	922		316+365+113 794	G	G
Capital Works Target – Smoke Detectors		804	475		200	A	G
Capital Works Target – Bathroom Replacements		200	120	Not in current plan for 2016/17	70	A	G
Tenant satisfaction of capital works completed on kitchens, heating and bathrooms.		N/A – new measure	Establish baseline 2014/15	TBC once baseline established	N/A	N/A	N/A
IPH3M1 - Capital Programme expenditure on improvement work streams <i>(Managing expenditure within or below budget to maximise available financial resources - Capital works budget)</i>		£12m	£9.76m	TBC	£6.94m	A	G

2. Reach a voluntary settlement with Welsh Government to introduce self financing for the Council housing service by 1st April 2015.

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Progress made includes:

- Chief Officer Community Enterprise, Housing Asset Manager & Finance are working towards the self-financing agreement for the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system exit.
- Agreement between the 11 Local Authorities has been reached and the Authority is now represented on a number of focus groups planning for the implementation of self-financing.
- A report on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan was presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October and work now continues to submit a revised Business Plan to Welsh Government.
- A Recent Member & Tenant Workshop took place on the 7th Jan 2015.
- MRA Application now submitted to Welsh Government

Next Steps

- Voluntary Agreement Signed by Leader of the Council
- Budget & Business Plan approved by Council February 2015
- Staff Briefings March 2015
- Newsletter to Tenants March 2015

Achievement will be Measured through:

- The implementation of a voluntary agreement by the deadline which gives the Council certainty about future funding

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Implementation of a voluntary agreement with Welsh Government to introduce self-financing by 1st April 2015

3. Develop a revised stock investment plan to meet the objectives in the Assets Management Strategy in conjunction with Tenants and Members.

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

Completed

- A revised Asset Management strategy has been developed and agreed at the Scrutiny and Cabinet committees
- A revised Stock Condition Survey has been commissioned and completed, including verification of previous Stock Condition Survey reports
- Detailed work undertaken to maximise efficiencies and reduce costs in the HRA Business Plan
- Initial discussions with Tenants and Members on the development of a revised delivery programme
- Detailed analysis of Stock Condition Survey information to ensure accuracy and alignment of HRA Business Plan
- Consultation on development of a revised delivery programme to meet WHQS
- Development of proposals and costings for a revised programme
- Existing programme continues to be delivered
- Collate feedback from consultation and develop a revised programme
- Proposals and report presented to the Scrutiny committee
- Continue to Collate information to finalise WHQS Programme
- Establish a list of properties from the new WHQS Programme to complete initial validation surveys.

Next Steps

- Design new WHQS Survey Sheet
- Arrange appointments with established list of properties to complete surveys
- Complete WHQS Validation Surveys
- Publish Final version of WHQS Programme
- Procure Contracts utilising Framework Providers
- Procure Contractors via various Tendering options
- Organise & Complete Contractor Interviews with Tenants Federation
- Implement WHQS Survey work detailing exact Property work schedules
- Continue to Develop and Update Stock Condition Data

Achievement will be measured through:

- Agreement of a 6 year investment programme by March 2015
- Delivery of capital improvement programmes

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Agreement of a 6 year investment programme by March 2015

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
IPH3M1 - Capital Programme expenditure on improvement work streams	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£12m	£9.76m	TBC	£6.55m	A	G

Risks to Manage: Ensure contractors perform effectively and that costs are contained within budget

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	1. Effective budget monitoring and management. 2. Robust management of contractors for programme delivery. 3. Ensuring effective arrangements and resource for customer liaison. Two Tenant Liaison Officers now appointed to ensure contractor performance and tenant satisfaction. 4. Arrange further CA training to assist with Contract Monitoring & Contractor Performance. 5. Review Budget Monitoring Sheets in line with Finance Team.	L	L	G	1. Review current resources. 2. Appoint required Clerk of Works to assist with the delivery of the WHQS Delivery Programme. 3. Review current Specification and carry out Cost Engineering exercise if required. 4. Manage tenant expectation	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↔	L	L	G	Mar 2015

Risks to Manage - Gaining agreement with all 11 stock retaining Councils and Welsh Government on approach to dismantling the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	H	R	1. Flintshire County Council will have greater freedom to invest. 2. There are 11 stock holding councils across Wales that are members of the existing Welsh housing revenue account subsidy system. This should be abolished by April 2015. 3. The next step in the process is to set up a voluntary agreement to enable the 11 organisations to introduce self-financing. 4. Chief Officer, Housing Asset Manager & Finance Manager all working on HRA work-streams.	L	H	A	Review self-finance arrangements Joint agreements with neighbouring organisations Implementation of new finance agreement and introduce control measures to ensure WHQS investment	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↔	L	L	G	Apr '15

Risks to Manage - Ensuring that the Council identifies and plans for the resources required to meet the WHQS by 2020

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	1. Ensuring other services i.e. Housing Management input to the Asset Management Strategy to plan for the impact of Welfare Reform and other regeneration issues. 2. Ensure that each member of staff within the Housing Maintenance/ Management teams are fully aware of the WHQS and the Councils goals to achieving the WHQS by 2020. 3. Ensure sufficient funding in place to deliver WHQS programme. 4. Ensure staff capacity to deliver WHQS programme.	L	M	G	1. Revisit and revise business plan to address future impacts of Welfare Reform i.e. re-modelling of existing accommodation. 2. Options for prudential borrowing 3. Review Stock Survey results for further cost saving options	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↔	L	L	G	Mar '15

APPENDIX 4

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

What we will do in 2014/15:

1. Place a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	A
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The Housing Act 2014 (Wales), which will be implemented in April 2015, places additional statutory homelessness duties upon Flintshire County Council. The main duty is to assist anyone (not only applicants with a priority need) who approach the authority as homeless or threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. In advance of the new statutory duty coming into force, Flintshire County Council decided to pilot the delivery of an enhanced homelessness prevention service in order to identify best practice models. The outcomes from the pilot will enable the efficient delivery of a Housing Solutions Service from April 2015 and ensure the authority's new statutory homelessness duties are undertaken as cost effectively as possible.

Achievement will be measured through:

- The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months
- Number of tenants helped to move to more affordable accommodation (because of the spare room subsidy)

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
HHA/013 - The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months.	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	84.89%	90%	90%	N/A – Annual Measure	N/A	N/A
Number of tenants helped to move to more affordable accommodation because of the spare room subsidy		50	65	TBC	32	A	A

Risks to Manage - Meeting the growing costs of homelessness prevention

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<p>1. Welsh Government agreed additional funding for 2015/16. This will enable appropriate resources, as identified through the enhanced homelessness prevention pilot, to be put in place from April 2015, in readiness for the implementation of the new statutory homelessness duties within the Housing Act 2014 (Wales).</p> <p>2. Continuing difficulties to transfer households, impacted by the spare room subsidy, to smaller accommodation. FCC</p>	M	M	A	<p>1. Common Housing Register for all social housing providers operating within Flintshire to be introduced in April 2015.</p> <p>2. Project being planned to target advice & support FCC tenants, who will be impacted by the reassessment of disability benefits that is due to commence in October 2015.</p>	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	Oct 2015

			Housing Service is working closely with HB to identify those households where an award of a discretionary housing payments will be a long term requirement. (<u>Note:</u> a DWP report published in July 2014 has conceded the main policy intent behind the introduction of the spare room subsidy, to encourage under-occupying households to downsize to smaller properties, is not being attained.)									
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2. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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During the period April 2014 – December 2014, the successful outcomes from the Welfare Rights Team's interventions with low income households has generated additional welfare benefit income for these households totalling £2,287,540 (comprising of £1,850,684pa on-going payments and £436,856 one-off payments). In addition, discretionary housing payments totalling £219,189 has been awarded to Flintshire households impacted by the welfare reforms and households at risk of homelessness have been assisted to manage debts totalling £860,822. Alongside boosting spending power within the local economy, which is being reduced by the on-going transformation of the social security system, the collective positive outcomes from the income maximisation activities positively supports the attainment of the objectives within the tackling poverty and homelessness prevention agendas.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of Flintshire residents assisted by Flintshire County Council to maximise their income
- Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions
- Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by Flintshire County Council
- Amount of monthly debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Money Advice Service
- Amount of monthly discretionary housing payment (DHP) paid to support peoples housing needs including changes due to Welfare Reform

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by FCC (WEL/001)	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£2.3 million	£2 million	£2.6 million	£2,287,540	G	G
The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for setting targets against							
Number of Flintshire residents assisted by FCC to claim Additional Social Security and Tax Credits	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	1,680	N/A	N/A	1,262	N/A	N/A
Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions		180	N/A	N/A	147	N/A	N/A
Amount of monthly debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Money Advice Service <i>It has been decided this year to exclude the housing costs (i.e., total amount of outstanding mortgage) from the debt managed</i>		N/A – new measure	N/A	N/A	£860,822	N/A	N/A
Amount of monthly discretionary housing payment (DHP) paid to support people to adjust to Welfare Reform changes		N/A – new measure	N/A	N/A	£219,189	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage - Advice and support services sufficient to be able to meet demand

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<p>1. Additional funding has been obtained to continue training front line staff to have the skills and knowledge to help residents resolve low-level welfare benefit problems and ease pressures upon traditional advice services</p> <p>2. FCC continues to work collaboratively with five N/Wales local authorities & DWP to develop joint approach to assisting households throughout the longer-term transformation of the social security system.</p>	M	M	A	<p>1. The Flintshire Tackling Poverty Partnership will identify & maximise the take-up of funding opportunities amongst advice services, to compliment similar work being undertaken across N/Wales being led by DWP. This is expected to start from February 2015.</p>	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	Jan 2015

			3. Evaluation being undertaken of the outcomes from the Advice Gateway pilot and, if appropriate, funding streams will be identified to enable the continuation of the Advice Gateway & the development of a single access pathway to the Advice & Support Gateways.									
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3.Support the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) within the Shotton Jobcentre Plus area

Progress Status	Progress RAG	G	Outcome RAG	G
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Universal Credit continues to be introduced in a measured and controlled manner. Currently, Universal Credit is only available to unemployed single people and couples who meet specific criteria & live within postcodes served by Shotton Jobcentre. At the end of December 2014, a total of 318 claims for Universal Credit have been made and 180 claims are still live. The low numbers of UC claimants needing to access support will not affect the level of funding provided by the DWP to FCC during the current financial year. However, the DWP will use these low numbers when determining the level of future funding. Thus, it is important that FCC ensures that the DWP acknowledge that UC is currently being delivered to the less problematic claimant groups and the demand for support will increase during the next 12 months as the roll out of UC extends to claimants with children who will have more complex needs.

FCC and the DWP have implemented an effective communication strategy that provides stakeholders with timely access to information enabling them to prepare for new challenges & ensure they possess the knowledge to be able to provide support & reassurance to residents if they have queries around Universal Credit. FCC and the DWP are also working in partnership to improve a claimant's access to a range of advice and support services that can help them address other social welfare problems they may have, which, if left unresolved, could impact upon their ability to meet the work seeking requirements within their UC claimant commitment & face a benefit sanction.

Note: FCC has no control over the speed at which the Westminster Government is progressively implementing UC within Flintshire. As such it is not appropriate to have targets for these measures, thus, the outturns are provided as management information

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of Universal Credit claimants referred to Citizens Advice Bureau for Personal Budgeting support
- Number of Universal Credit claimants assisted with on-line access
- Number of claims referred from Jobcentre Plus to Flintshire County Council Housing Benefit service

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for setting targets against							
Number of Universal Credit claimants referred to Citizens Advice Bureau for Personal Budgeting support	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	19	N/A	N/A
Number of Universal Credit claimants assisted with on-line access		N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	1	N/A	N/A
Number of claims referred from Jobcentre Plus to Flintshire County Council Housing Benefit service		N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	88	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage - Eviction levels rising if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)		
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FCC & DWP delivering briefing sessions examining 'Alternative Payment Arrangements' & addressing concerns held by landlords around renting to tenants claiming UC. FCC working with the DWP to ensure private landlords receive similar support to that provided to social landlords when a tenant claims UC. FCC Housing Benefit Service proactively uses Discretionary Housing Payments to assist 	M	M	A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> DWP proposing new data sharing regulations to enable stakeholders to access information on UC claimants to provide support & stop them falling into arrears. FCC will apply to be involved in test & learn activity, linked to Alternative Payment Arrangements; Housing Verification; & Personal Budgeting Support, when DWP introduce their additional pilots in the summer of 2015. 	Chief Officer Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	Jan 2015

Risks to Manage - Local Economy may suffer as residents have less income to spend

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FCC providing services to help Flintshire households maximise their income through accessing social security benefits & managing their financial commitments. FCC funding a personal budgeting support service delivered by the CAB, for UC claimants who experience problems managing their household budget. Flintshire Tackling Poverty Partnership considering an application to DWP Flexible Support Fund to deliver a project aimed at improving financial and digital inclusion 	M	M	A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FCC to forecast the projected impacts of future changes to social security legislation upon residents, service users, service providers, local businesses. The development of a Universal Support Delivered Locally Framework will identify the advice & support resources that are required to help residents to manage the impacts of longer-term 	Chief Officer Community & Enterprise	↔	M	M	A	Jan 2015

			amongst working age claimants in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance.				transformation of the social security system.						
							3. Initiatives to be developed & implemented to support working households, particularly containing children, who are now seeing their income fall because of the welfare reforms.						

Risk to Manage - Resources to meet the requirements of the Universal Credit roll-out

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> During the period April 14 – March 15, the UC delivery partnership agreement ensures resources will be in place to support UC claimants. FCC & DWP currently negotiating funding levels for 2015/16 to take account of the UC expansion programme. FCC & DWP hold a regular UC strategic meeting to manage the implementation of the Universal Credit local delivery partnership agreement. 	L	L	G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement order agreed in Parliament for Shotton JCp to accept UC claims from claimants with children from 26 January 2015 & UC rolled out across the Flintshire for single people from 23 February 2015, Flintshire's Tackling Poverty Partnership to lead the development of a strategic approach to improving financial literacy and capability within all households impacted by the 	Chief Officer Community & Environment	↔	L	L	G	Jan 2015

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APPENDIX 5

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

What we will do in 2014/15:

1. Improvement in the energy efficiency of housing on Deeside through the Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration framework

Progress Comment	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
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This report covers two V&VP project areas, 1) WHQS Plus and 2) Promoting Deeside as a place to live and work. WHQS Plus seeks to improve the energy efficiency of up to 39 council homes at least 5 points above the minimum Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score of 65. It is impossible to guarantee that the same improvement can be made to the private homes receiving measures through the second V&VP project area so the impact of this work is reflected in section 2 'Help residents in the private sector to access funding support to improve the energy efficiency of their homes'.

A further three WHQS Plus installations took place in Q3. Delivery to the remaining 166 anticipated properties is scheduled for Q4. The ambitious overall annual target of 650 homes receiving installations has been behind schedule in Q2 as a result of the complexity and scale of projects; namely the gas infill programme which pushed other projects into Q3 and Q4. Some capacity was planned into Q3 and Q4 just in case of this situation. The Vibrant and Viable Places Programme was scheduled for delivery in Q3 and Q4 and will pick up and be completed in Q4 as planned with a committed volume and timely funding claim anticipated.

As a result of this work there are no further council owned external solid walls without insulation left in the Housing Renewal Area. This will allow additional council flats in Connah's Quay to receive solar photovoltaic systems.

Achievement will be measured through:

- The installation of additional energy efficiency measures including solid wall insulation and solar PV

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	N/A – new measure	177	177	11	A	G
Average SAP score of Council homes receiving measures		65	70	70	70	G	G

Risks to Manage – Residents may not take up the energy efficiency measure available as we hope

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)		
H	H	R	1. The Council has evaluated previous programmes and identified the most cost effective measures based on capital cost and potential savings. These measures form the basis of the 2013/14 service delivery strategy.	L	L	G	1. Continue to evaluate performance and undertake customer research to identify the measures that will benefit residents most and that are most desirable.	Housing Regeneration and Strategy Manager	↔	L	L	G	09/03/15

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

Progress Comment	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	G
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By Q3 it was expected that the domestic energy efficiency programme would have delivered a minimum of 495 measures to properties to ensure quarterly progress in line with ultimate delivery to 650 homes. Progress has been slower than expected in Q2 with only a cumulative total of 293 installations completed instead of the required 405. This was due to the gas infill scheme in Mostyn encountering difficult drilling conditions and delaying the installation of heating systems to Council properties. In Q3 a lower installation rate of only 100 properties was planned as there was a suspicion that delays may be likely. The result is 224 installations took place in Q3 which has brought the programme back on track with 517 homes receiving installations so far this year. The 224 installations in Q3 includes 118 replacement gas boilers and heating systems, 38 external solid wall insulation systems, 55 heating and insulation systems through the Affordable Warmth Fund and 11 insulated lofts and 2 insulated cavity walls for previously uninsulated council properties.

The benefit of this work is that 517 homes have so far each seen average annual heating bill savings of £301. Gas infill areas such as Mostyn and Aston will benefit from the highest savings when oil and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) fuelled heating systems are replaced with gas fuelled heating systems. The team hopes to hit the £200,000 annual heating bill saving mark by the end of the financial year.

It is, however, unlikely that the carbon reduction target of 25,000 tonnes will be hit this year. It is anticipated that a carbon saving of between 17,500 and 22,500 tonnes will be achieved based on current projections. The target figure was calculated based on the achievements of 2012/13 when 17,412 tonnes of carbon was saved. Compared with then, fewer properties are now having multiple measures installed and so the amount of carbon saved per property is on average circa 10 tonnes less. This is offset slightly by the fact that more properties will receive improvement measures this year compared with 2012/13 but the issue is clouded further by the fact that there is a different mix of measures this year. This will be reviewed at the end of the year to ensure that reporting is consistent.

Flintshire's fuel poverty crisis fund has continued to perform well with the target of reducing the bills of 30 households this quarter surpassed. In Q3 66 households received detailed home energy advice surveys and reports whilst 55 properties received installations ranging from new heating controls to loft insulation and full heating systems. This unique fund is used as a last resort, a safety net for homeowners or tenants who can evidence a genuine need for help but that would otherwise not qualify for financial assistance. For example, financial support towards energy efficiency measures is available for households living in certain areas of deprivation through the Welsh Government's Arbed programme and similarly, households living in a property with a SAP rating of 38 or less and are in receipt of income related benefits qualify for free energy efficiency improvements through the Welsh Government's Nest scheme. Flintshire's fuel poverty fund supports households who fall outside of these funds but who still genuinely need support. Referrals can

come from households themselves as a direct application or through partner organisations such as Care and Repair or the Citizens Advice Bureau. Flintshire County Council provides training through the North Wales Energy Advice Centre for support agencies so that their employees or volunteers can identify households who need support as well as knowing enough to be able to refer households to the appropriate schemes. Over 60 people have received training so far. A further more detailed report will be included in the year end report.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of households accessing Eco and other energy efficiency funding
- Number of households accessing the opportunity to convert from oil to gas heating in the Aston and Mostyn areas

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Overall annual fuel bill reduction for residents	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£142,430	£175,000	£250,000	£155,940	G	G
Annual reduction in carbon emissions		11,661 tonnes	25,000 tonnes	20,000 tonnes	15,151 tonnes	A	G
IPE2M5 – Number of homes benefiting from improved domestic energy performance measures		466 homes	650 homes	1000 homes	517 homes (cumulative total)	G	G

3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to Council homes.

Progress Comment

Progress RAG

A

Outcome RAG

G

400 council homes are programmed to receive measures this year based on 233 council properties in gas infill areas (Aston and Mostyn), 136 properties through the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme and the remaining through the council loft and cavity programme and any other schemes such as reactive air source heat pumps and solar pv. 214 properties have so far received measures with the vibrant and viable programme ongoing in addition to the affordable warmth programme and the Arbed Oakenholt project in conjunction with the Welsh Government. The Arbed project will run from Q4 into the next financial year and whilst the Council is a partner in the delivery, overall control of the programme is with the Welsh Government. The programme is set to deliver measures such as solid wall insulation, loft and cavity insulation as well as heating controls to at least 60 properties.

In Q3 114 gas heating systems were installed in Mostyn. 17 properties have refused and only had a gas service to the front of their property with no new heating system. These properties are scheduled to have new heating systems when the properties become void. 92 homes are programmed to have new heating systems in Q4. The anticipated total install rate for the gas infill areas in 2014/15 is 216 homes out of the original 233.

In Q4 up to 125 council homes, identified from energy performance certificates, are scheduled to receive external solid wall insulation (EWI) or solar photo voltaics through the Vibrant and Viable Places WHQS Plus programme. 11 EWI were installed in Q3 with the remaining works scheduled for completion in Q4.

The council loft and cavity programme delivered insulation measures in 11 lofts and 2 cavities in Q3. Most council properties are insulated and these small numbers are largely based on new tenants moving into properties where the tenant has previously refused the measure. It is expected that up to 30 properties will have insulation installed in Q4.

The overall RAG status for Council properties is Amber due to slower delivery in Q3 than planned and the knock on effect that project management resource allocated for the delivery of Vibrant and Viable Places is still committed to the gas programme. If there were further unexpected issues with either the gas or the Vibrant and Viable Programme, being so late in the year there is no room to extend projects, only to reduce the delivery volume. Whilst this risk is minimal it still exists hence reflected in the RAG status.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures
- Number of Council homes in the Aston and Mostyn areas being converted from oil to gas

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	Current Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
IPP2M4 - Number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	161 council homes	400 council homes	500 council homes	214 council homes (cumulative total)	A	G
Number of Council homes in the Aston and Mostyn areas being converted from oil to gas (this is a sub-measure of IPP2M4 above)		N/A – new measure	233 council homes	N/A	125 council homes (cumulative total)	G	G

Risks to Manage – Available funding might fall short of public demand

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)				
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date	
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)		
Page 92	H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A robust 3 year business plan has been developed to ensure that the service can be sustained. 2. The business plan is based on meeting the Councils spend to save ratio of £1 spent for every £5 saved or secured through external funding. 3. Discussions with stakeholders have taken place to emphasise the benefit of continuing investment in domestic energy efficiency. 	L	L	G	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sufficiently skilled staff need to be retained / developed to ensure there is the capacity to continue to identify and secure funding opportunities and to ensure that delivery of programmes meets the standards of the Council, service users and funding providers. 2. Progress needs to be evaluated against the business plan to determine whether the model is working or not. 3. Public demand needs to be evaluated regularly to ensure appropriate investments are made. 4. The service needs to maintain a strong communications plan to provide transparency to existing and potential service users. This may include referrals to other services/fund providers including local contractors with access to ECO funding. With good communication it may also be possible to manage the Public's expectations. 	Housing Regeneration and Strategy Manager	↔	L	L	G	Dec 14

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **TUESDAY 24TH MARCH, 2015**

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

SUBJECT: **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Strategic Assessment of Risks & Challenges.

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

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

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work Programme of the Committees of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None as a result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 N/A.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme

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

None.

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Telephone: 01352 702305
Email: ceri.owen@flintshire.gov.uk

CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
24 April 2015	Work of Pennaf Housing Association	To enable the Committee to meet with representatives of Pennaf Housing Association.	Service Improvement	Presentation from Graham Worthington	16 April 2015
	Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)	To update the Committee on Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)	Service Delivery	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
	Council House Development	To consult the Committee on the outcome of the procurement programme and delivery of new homes	Service Delivery	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
	Draft Improvement Plan 2015/16	To consider the draft Improvement Plan 2015/16	Performance Reporting	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
20 May 2015	Review of Strategic Housing Partnership	To review the Strategic Housing Partnership.	Service Delivery	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	

	Private Sector Housing Renewal	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service development and county wide projects.	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
	Welfare Reform Update	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform	Service Delivery	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
	Update on Tenant Involvement	To consider tenants satisfaction results and the involvement of tenants in service improvements.	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
1 June 2015	Work of Grwp Cynefin Housing Association	To enable the Committee to meet with representatives of Grwp Cynefin Housing Association.	Service Improvement	Presentation from Walis George	21 May 2015
	Update on North East Wales Homes & Property Management	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Performance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	
	Allocation of Sheltered Accommodation	To review the Allocation Policy for Sheltered Accommodation	Service Improvement	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	

8 July, 2015	Quarterly Performance Reporting	To consider Q4/Year End performance outturns for improvement targets.	Performance Reporting	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)	30 June 2015
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REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Six monthly	Private Sector Housing Renewal	To consider progress on the delivery of Flintshire's first Renewal Area, general service development and county wide projects.	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Annually	Update on Delivery of Choices Document	To receive an update report on the delivery of the Choices Document.	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Six monthly	Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Six monthly	Update on North East Wales Homes & Property Management	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Annually	Vibrant and Viable Places	To review progress made following the allocation of funding as part of the Vibrant and Viable Places Bid.	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)