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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

20 April 2015

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Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **THE OLD COURT HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, FLINT CH6 5AE** on **FRIDAY, 24TH APRIL, 2015** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

*** Members are requested to note the venue for the meeting.**

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

AGENDA

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 10)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015 (copy enclosed).
- 4 **WORK OF PENNAF HOUSING ASSOCIATION (PRESENTATION)**
To receive a presentation by Mr Graham Worthington from Pennaf Housing Association and to meet with representatives of Pennaf Housing Association.

5 **FLINTSHIRE'S STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)** (Pages 11 - 42)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

6 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 43 - 48)

Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

*** Following the meeting, Members of the Committee are invited to take part in a tour of the regeneration area.**

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **24 MARCH 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 March 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

Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend for Agenda Item 4 - Vibrant and Viable Places

Present: Councillors: Ian Dunbar, Colin Legg, Nancy Matthews and Paul Shotton

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor Carolyn Thomas (for Ron Davies)

APOLOGY: Cabinet Member for Housing

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Dennis Hutchinson

CONTRIBUTORS: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Economic Development Manager, Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager and Housing Asset Manager

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

63. 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.

During discussion on Agenda Item 5 - The Future of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire, the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Environment declared a personal interest as he was a Director of North East Wales Homes.

64. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2015 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

65. VIBRANT AND VIABLE PLACES

The Economic Development Manager introduced the progress update on the delivery of the Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme in Deeside. He

explained the background to the report, culminating in the Council securing a funding package of £6.024m from the Welsh Government (WG) over three years to support projects relating to the wider regeneration of Deeside. Although funding allocated to each of the three years needed to be utilised within those periods and could not be carried forward, it could be moved between projects. Formal approval had not been received until July 2014 which had impacted on initial progress with projects for 2014/15, however work was now largely on track.

The Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager and Economic Development Manager gave an overview of progress on projects within their respective areas, as set out in the report. Outputs achieved by the programme to date included the creation of 28 new jobs and 105 qualifications gained by trainees in the Green Team.

The Chairman welcomed the implications of the programme across Flintshire and the creation of employment opportunities. In response to a question on timescales, it was stated that the VVP programme spanned three years whereas the creation of an estimated 7,000 jobs in the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone would take over five years. It was estimated that around 2,000 new jobs had already been created through investment by businesses in Deeside.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Paul Shotton referred to the Council's original bid for £15m funding which had been reduced to £6m by WG. He welcomed work undertaken by the Green Team and the initiative to acquire and develop stalled sites through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

Councillor Peter Curtis hoped that other areas of the county would benefit from the programme and commented that social enterprise in Holywell had been initiated by Communities First.

In welcoming the conversion of vacant spaces above shops into accommodation for letting purposes, Councillor Brian Lloyd said that provision should be made for rear access in those buildings. The Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager explained that this could be facilitated through VVP grant funding or through the empty property loans in all other parts of the county as part of the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement Policy.

In response to comments from Councillor Nancy Matthews on reducing business rates, the Economic Development Manager explained that the WG had a programme of support to help smaller retailers access a rebate on a sliding scale. He went on to agree with remarks around the importance of effective delivery of Wifi to local residents and businesses as well as shoppers in town centres and the need to encourage shoppers to their local high street.

Councillor Ian Dunbar welcomed a number of the projects, particularly on those encouraging use of high street shops. In response to queries, the Economic Development Manager said that grant funding was available to individual businesses wishing to improve the visibility of their shop front, with 18 enquiries received since the launch of the scheme. Despite the detailed application process leading up to approval, one scheme had been approved

whilst two were currently being progressed. In relation to the purchase of two vacant shops for a business start-up project, it had been decided to defer this to year 2 of the programme to focus on the civic building demolition in Connah's Quay.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin congratulated the Council on its success in achieving the £6.024m grant funding in the current climate, despite the bid for a higher amount. In response to a query on energy efficiency measures, the Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager agreed to respond separately with the number of properties where solar panels had been installed and how much money this had generated. However, he advised that this amount would have been re-invested for further energy efficiency work.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood highlighted the importance of having efficient transport links in place around the Deeside area to connect residents and businesses to opportunities. The Economic Development Manager pointed out that the Council's bid had included an element for transportation which had been unsuccessful. However, it was noted that the WG was undertaking work, outside the VVP programme, on transportation across North Wales.

In response to queries by Councillor Matthews on the installation of solar panels on Council properties, the Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager explained that the Council received the Feed in Tariff payments whilst the tenant benefited from reduced energy bills. Although solar thermal panels had been installed in Shotton, solar photovoltaics (PV) systems had been installed in Greenfield, Connah's Quay and Garden City. However, each install considered was dependent upon the capacity of electricity sub-stations in those areas to accommodate that.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Curtis that some shops remained empty despite improvements made through the grant funding. He suggested that this could be addressed by including a clause in the approval process for the shop to be utilised within a set period.

The Chairman thanked Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their input on this item.

Following agreement by the Chairman, Councillor Mike Reece raised another matter in relation to difficulties being experienced by some residents on alternative methods of paying rent as they would be unable to use the Post Office in the future. The Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Environment commented that this matter was under the remit of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, he explained that as part of the budget process for 2015/16, it had been agreed to delay the rollout of these changes for three months to enable contact with all affected service users and offer appropriate assistance. He asked that the contact details of the individuals be passed to officers to make contact.

RESOLVED:

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

66. THE FUTURE OF THE RIGHT TO BUY AND RIGHT TO ACQUIRE

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) presented a report on the Welsh Government (WG) consultation on the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire and sought the Committee's views on the proposed response, following recent consideration by Cabinet. It was anticipated that a separate response would be submitted by the Tenants' Federation within the deadline of 16 April 2015.

The Chief Officer provided background information and summarised the main considerations as set out in the report. She referred to previous debate by the Committee on this matter and concerns over the long-term investment in new Council homes under the current legislation. The two proposals within the WG consultation document were:

- i) To reduce the maximum discount from £16,000 to £8,000 on the market value of the property, as a short/medium term measure to reduce sales.
- ii) To develop new primary legislation to suspend the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire for all social housing tenants across Wales.

There was currently provision for Councils to apply to WG to suspend Right to Buy in specific areas for an initial five years, supported by an appropriate business case. It was indicated that the Council aimed to do this, due to its plans to build 200 new Council houses over the next five years.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood said that if the legislation were to continue, then the price of properties sold under Right to Buy should be ringfenced to build new homes. She went on to refer to planning policy and the need for developers to provide affordable homes that were genuinely affordable to those in need, such as single people.

The Chief Officer advised that for the 33 properties sold under Right to Buy over the past five years, the Council had generated a capital receipt of £549,325 representing the 25% it was permitted to retain. This amount was ringfenced in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for reinvestment in stock improvement. With the introduction of self-financing, 100% of the market value of the sold property would be kept by the Council. However, even if the maximum discount was reduced (as per the WG proposal), it would not be possible for sold properties to generate enough income for a like-for-like replacement new build, due to the variance between the value of existing stock and new build cost.

On affordable housing, the Chief Officer referred to provision for this in planning policy on new sites. She went on to refer to the role of North East Wales (NEW) Homes in improving access to affordable housing where opportunities were limited, for example by offering more flexibility to individuals whose incomes were low but could not qualify for social housing.

When asked by Councillor George Hardcastle about plans to develop 500 new homes over five years, the Chief Officer advised that these would comprise 200 Council and 300 affordable homes. The report on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) recently considered by Cabinet had included

details of a wide range of sites across the county and the Committee was due to receive an update at the next meeting.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke in support of the proposed reduction in discount and asked for clarification on the definition of affordable housing levels. The Chief Officer said that this was based on a figure of income being used towards housing costs, and would confirm in a separate response. She added that along with Section 106 and planning obligations, a range of housing options were being explored including shared ownership.

On affordability, Councillor Isherwood said that consideration should be given to graduates who may need to repay their university grants.

Following Members' comments on the negative impact of Right to Buy on Council housing stock, the Deputy Leader welcomed the decision by WG to open up consultation on this matter.

Whilst speaking in support of the proposals, Councillor Gareth Roberts remarked that some villages in rural areas had lost all their Council houses to the Right to Buy scheme.

Councillor Carolyn Thomas referred to a recent planning inquiry where affordable housing had averaged £178K based on census statistics in the area which was above the expectations of most first-time buyers. She added that the inquiry had identified social rented housing as a priority need. The Chief Officer requested that Councillor Thomas liaise with her following the meeting regarding a vacated property in her ward.

Following comments from Councillor David Cox on the need for reasonable purchase prices on affordable housing developments, the Deputy Leader commended the Council's initiative to set up NEW Homes to help individuals who were currently unable to access this type of accommodation and were most in need. The Facilitator advised that an update on NEW Homes was scheduled for the Committee's meeting in June 2015.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Welsh Government consultation currently open concerning the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire, be noted; and
- (b) That Flintshire County Council respond positively to the consultation and support early implementation of the reduction to the discount, followed by the ending of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire.

67. IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) introduced the report for the Committee to note and consider elements of the 2014/15 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Committee for the period October to December 2014.

A short presentation was given on performance within each of the sub-priority areas, highlighting work which had been undertaken to improve performance and areas where improvement was needed, as outlined within each report.

Extra Care Housing

Members were advised that the planning application for the new extra care scheme in Flint was due to be considered by the Planning & Development Control Committee the following day.

Councillor Peter Curtis welcomed plans for a further extra care scheme in Holywell, subject to agreement on a site. The Deputy Leader said that if agreement could not be reached on a site within Holywell then an alternative would be sought elsewhere.

Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes

Proposals for extending growth of the Council's housing company would be discussed by the NEW Homes Board in April 2015, prior to an update to be brought to the Committee in June 2015.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin praised Wales & Wales Housing for providing flats for the over 50 age group. The Chief Officer confirmed that a range of property types for different groups of individuals would be considered as part of the new build programme.

In response to a query from Councillor Amanda Bragg on the target to prevent homelessness for 90% of all potentially homeless households, the Chief Officer explained that the quarterly outturn had narrowly missed this target. The target set by Welsh Government aimed for councils to work towards preventing homelessness situations for at least six months, however there were some situations where individuals returned within that period which required more extensive support.

When asked about the lease agreement for the over 55s lease option scheme, the Chief Officer referred to the challenges in meeting specific requirements on the type and location of properties required by those individuals and the need to balance their needs with others on the waiting list. More detail would be given in the next update report to the Committee.

Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)

The Housing Asset Manager gave an update on more detailed survey work being undertaken and the completion of contractor interviews, with Tenant Federation representatives included on the panel. He referred to the outturns within the report, as at December 2014, adding that work was on schedule to achieve the promises within the Choices Document.

Welfare Reform

A previous report had been received by the Committee on the pilot of enhanced homelessness prevention to enable the Council to be better prepared for the new statutory duty due to come into force at the end of April 2015. The support given by the Welfare Reform team to vulnerable individuals during the first nine months of the pilot had generated additional ongoing annual welfare benefit payments of £1.8m.

An update was given on the future rollout of acceptance of Universal Credit claims across Flintshire. This was identified as a risk to the Council as the initial rollout had focussed only on single applicants whereas the programme would change to include other groups.

Councillors Paul Cunningham and Amanda Bragg asked that Members' thanks be passed to the Welfare Rights team for their excellent work.

Fuel Poverty

The Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager reported on the completion of solid wall insulation work on Council properties in the Housing Renewal Area and highlighted concerns around the future of Eco funding. On the delivery of energy efficiency measures to Council properties in gas infill areas, it was noted that the scheme was to be extended to Treuddyn and Rhydymwyn in line with the results of a positive viability exercise.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

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

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) updated the Committee on the final stages in preparation for self-financing. She explained that Finance colleagues were continuing their work on borrowing interest rates and that following the imminent final meeting of the steering group, it was hoped that the voluntary agreement would be signed by the Leader of the Council by the end of the week. A note would be circulated to the Committee once the agreement had been signed.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal report be noted.

69. 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:

- The next meeting on 24 April 2015 to be held at The Old Courthouse in Flint to incorporate a tour of the regeneration area. Members would be advised of the arrangements in advance.
- The additional meeting scheduled for 20 May 2015 to include an update on Welfare Reform for which Members of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

70. 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 11.32 am)

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Chairman

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **FRIDAY, 24 APRIL 2015**

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

SUBJECT: **FLINTSHIRE'S STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update and opportunity to influence Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The next stages of Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) were approved by Cabinet on the 17th March 2015. This report outlines the next key stages of the procurement to appoint a development partner.

2.02 At Cabinet in September 2014, approval was given to undertake a major procurement process to appoint a development partner, with the aim of developing 500 new homes (council housing and affordable housing) at a range of sites across the county, alongside commissioning a range of linked regeneration initiatives and community benefits. The Programme will have an initial period of 5 years¹. The Programme will be overseen by a Partnership Board whose decisions will be subject to approval by Cabinet.

2.03 The Commissioning Objectives (as approved by Cabinet in September 2014) are detailed below and illustrated in Appendix 1.

- Delivery of the Programme in a manner responsive to local needs and priorities;
- Quality of Housing which conforms to at least local planning level 3;
- A funding model which provides the initial capital investment for the Developments through borrowing; lease back; buy back options or other arrangements to be recouped through increased income from rents;
- Value for money facilitated by competitive pricing; robust and transparent costings supported by open book

¹ With the option to extend the agreement by a further period of up to 5 years (dependant on successful performance).

- accounting²; performance reporting and monitoring;
- Workforce and training initiatives;
- Environmental protection and improvements;
- Development of sub-contracting and supply chain opportunities including transparency of opportunities and award procedures including advertisement through Sell2Wales;
- Increased social capital through engagement and consultation with the community.

2.04 An indicative list of development sites has been provided to Bidders along with linked targets for the achievement of regeneration and community benefits. Indicative sites (as approved by the Cabinet in September 2014) are listed below:

Table 1. Proposed Phase 1 of Council and Affordable Housing Building Programme 2015/18

Site	No. of HRA Units	No. of Affordable Units	Total
The Walks, Flint,	30	65	95 ³
Custom House School,	8	8	16
Connah's Quay			
Land at Llys Alun,	7	8	15
Rhydymwyn,			
(Former Primary School)			
Former Bowling Green,	8	0	8
Trelogan,			
Maes Meillion,	6	0	6
Leeswood,			
Tan y Rhos, Nercwys	6	0	6
Redhall, Connah's Quay	6	0	6
Ffordd Pennant & Ffordd Hiraethog,	0	28	28
Maes Pennant Mostyn			
Canton Depot , Bagillt ⁴	0	25	25
			Total: 210⁵

2.05 These sites are also shown at Appendix 2 in the context of a larger list of potential sites for inclusion. These potential sites which will be subject to further feasibility work and strategic assessment and approval to determine their suitability for inclusion in the SHARP. (Additional sites may also be identified as suitable for inclusion as

² Open book accounting provides the Council with visibility of Developers fixed and variable costs and profit etc. to allow for review and assurance of value for money via contractual mechanisms.

³ The original forecast of 100 units on The Walks Flint has been revised to 95 units based on more detailed feasibility work having been undertaken and feedback from Bidders.

⁴ A 3 year lease has been recently agreed on this site: so whilst the site is potentially available for housing, this will be towards the end of the programme.

⁵ Princess Avenue Buckley has been withdrawn from the original list, thereby reducing overall numbers by 10 affordable units.

the Programme progresses).

- 2.06 The Programme will commence with the redevelopment of 3 sites: the cleared sites of the maisonettes in Flint with a mix of circa 95 houses and apartments; the cleared site of a school in Connah's Quay and a rural site in Leeswood. As the Programme is developed approval of further sites as early priorities for development will be requested from Cabinet.
- 2.07 The Programme also includes the potential to develop homes for private sale to maximise the value of Council land assets and has the potential (should the Council wish to do so) to invest the increase in land value realised, to provide cross subsidy for the development of Council and Affordable sites across the Programme.
- 2.08 To maximise the potential for regeneration and the creation of cohesive communities, the SHARP also allows for the construction of non-residential properties such as community buildings; commercial and retail units.
- 2.09 As per the Commissioning Objectives, the procurement is exploring the options for funding including self-financing funding from the private sector and prudential borrowing.
- 2.10 The procurement process has been led by a SHARP Evaluation Panel consisting of the SHARP Programme Manager and Council officers from Housing; Economic Regeneration; Finance; Planning; Communities First; Energy and Procurement. The Programme has also received support from external financial; legal and technical advisers. An interim procurement manager has been appointed to manage the procurement process.
- 2.11 The procurement has made good progress to date, meeting all of the key indicative procurement timetable milestones. The procurement (including time estimated for post tender implementation and mobilisation) is estimated to be 75% complete as at the 17th March.
- 2.12 The procurement was advertised via the Sell2Wales and the European Journal on the 25th September 2014. Six potential bidders completed and returned a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to the Council by the stated closing date of 28th October 2014.
- 2.13 Following review and evaluation by the Evaluation Panel (against evaluation criteria based on the Commissioning Objectives), 4 Bidders were invited to participate in the tender process. The four bidders are:
- Galliford Try

- Lovells
- Keepmoat
- Wates Living Space

- 2.14 The Bidders attended Dialogue Sessions with the Council's Evaluation Panel during December 2014; January and February 2015. Following the Dialogue Sessions in December bidders completed and returned a Detailed Solution which outlined their proposed approach. These Solutions have been evaluated and further dialogue has taken place with Bidders.
- 2.15 The current timetable for the Procurement aims for contract award during May 2015 (after cabinet approval has been obtained).
- 2.16 Running alongside the procurement has been the work of the Flintshire House Standard Task and Finish Group. The Group consists of tenants, Elected Members and officers and is facilitated by external expertise. The group has been developing a specification for a 'Flintshire Housing Standard' (Appendix 3) to be approved by the Council. This standard will inform the design and specification of the proposed new Council, affordable rent and private, for sale housing.
- 2.17 The Housing Standard will form a benchmark to ensure consistent, good quality of internal layout, and fixtures and fittings, high standards of energy efficiency and external appearance in keeping with local circumstance, low maintenance product specifications, adequate parking and a public realm designed to promote cohesive and inclusive communities. Bidders have been consulted on the feasibility of the Housing Standard during the tender process and their comments have been taken into account by the Task and Finish Group.
- 2.18 Dialogue has taken place with other North Wales local authorities and other public sector organisations to discuss whether they wish to join the Council as collaborative partners in the procurement. The benefits of collaboration include the potential to increase critical mass; gain greater benefits from economies of scale; share knowledge and expertise and share procurement and administration costs (by for example the Council charging a 'usage fee').
- 2.19 The discussions have been very positive to date, and it is apparent that Flintshire's arrangements appear to be well-established and advanced when compared with other authorities. The scope of the use of the Contract by other Contracting Authorities has also been very well received by Bidders.

3.0 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Key themes have emerged from the Dialogue Sessions and the Detailed Solutions submitted by bidders which have greatly assisted the Council to inform and develop the proposed approach to the delivery of the SHARP. However, they have also highlighted the need for the Council to consolidate its position on key aspects which underpin the SHARP in order to develop a framework that will realise the agreed Commissioning Objectives.
- 3.02 The key areas requiring further consideration are listed below under the following headings;
- Housing Delivery Programme including additional proposed sites for inclusion in the SHARP;
 - Funding Model;
 - Regeneration and Community Benefits;
 - Timetable revisions

Housing Delivery Programme

- 3.03 The initial phase of the Programme is spread over 5 years (with the option to increase the Programme over a further period of up to 5 years). The initial Housing Programme will be recommended by the Partnership Board as a gateway prior to Cabinet approval. The Programme will be structured on an annualised basis and will be designed to develop both more challenging and market ready sites concurrently (and / or consecutively). This will ensure measured development that is responsive to local needs and focused on achieving regeneration in priority areas, as well as the ability to achieve rapid results on more easily developable sites.
- 3.04 With this in mind, it is proposed to develop a process for the consideration of sites to be included within the Programme. It is proposed that this process should take the form of a business case approach which will consider the options in relation to disposal; development and investment of land assets. The business case would be developed via a cross-functional group taking into account the expertise of planning; housing; valuation and estates; economic development; legal; finance; equalities unit etc.
- 3.05 The business case for sites to be included within the Programme would be reviewed by the Asset Management Group and the SHARP Partnership Board prior to submitting to Cabinet for approval. It is proposed that this process be jointly developed and agreed by all Council stakeholders in readiness for inclusion by Cabinet as part of the report requesting approval of contract award.
- 3.06 Whilst the structure of the Housing Delivery Programme will be innovative and robust in terms of the delivery of all sites within an acceptable timeframe. It has become evident during the Dialogue

Sessions that the development market is currently buoyant and that the SHARP needs to provide a strategic and structured commitment with a broad range of Council, affordable and private for-sale units at a number of sites across Flintshire.

- 3.07 The first phase of development will take place at three sites across the county; including two urban and one rural scheme. The plans for Flint are most well developed, due to advanced feasibility and site preparation as a result of the Flint Masterplan. It is also considered that Custom House School Connah's Quay could also be considered as a priority site for development, due to feasibility investigations already completed prior to the commencement of the Programme. Leeswood has also been identified as worthy of prioritisation due to its readiness for development and identified need in this rural location.
- 3.08 In order to maximize the potential benefits of the SHARP, all Bidders advised during the Dialogue Sessions that the utilisation of a site for private house sales at an early stage would assist to generate funding to "pump prime" the SHARP as a whole or to offset any costs or funding commitments from earlier developments or indeed to generally assist the funding of other Council priorities, (in the same way as if a receipt had been received from the capital receipts programme).
- 3.09 Any sites designated for private sales will be funded by Bidders' existing private finance facilities. The intention of this approach is to increase land value. Under this approach up to 15% of the land value could be paid to the Council as deposit, with the balance of land value paid to the Council on completion of sales to individual purchasers. (The land value having increased by virtue of the development process, thereby realising greater returns compared to that realised by disposal of land assets without development).
- 3.10 In order to inform and illustrate this potential approach further site information has been provided to bidders on Maes Gwern, Trebeirdd, Mold as an indicative private for sale site (with no commitment for inclusion on behalf of the Council).⁶ The initial Dialogue with Bidders has provided very positive indications that this approach will work in the best interests of the Council. The tender process will agree a robust methodology for the calculation of land value and development processes, against which Bidders are being evaluated. These processes will then represent the agreed approach to be followed throughout the Programme.
- 3.11 Further sites are also suggested for inclusion in the procurement

⁶ This site has been selected as it has been subject of a report commissioned by the Council on the future viability of sites in Mold. It is currently designated as commercial and would require a change in use designation to residential as part of the emerging UDP process. However early feasibility indications are positive in this regard.

documents so that the Bidder's approach to development and viability can be evaluated as part of the procurement. (These are listed below). All sites are indicative only and their inclusion merely allows for the earliest exploration of feasibility to facilitate the presentation of a draft Housing Programme for Cabinet promptly post Contract award. Bidders are currently being asked to prepare a draft business case (for presentation to Cabinet) as part of the procurement process.

- Former Police Station and Magistrates Court, Flint;⁷
- Plas yr Esgob, Leeswood;
- Former Dairy site, Connah's Quay;
- Former Ysgol Delyn School, Alexandra Road, Mold
- Maes Gwern, Trebeirdd, Mold.⁸
- A number of sites arising from the review of HRA garage sites.

3.12 The current proposed tenure and unit mix for Chapel Street Flint is set out below.⁹ (This scheme is being used as an illustrative model to describe options around funding the programme).

Council Homes	Affordable Homes (inc. Affordable Rent, Affordable Home Ownership, Rent to Buy)
14 X 2 bed houses	6 X 1 bed apartments
8 X 3 bed houses	10 X 2 bed apartments
6 X 1 bed apartments	33 X 2 bed houses
2 X 2 bed apartments	16 X 3 bed houses
Total 30	Total 65
Gross total = 95	

Funding Solutions

3.13 Different funding solutions are applicable to financing the three housing tenures (council homes; affordable homes for rent and homes for private sale) within the overall Programme.

3.14 As per paragraph 3.09, all units for private sale would be funded by the developer with the Council investing the land for a capital receipt and/ or profit share.

3.15 During the Dialogue Sessions the option of self-financing funding solutions have been explored for both council homes and affordable homes for rent. These solutions range from private borrowing; lease back; buy back options or Council borrowing

⁷ This site is a priority for inclusion to allow for concurrent development with the site at Chapel Street Flint.

⁸ This site is a priority for inclusion to allow the potential to explore private for sale development within the procurement.

⁹ This tenure mix is for Chapel Street Flint and does not include homes proposed for the Former Police Station and Magistrates Court, Flint.

which would then be recouped through rental incomes (which are predicted through robust models making agreed allowances for voids; maintenance costs; rental income levels (including CPI etc.)

- 3.16 For public-finance routes, the Council's position is strong given the voluntary agreement for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing. This option offers routes to long-term debt which remain the cheapest and most stable funding product available to the Council, alongside completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for the existing stock. The Council has been successful in securing additional allocation of borrowing headroom for a HRA new build programme and the HRA is likely to generate further revenue and borrowing headroom during the life of this programme.
- 3.17 In addition, whilst the opportunity for the Council to support Housing development exists through the utilisation of Council Fund prudential borrowing, this may be subject to competing priorities by other Council services. However, this does present a potential opportunity to deliver new homes cross-tenure outside the HRA, enabling the Council to make interventions in the market place to meet need, stimulate demand and deliver a return.
- 3.18 It is recommended that prudential borrowing is utilised for the development of council housing within the programme. Whilst this approach would be reviewed on a site by site basis, this option is cost effective and considered particularly appropriate as the Council properties will remain in the ownership of the Council from completion. Also as the anticipated level of expenditure is considered sustainable within the context of HRA self-financing and the recoupment of prudential borrowing costs via rental incomes (which are predicted through robust models making agreed allowances for voids; maintenance costs; rental income levels (including CPI etc.) as per 3.17 above.
- 3.19 In respect of funding solutions for affordable homes to rent, the most accessible options are long term leasing; obtained by a Council provision of a repayment guarantee (in much the same way as if the Council financed through public finance routes i.e. prudential borrowing): repayments would be funded from rental incomes with the Council making up any shortfall. (However the aforementioned cost models make robust allowances to make sure that there is sufficient headroom within the funding model to minimise this potential, therefore providing a high level of assurance that arrangements will be self-financing from rental incomes).
- 3.20 A variety of private funding terms are available within the market from 20 years plus to 40 years. The procurement will evaluate the most appropriate and economically advantageous term and advise

Cabinet as part of the request to award the contract.

- 3.21 Bidders most consistently present a leaseback model of funding as the most economically advantageous private financing model available to the Council. As outlined in the Cabinet report of September 2014, within this model the Council provides the land for development; the developer then builds the units and leases these back to the Council. The units then revert back to the Council at the end of the lease period for a nominal sum.
- 3.22 The Council's current approach is to retain the title to the land whilst the units are built (the development period).¹⁰ On completion the developer (or funder) would purchase the units and lease these back to the Council. Currently, lease back funding is not being offered by the market to cover the development period, however the procurement is currently investigating funding options.
- 3.23 As part of this process, Bidders will shortly be evaluated on their funding capabilities and the cost of providing funding (including the development period and via leaseback). In addition, Bidders will be allowed to present innovative forms and terms of financing as part of their offer (and these options may be commissioned as part of the funding for the Programme). Bidders will be evaluated on these options to demonstrate their capability to meet the Council's current and future funding needs (as these may develop throughout the course of the Programme). The report to Cabinet to award the contract will set out the results of these evaluations, identifying the most economically advantageous bid.

Community Benefits

- 3.24 An integral element of the SHARP is to support the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Council's Regeneration Strategy: 'a competitive Flintshire; sustainable communities and the creation of employment and skills' (including working with disadvantaged and targeted groups and social businesses); the development of supply chain opportunities (including for small and medium enterprises); local employment opportunities and education and training initiatives.
- 3.25 The Dialogue Sessions have involved working closely with Communities First and the Council's Economic Development Team to embed community benefits into the contract and to ensure that all Bidders are aware of existing networks and initiatives and that

¹⁰ The alternative option would be to transfer the title to the developer which would seriously limit the sanctions available for the Council to ensure developer is delivering the sites in accordance with the specification and timetable. Therefore, the advantages of retaining title is that this is the most secure way to protect the Council's interests, as the Council retains control over the quality, delivery and land value of the sites until completion of all units. However, granting of title to the developer would remain a commissioning option.

these will be supported and re-enforced by the SHARP.

- 3.26 Performance measures and targets in respect of Community Benefits are being co-produced with Bidders during the Dialogue Sessions and Bidders will be evaluated on measures proposed as part of the tender process. These targets will focus on measuring the impact of contract initiatives at local; countywide; North West Wales; Mersey Dee Alliance and Welsh wide levels: the aim being to have a systematic reporting structure which will not only inform performance reporting on the contract, but also fulfil other required reporting measures such as to the Welsh Community Benefits Toolkit and Communities First with the minimum of duplication.
- 3.27 A key area of work has been to ensure that the SHARP provides opportunities for local employment and has cohesive links to education and training initiatives. A new 'Client Based Approach' to construction industry training has been approved in November by the Welsh Government. This is led by the Construction Industry Training Board for Wales (CITB). This approach had been envisaged for incorporation in the early stages of the procurement¹¹ and as a result, the Council is in a position to adopt this new market leading approach in Wales.
- 3.28 The approach sets out robust standards and goals for employment; apprenticeships; skills and training. The performance of the developer partner will be monitored against these standards as part of the contract and the Council would receive CITB accredited status for the contract.
- 3.29 There is also the option for the Council to implement this approach across all new construction Contracts and on this basis the Council would receive CITB accredited employer status. No other Welsh Local Authority has yet achieved this status and should the Council include the Welsh CITB standards on the Contract, this would place the Council at the forefront of emerging best practice in Wales and provide a foundation for achieving CITB accredited employer status should the Council wish to pursue this.
- 3.30 **Proposed Timetable Revisions**
In order to accommodate the recommendations below within the procurement process, (in particular the inclusion of further sites and investigations of funding solutions); Cabinet approved a slight extension to the bidding process with a report being made to Cabinet during May 2015.
- 3.31 This approach will allow further certainty of offers and for Bidders to be evaluated on the Council's position as it is currently 'best

¹¹ As it already presents a proven and effective industry solution to imbedding employment, skills and apprenticeships into the procurement of construction works in England and Scotland.

known'. In turn this will provide for increased confidence that the Preferred Bidder will have the capability to meet the Council's Commissioning Objectives and more rapid progress of the Programme post contract award.

3.32 Cabinet approved the following recommendations:

- Inclusion of new indicative sites as part of the Programme & further prioritisation;
- Prudential borrowing as the 'preferred approach' for Council units;
- Leaseback as the 'preferred approach' for funding affordable to rent units in Chapel Street, Flint;
- Incorporation of the CITB into the contract and subsequent (if desired) application to the CITB for the Council to achieve CITB accredited employer status;
- The new timescale to allow incorporation of the above elements.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and give their views on:

- Proposed Flintshire House Standard Design Principles and Standards.
- Indicative sites identified for inclusion within the SHARP for further investigation and feasibility investigation work.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 Site acquisitions will be made through budgets identified for this purpose. This will include utilisation of the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme, Housing Revenue Account and could also include Commuted Sums budgets (subject to policy approval).

5.02 The procurement costs are expected to be circa £260k in total. As a proportion of the total anticipated value of the first five years of the programme this is 0.5%. (There is provision for this to be extended to 10 for no extra procurement cost).

5.03 Initially the council will need to make provision to fully fund this; however as other partners utilise the development partnership some of these initial costs will be recovered.

5.04 The procurement costs are composed of interim Project Manager costs, specialist legal costs, development expert costs, and site investigation costs (to speed planning).

5.05 Procurement costs are to be shared between HRA/Council fund on the basis of 40% HRA, 60% council fund. Costs in 2014/15 are expected to be £200k in total. The HRA element of £80k can be met from the Flint maisonettes budget. The Council fund element can be met from revenue budget savings achieved through managed budgetary control.

5.06 The remaining procurement costs will be met from 2015/16 budgets. Once the contract is awarded, any ongoing project management costs can be capitalised, and potentially some of the procurement costs subject to capitalisation direction.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The Commissioning Objectives for the SHARP will provide additional affordable housing and improved training, education and job opportunities in some of Flintshire's most deprived communities and would therefore have a positive anti poverty impact.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 As per the emerging findings of the Flintshire Housing Standard Task and Finish Group, all council, affordable and private market properties homes will be built to a minimum of Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) Level 3 on all elements, apart from Energy & CO² when level 4 standards are expected as minimum.

7.02 A sustainability risk assessment has been undertaken. Bidder's environmental track record and capability to assure good practice was assessed at the PQQ stage of the procurement and the environmental impacts of Bidder's proposals will also be evaluated as part of the procurement.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 An initial equalities impact assessment has been completed, which has been reviewed as part of an ongoing assessment throughout the process. There are no negative equality implications arising out of this initial report and the positive implications remain as stated in the Cabinet report of the 16 September 2014: including increased provision of homes to tackle homelessness; increased and improved provision of accessible homes for the disabled and elderly; the creation of a more cohesive and accessible communities; increased social capital through engagement and consultation with the community (including a bilingual requirement for all communications) and further social capital to be realised through training; employment and education opportunities. Plus, transparent and accessible supply chain opportunities including targets for social businesses and community groups.

- 8.02 Bidder's equalities track record and capability to assure good practice was assessed at the PQQ stage of the procurement and Bidder's proposals to ensure the achievement of equalities will also be evaluated.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 The resources required for the procurement are confirmed (as predicted in the Cabinet Report of September 2014) at approximately 800 days inclusive for all officers and external support. This includes the implementation and mobilisation of the project during summer and autumn 2015. The project has required support from external financial; legal; and technical advisers. A programme manager and an interim procurement manager have been in post since June 2014. The Council's existing technical advisers have been used for ad-hoc advice; PDW Ltd has been appointed as development advisers and a tender process appointed Weightmans as the project's legal advisers.
- 9.02 As well as the appointment of a development partner, the resource invested in the procurement will return a Flintshire Housing Standard and a portfolio of housing specifications based on this; a prioritised housing development programme; highly developed layout for Chapel Street Flint; sourced self-financing funding options for the programme and a framework for the delivery of community benefits. All of these elements being contained within a robust and transparently governed commercial structure, supported by performance monitoring and reporting.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 As above, there are 6 review points built into the procurement process to ensure ongoing approval for the developing Programme strategy.
- 10.02 Further Consultation with the local community (including community groups) will be undertaken (with support from the Council's Equalities Unit), on the developments post appointment of the development partner.
- 10.03 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee's views will be sought on the Flintshire House Standard and proposed development sites.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 Consultation was undertaken during November 2014 on proposals for the re-development of Flint Town Centre. The event was attended by c. 300 people. This event was part of wider

consultation with the local community in Flint to develop the agreed vision and outcomes as per the Flint Master Plan.

- 11.02 Consultation with the local community (including community groups) is being undertaken with support from the Council's Equalities Unit.
- 11.03 A Task and Finish Group is progressing the development of a 'Flintshire Homes Design Standard'. The Group consists of tenants, Elected Members and officers and is led by external development advisers. This Group is in the process of developing the design specification of the homes i.e. appropriate building code level and any specific design features to be applicable to the new Council, Affordable and private homes.

12.00 APPENDICES

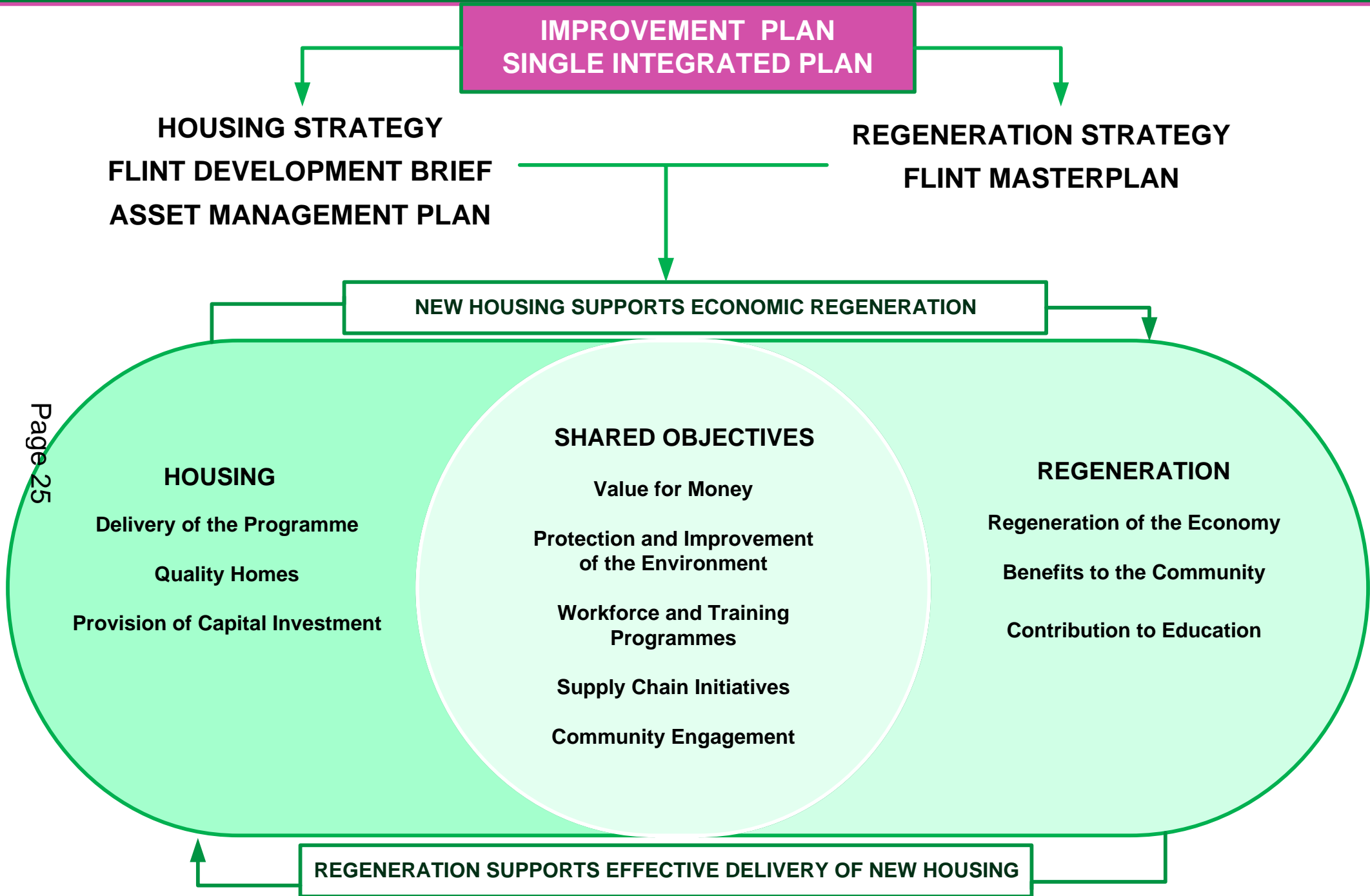
- 12.01 Appendix 1 SHARP Commissioning Objectives Diagram
- 12.02 Appendix 2 SHARP Residential Development Sites
- 12.03 Appendix 3 Flintshire House Standard

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT)1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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COMMISSIONING OBJECTIVES



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Appendix 2 - Flintshire Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) Residential Development Sites

Approved Sites September 2014	Proposed Additional Sites March 2015	Further Site Feasibility Required	Undevelopable / Sold Sites
The Walks, Chapel Street, Flint	Maes Gwern, Trebeirdd, Mold	Queensway, Hope	School Lane, Greenfield, CH8
Custom House School, Connah's Quay	Plas yr Esgob, Leeswood	Rhosesmor,	Land to the Rear of Bodawen Surgery, Holywell
Land at Llys Alun, Rhydymwyn, (Former Primary School)	Former Dairy site, Connah's Quay	Pentre Halkyn	Land at Gronant
Former Bowling Green, Trelogan	Garage site, Gwernymynydd	Wat's Dyke Way, Sychdyn	Princess Avenue, Buckley
Maes Meilion, Leeswood	Former Ysgol Delyn School, Alexandra Road, Mold	Terrig Street, Shotton	Hillside Avenue,
Tan y Rhos, Nercwys	Former Police Station and Magistrates Court, Flint	Glynne Street, Queensferry	Wirral View, Rhewl-Mostyn
Redhall, Connah's Quay		Hawthorn View, Garden City	Strand Holywell, Bryn Mawr Road
Fford Pennant & Ffordd Hir Bethog, Maes Pennant Mostyn		Land at Llys Dewi, Penyffordd, Holywell	Sealand Avenue
Carton Depot, Bagillt		Ffordd Glyndwr, Northop	Nant y Coed, Holywell
		Bradshaw Avenue, Saltney Ferry	Walwen Garage, Holywell
		Abbots Walk, Holywell	
		Engfield Ave, Greenfield	
		Bryn Offa, Mynydd Isa	
		Queens Park, Mold	
		Melrose Avenue, Shotton	
		Allans Close, Shotton	
		Watkin St, Sandycroft	
		Former Abbey Joinery, Greenfield	

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Flintshire Housing Standard

Draft

24 March 2015

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Produced by Project Development Workshop Ltd for Flintshire County Council

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ABOUT THE FLINTSHIRE HOUSE STANDARD

The Flintshire House Standard is a set of key design principles that is intended to ensure new homes built or facilitated by Flintshire County Council are of high quality and excellent value.

The expectation is that the Standard helps to ensure new homes provide a successful legacy in respect of both the individual homes and the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

The Standard is intended not to be onerous or impractical and seeks to avoid duplicating other good practice standards. Instead it should utilise these relevant standards as a frame of reference and provide clarity on the extent to which these other standards should be applied.

The Standard also avoids duplication with principles that are already outlined by the Council's planning guidance and Building Regulations.

The Council may require different standards on occasion, for instance if attracting funding from the Welsh Assembly Government or if there are particular specialist requirements, for instance for a supported or specialist housing development.

In addition, the Council understand that quality new homes rely not only on clear design requirements, but also quality collaborative processes and strong communication. These are equally important aspirations from any of the Council's partners.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

1. General Design Requirements

Building for Life

The Council require the use of the **Building for Life 12** assessment to consider the merits of development proposals and what successful, sustainable development looks like. The Building for Life 12 principles should be applied to measure how well designed, well integrated, functional, attractive, and sustainable new homes and neighbourhoods are.

See: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>

The Council will expect all schemes to receive mainly green traffic lights and amber when constraints of the site mean that a green is not possible.

Welsh Housing Quality Standards and Welsh Design Quality Requirements

Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), which was revised in 2008, outlines the Welsh Assembly Government's vision that all households in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. WHQS sets standards for all social housing, including existing homes.

Welsh Design Quality Requirements of 2005 (WDQR), overlaps to much of an extent with the WHQS, but applies to housing association new build projects. As it applies to new build it is therefore generally more relevant to the Flintshire Housing Standard.

General compliance with WHQS and WDQR internally/externally for all Council and Affordable Properties is expected, other than where the exceptions detailed within this guidance apply and/or where the standards have been superseded by the Flintshire House Standard (e.g. amended Lifetime Homes requirements) or have become outdated.

When viable, the Council would also welcome Private Market properties meeting these standards.

2. External Appearance of Homes

External appearance of Council, Affordable, and Private Market Properties should be "tenure blind". This will ensure that the Flintshire Standard will leave a lasting legacy in terms of external appearance and creating coherent mixed tenure neighbourhoods. This does not mean that properties must be identical or have the same internal layout, nor does it mean that the developer's standard house types cannot be used.

This means that the external appearance of the properties is not an obvious clear indication of occupier's tenure.

The Council also expect that new homes and developments have distinctive character through the use of materials, finishes, building styles and landscaping details. This will provide a development with a coherent appearance, where new homes complement each other, without all homes looking exactly the same.

The design of homes should also consider how they fit in with the local surroundings and topography.

3. Space Standards and Room Layouts

Flintshire's new homes should provide sufficient space and smart design to allow the intended household size to live, study, play, work, host guests, and comfortably store everyday household items.

Floor space dimensions for the Council and Affordable homes should generally be in accordance with Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) and Welsh Design Quality Requirements' (WDQR), stipulated minimum expected furniture per room (and the expected size of different furniture items detailed in the WHQS and WDQR), circulation, and storage requirements. **There is clear guidance in the WDQR on this, so it is not duplicated in the Flintshire Standard.**

Where viable, it is proposed that these principles will also be applied for private market properties

It is important to note that, because of the Council's flexibility on some elements of Lifetime Homes (as listed below), a slightly different set of space standards is included in the Flintshire House Standard to the notional standards suggested in the WDQR, which includes provision for full Lifetime Homes. Subsequently, the Council expect new homes built to the Flintshire House Standard to meet the following space requirements:

Type	Anticipated Metre ²
1 bed 2 person flat	45 – 51
2 bed 3 person flat	57 – 65
2 bed 4 person house	71 – 83
3 bed 5 person house	85 – 94

The above are some typical expected house types. Further guidance will be provided if other house types are required, which will be in alignment with these principles.

The aim of offering a range of sizes is not to encourage always building to the lower end of the range, but to offer some flexibility to respond to site and viability constraints whilst maintaining a minimum acceptable level. Generally the Council will expect homes to be built towards the middle-higher end of the ranges provided.

The ceiling height is to be 2.4m for all Council, Affordable and Private Market Properties.

Storage

Adequate built in storage should be provided for both clean items (e.g. laundry etc) and dirty items (e.g. mops).

Minimum internal storage required should include:

1 bedroom	1.5m ²
2 bedrooms	2m ²
3 bedrooms	2.5m ²

Some storage will need to be 2m high, in order to store tall items – e.g. brooms.

External storage will be required for bikes and gardening equipment (when applicable) as per the WDQR.

Studying and working from home

All new homes should allow space for studying and working from home, with relevant services (e.g. plug sockets, internet, telephone connections) relating to the identified space.

Garden sizes

Gardens for houses and bungalows should be a minimum useable area of 30m² unless otherwise agreed by the Council and should include a level, paved area (min 3m²) accessible from the back door, and paved access to the garden gate (if applicable).

Further guidance on sizes and sloping requirements are provided in the WDQR.

4. Access and Circulation

Front entrance

The external front entrance to new houses should be accessible (as per Lifetime Homes), covered (e.g. canopy), and illuminated.

Entrance from front door to living room

The front door to new homes should not open directly into the living room. Front doors should open into a lobby area, circulation space, or entrance hall that will act as a buffer.

Access to gardens

Generally it should either be possible to access the garden from the kitchen without needing to pass through the living room, or to reach the rear garden from the street without having to pass through the main living room.

All family homes should be provided with gardens that are convenient to access and safe for small children to play in.

Circulation Space

Generally all separate rooms should be accessed from corridors/circulation space, as opposed to through a different room.

However, this should not discount the option of open plan kitchen-dining-living spaces, which could be considered as a single room accessed from the corridor if agreed by the Council and if this makes sense to the requirements of the target markets identified for the homes.

5. Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Ensuring homes are energy efficient and affordable to keep warm whilst mitigating the impact of new homes on the environment are key aims of the Flintshire House Standard.

While noting that the improvement to Building Regulations Part L have superseded elements of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH), a minimum of **CSH** Level 3 is required on all elements. The only exception is the Energy & CO₂ element where level 4 standards are expected as a minimum for all Council, Affordable and Private Market Properties.

A “fabric first” approach should be adopted to achieve required levels of energy efficiency.

Due to the high levels of energy efficiency required, it will be essential to demonstrate ventilation strategies early on, and how these will help to avoid condensation and meet Building Regulations. Sufficient levels of controllable ventilation are essential.

It will also be important to demonstrate strategies for preventing overheating that are not reliant on mechanical ventilation.

6. Parking

The Council wish to see development that is car friendly, but not dominated by cars. The maximum parking ratios, as defined in the Council’s supplementary planning guidance on

parking, should be followed alongside discussions with planners on a site by site basis that will also consider visitor parking.

The Council would like parking to be visible to residents, but recognise that the viability of this will need to respond to the individual context of each site and its constraints. Therefore this will be a planning consideration on a site by site basis.

Guidance should also be taken from Building for Life 12 and WDQR.

Parking should be easily identified as being linked to the home that the space serves.

Access from the parking space to the home should be convenient, clear, safe, and well-lit. Parking spaces should not be within 2 metres of any window.

7. Lifetime Homes

The Council is eager that new properties are flexible so as to meet future needs of the residents. The Council will not require full Lifetime Homes standards to be met, but will welcome proposals from developers on the use of key elements of the Lifetimes Homes standard to apply to all Council and Affordable homes, and when viable, Private Market Properties. It is anticipated that the most important aspects of Lifetime Homes for the Council would be:

- First floor bathroom side access to WC and bath
- First floor bathroom space potential to convert to walk in shower
- Ground floor level WC
- Sockets controls etc. at a convenient height
- Turning space for wheelchairs in ground floor living rooms
- Space provision for a future stairlift
- Walls able to accommodate fitting of future handrails etc.
- Wide enough doors and halls to allow wheelchair access
- Accessible threshold, covered and lit
- Level or gently sloping access to entrance (when practical)

While a ground floor WC is required in houses, the ability to create a future ground floor level access shower (as per full Lifetime Homes) is not required, as the elements of Lifetime Homes retained should enable the continued use of the upstairs bathroom, irrespective of mobility (see below). This also mitigates the requirement for a potential through-floor lift.

For bungalows or specialist homes, full Lifetime Homes and additional standards may well be required and details of the different requirements will be confirmed in such instances.

8. Stairs

Due to the design requirement that the upstairs bathroom has the potential to be adapted into a level access walk in shower, the potential to install a stairlift is also required. It is therefore anticipated that **winders on stairs** will typically not be appropriate, unless it is clear how future adaptations will be possible (i.e. the stairlift) and how other challenges associated with winders, such as movement of furniture can be mitigated.

At least one handrail should be provided on the stairs.

9. Service Meters

Service meters for utilities (e.g. gas, electricity, and water) should be clearly marked and accessible for utility companies outside of properties. Care should be taken that the meter cupboards are discreetly positioned and do not dominate the external appearance of the properties in an unattractive manner.

10. Sprinkler Systems

It is important to note the Welsh Assembly's intention to make sprinkler systems mandatory in all new homes, with this expected to come into force in 2016.

11. Communal Areas

Areas that will require maintaining via a service contract (for instance communal landscaping) should be minimised as much as possible at the design stage in consultation with the Council. This is to reduce the need for service charges, which will have affordability consequences for both the Council and its customers.

Detailed specification for communal spaces will be agreed with the Council on a case by case basis, but there will be an emphasis on communal space, where it is required, being attractive, safe, visible, and cost effective to maintain and manage.

12. Apartments

While the Flintshire House Standard focuses mainly on houses, the Council recognises the role that apartments can play in parts of the Flintshire housing market and that these will be appropriate for certain sites for various reasons.

It is important to the Council to minimise the extent of internal communal circulation space within any apartment blocks and to ensure efficient external space that is easy and cost effective to manage and maintain whilst still being attractive.

The council will consider "cottage flat" type arrangements, in which the occupier of the first floor apartment can access their home from their front door on street level. The Council will also consider access via secure (resident only) open air stairwells that minimise management costs and liabilities. These would be subject to the detail of these offering an attractive design solution (a return to the 1960's style deck-access approach would not be welcome).

The Council understand that in some cases, to achieve high levels of design, cost efficiency, and appropriate density, some apartment blocks may require internal circulation space. In such instances the Council expect a real emphasis on these being designed to be secure spaces, maximising visibility, and designing out communal hidden areas. In these scenarios the Council also expects these to be efficient spaces in terms of management and maintenance costs.

Lifts will only be considered in older person, specialist, and supported blocks or apartment blocks greater than four storeys. The lift manufacturer will need to be agreed with the Council and the lift should be open protocol in terms of maintenance.

13. Loft Space

All roof voids must have a roof access hatch in a circulation area. Access must avoid door swings and stairs. Hatches should be lockable and insulated as per the adjacent ceiling.

The Council does not generally expect lofts to be fully boarded, although boarding should be used to prevent any loose/fibrous insulation from becoming airborne.

Some developments should have full boarding as part of the detailed specification, subject to feasibility and whether this will have a detrimental impact on achieving other priorities.

If loft mounted services have been unavoidable, access ways should be provided (e.g. plywood) between the access hatch and service area. The hatch should be of an appropriate size to allow servicing of equipment.

14. Flooring

The Council will typically require flooring in kitchens and bathrooms to be non-slip vinyl flooring or an alternative (as agreed with the Council), with choices to be agreed with the Council.

15. Kitchens

Kitchens should meet the requirements outlined in WDQR. They should include space for all appliances within the kitchen or adjacent utility room if applicable.

16. Bathrooms

All two storey (or more) houses will require an accessible ground floor WC and hand-wash basin.

The first floor bathroom should include a bath and a shower, and have the ability to be adapted to a level access shower in the future.

17. Gardens and Boundaries

WDQR provides guidance on gardens and boundary requirements that should be followed.

Gardens should be turfed or seeded as per agreement with the Council.

Boundaries between gardens should be at least 1200mm high and be fenced with timber close boarded fencing or an alternative as per agreement by the Council.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

18. Detailed Specification

The Flintshire House Standard provides key overarching design principles for Flintshire's New Homes Programme, which will inform the delivery of the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Partnership.

The Council expect to agree a detailed specification as part of the contract documentation, which will include performance requirements for each building contract/site delivered through the SHARP or by a separate arrangement.

In addition to further detail on the above items, the Council will require specific agreement, as part of any contract documentation of the following items:

Specification

- Heating and hot water
- Ventilation systems
- Internal decoration
- External decoration
- External doors
- Internal doors
- Windows
- Bathroom and sanitary ware
- Telephone, TV, and internet installations
- TV aerials
- Communal digital TV services (apartments)
- Door intercom systems (apartments)
- Warden call systems (when applicable)
- Hard and soft landscaping detail
- Sprinkler system
- Fire alarms, heat and smoke detectors
- Ironmongery
- Timber and Joinery
- Refuse storage
- Internal lighting
- External lighting
- Kitchen unit manufacturer and range
- Sheds (when required)
- Rainwater goods
- Service installations
- Meter positioning
- Intruder alarms (when required)
- Lifts
- Site signage
- Any other items identified by the Council

Process and other information

The Council will also expect to obtain and agree detail of the following as part of each site/contract:

- Building warranty
- Number of keys

- Collateral warranties
- Performance bond
- Component whole life costings
- Handover process requirements for the Council
- Defects liability information, response times, and key performance indicators for during the defects period
- Tenant choices
- Maintenance and H&S manuals
- Supply chain details
- Tenant handover packs
- Local labour
- Considerate construction scheme
- Fire risk assessments

19. Building Information Modelling

The Council would encourage the use of Building Information Modelling (BIM), which allows greater depth of collaboration at design stage and the modelling of the proposed buildings in a digital form. The expectation is that BIM can help encourage a better understanding of what is being built, whilst encouraging efficiency and value for money in relation to the construction and whole life of the new building. The outcomes of using BIM should also mean a more considered design and ultimately a better home for the tenant to live in.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

DATE: **FRIDAY 24TH APRIL, 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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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
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)	
	Update on Tenant Involvement	To consider tenants satisfaction results and the involvement of tenants in service improvements.	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)	

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

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)

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