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To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies,
Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, George Hardcastle,
Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

plus one vacancy

4 February 2016

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 10th February, 2016 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2016 (copy enclosed).

4 INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM FOR LONG TERM EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES (Pages 9 - 16)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: To seek the introduction of a local scheme to charge council tax premiums for long term empty property and second homes.

5 **COUNCIL TAX & BUSINESS RATE STATUTORY POLICIES** (Pages 17 - 22)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: To consider annual policies for the financial year 2016-17 that determine discount schemes and administrative arrangements.

6 **FLINTSHIRE SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY** (Pages 23 - 36)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: To provide an update on the Flintshire SHG Programme Affordable Housing Development.

7 **FLINTSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN** (Pages 37 - 64)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.


Purpose: To enable the Committee to consider appropriate measures to manage reductions within the Supporting People Programme Grant to protect service delivery as much as possible.

8 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 65 - 72)

Report of Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Committee.

Yours faithfully



Peter Evans
Democracy & Governance Manager

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **12 JANUARY 2016**

Minutes of the meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 12th January, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, Brian Lloyd and Gareth Roberts

SUBSTITUTE: Councillors: Haydn Bateman (for George Hardcastle), Paul Shotton (for Peter Curtis) and Arnold Woolley (for Amanda Bragg)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Ray Hughes and Mike Reece

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Bernie Attridge

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance; Councillor Helen Brown, Cabinet Member for Housing; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Chief Officer, Community & Enterprise; Service Manager for Enterprise & Regeneration and Enterprise Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2015 were submitted.

Matters Arising

Councillor Ron Davies clarified that the issue he had reported in his ward related to a boiler and that this had now been resolved.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

63. STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROJECT (SHARP)

The Chief Officer introduced a report to seek support to progress the next stages of the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP) and to set out the proposed design of the first development located at the former Custom House School site in Connah's Quay. The introduction of self-financing

for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had enabled the Council to commence its plans to develop new Council homes on a range of sites.

Detailed proposals were shared on the scheme in Connah's Quay on which work was due to commence in February 2016. Preparation of the plans had taken into consideration the need for sufficient parking on the site together with the design fitting with the local environment. The Flintshire Housing Standard, which had been adopted for use on all the Council's new housing schemes, had been developed by a working group of Members, officers and tenants using industry standards. This demonstrated the Council's commitment to provide high quality living environments with adequate storage space and quality fixtures/fittings. An update was also given on progress made towards future SHARP schemes and the delivery of various community benefits including the creation of an apprenticeship academy.

The report highlighted the approach to funding, utilising prudential borrowing for the Connah's Quay scheme, with future projects to be reviewed case by case. The Chief Officer circulated a financial analysis of build costs for the Connah's Quay scheme which was subject to ongoing verification and challenge. This included a breakdown of additional costs for drainage, parking etc, that was affordable within the HRA. Members were assured that the total cost of the scheme (including borrowing, repairs, allowance for bad debt and empty properties etc) would be recovered through rental income over a 50 year period.

Councillor Aaron Shotton described this as a watershed moment for the Council, which addressed one of the priorities set out in the Improvement Plan as well as meeting the needs of residents and filling the void in the housing market. He referred to the challenges encountered in reaching this stage which gave the opportunity to meet general housing needs and provide a high quality standard of living.

In thanking officers for the report, Councillor Ian Dunbar welcomed this first new build development under the SHARP programme and in particular the location of the scheme and parking provision.

As a point of accuracy on paragraph 3.02, Councillor Alison Halford pointed out that planning permission had been granted in December 2015 and took the opportunity to praise all those involved in making the right decision at that time. She commented that the plans for the scheme demonstrated a good quality build and design. On the costings provided, she queried the amount of £4,246 for car parking spaces. The Chief Officer pointed out that this equated to £353 for a second car park space per property. Consideration had been given to adequate parking provision, given the nearby school and traffic implications, and would be a key consideration for future developments to address the increase in car ownership.

Whilst welcoming the proposals for the Connah's Quay scheme, Councillor Paul Shotton was particularly pleased that some of the features of the former Custom House School had been incorporated in the development. In response to questions, the Chief Officer explained that the £140K opening market value was an estimate of the properties' value at the time of building. The 7% financial

institution yield was an assumed starting interest rate on the advice of financial colleagues.

Councillor Aaron Shotton thanked Councillor Bernie Attridge for helping to retain some of the original features of the former school for the new development, and said that the plans demonstrated the Council's approach to ensure that each scheme was designed to fit in with the surrounding area.

Following queries from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, it was confirmed that £91.67 and £100.83 weekly rent had been set for the two and three bedroom properties respectively on the Connah's Quay scheme. This compared favourably to the Local Housing Allowance weekly rent as indicated in the document circulated. On another question, it was explained that at least two social enterprises would be used during the programmes; one to employ apprentices who could be guaranteed a four year programme to complete their training through SHARP and improvements to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

In supporting the plans, Councillor Gareth Roberts spoke about the need to abolish Right to Buy to protect new Council properties. Councillor David Cox felt there was an opportunity to publicise and highlight the Council's housing initiative to show progression to meet the needs of residents.

Councillor Aaron Shotton said it was important that the Welsh Government promptly approve the Council's application to suspend Right to Buy. He added that although some progress had been made, more work was needed to lobby for an increase in the borrowing cap as this restricted the Council's ability to continue the momentum on addressing future housing needs.

Councillor Derek Butler commented that the programmes would provide opportunities to maximise skills and demonstrated that schemes were being targeted in communities where there was demand.

Concerning apprenticeships, Councillor Jim Falshaw spoke about the skills shortage in the construction industry and asked whether the training programme included Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) accreditation which was highly valued in the industry. The Chief Officer agreed to check whether this was already part of the plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Paul Cunningham on the recruitment of apprenticeships, the Chief Officer said that local schools and colleges had been made aware of the opportunities. Although preference would be given to local applicants, those from outside the area could not be excluded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the development of 12 new Council homes on the Custom House School site, Connah's Quay be supported; and
- (b) That the standard scheme development assumptions as identified in section 1.20 of the report be supported.

64. FLINTSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK 2015 (FBW15)

The Enterprise Manager presented a report on the delivery and outcomes of Flintshire Business Week 2015 which had incorporated a regional theme to support local and regional business to maximise opportunities for investment, employment and skills. She spoke about the growth of the event with continued improvements sought year on year to respond to the needs of the wider economy.

The Committee received a summary of the key activities from the event held in October 2015, with good outcomes reported against the aims and performance indicators, as set out in the report. Delegate attendance had surpassed expectations, mainly due to the success of the Science Technology Engineering & Maths (STEM) event which gave high school students an opportunity to engage directly with the manufacturing sector. Plans were underway on the 2016 Flintshire Business Week which would also celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Councillor Derek Butler paid tribute to the small dedicated officer team and said that Flintshire Business Week was a widely recognised flagship event which demonstrated the richness of the county's industries. He commented on the positive feedback and record attendance for the 2015 event, particularly on the STEM event, and referred to the timing to coincide with the Wales Rally GB.

In congratulating the team, Councillor Paul Shotton particularly noted the excellent networking opportunities and quality seminars which had taken place.

Councillor Alison Halford asked about the role of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) and the availability of the business booklet highlighted by Councillor Butler.

Councillor Butler confirmed that the business booklet had been made available in the Members' room. He explained that the NWEAB was a regional partnership between the six North Wales Councils, chaired by Conwy, with priorities on the region's economy, tourism, transport and infrastructure. He advised that he was currently Vice-Chair of the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) and was soon to be appointed Chair, and that an update on the MDA together with an overview of the ongoing work of the NWEAB would be received at the March meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Aaron Shotton referred to the ambitious programmes of the NWEAB which included representatives from each of the six Authorities and the work of the MDA in establishing links with North West England.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin stated the need for a better understanding of the regeneration functions which were a new area of responsibility for the Committee. She pointed out the shortage of skilled trades people and asked what was being done to encourage young people to take up this training.

Councillor Butler reported that some progress had been made to encourage local colleges to offer a range of skills courses. The Enterprise Manager referred to the joined-up approach between the Council and its

partners, such as Coleg Cambria, to develop opportunities across the region. She added that investment often involved a slow process and spoke about the importance of ensuring young people were job-ready, working with existing companies in the process of expansion and engaging with larger contractors to develop opportunities for apprenticeships.

Councillor Aaron Shotton welcomed the future update report on regeneration to help the Committee to scrutinise these important issues. He went on to refer to the steady growth in STEM events and in the number of young people taking advantage of employment and apprenticeship opportunities in Flintshire, which was not the case in some other counties.

Following comments from other Members, Councillor Paul Shotton felt that schools could do more to help address the shortage of trade skills and suggested that these concerns be relayed to the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Officer advised of plans to promote different types of apprenticeships at a jobs fair as part of National Apprentice Week in March. She agreed to share Members' questions with colleagues from the education sector with whom officers would be engaging to find routes from schools to apprenticeships or work-based learning.

In highlighting the importance of Welsh Government support for the MDA, Councillor Arnold Woolley asked about progress with the Halton Curve. Councillor Butler said that the achievements of the MDA had been acknowledged at ministerial level. The Halton Curve project had been agreed. He went on to say that the shortage in construction skills was a national problem as schools and colleges were lacking the infrastructure required, and that this would need to be addressed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the key activities and outcomes from Flintshire Business Week 2015 be recognised and supported; and
- (b) That the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee be asked to look into the concerns of the Committee around skill shortages and review how schools are working to reduce this shortage.

65. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

In presenting the current Forward Work Programme for consideration, the Facilitator reminded Members of the budget meeting on 15 January.

Due to the number of items planned for the February and March meetings, the Committee agreed that the Facilitator liaise with the Chairman and Chief Officer to schedule an additional meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and

- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

66. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press in attendance.

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

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Chairman



COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday, 10 th February 2016 |
| Report Subject | Introduction of Council Tax Premium for long term empty and second homes |
| Portfolio Holder | Cabinet Member for Corporate Management |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) |
| Type of Report | Operational |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 now gives local authorities in Wales the discretion to charge up to a 100% council tax premium on long term empty properties and properties with a second homes/holiday homes from April 2017. The report sets out the legal framework for charging the premium and the circumstances where a premium may not be charged (commonly known as 'exceptions')

The Council may, if it wishes, charge a premium on long term empty homes and second/holiday homes at any rate between 0% and 100% but prior to the introduction of the premium, there is also a requirement for full Council to make a decision about whether to introduce a premium 12 months in advance of the premium taking effect, and if so, the level of premium which would be charged from April 2017.

The introduction of a premium is designed to address local housing need and to encourage owners of empty and second homes properties to bring those properties back into full use.

The proposal is to adopt a 50% premium for the first year of implementation which will be consistent with other local authorities across the region.

RECOMMENDATION

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| 1 | Provide feedback on the proposals to introduce the Council Tax Premium, set at a level of 50%, enabling cabinet to consider all comments before the scheme is recommended for approval at full Council on 1 st March 2016. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM FOR LONG TERM EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES |
| 1.01 | From April 2017, local authorities in Wales will be able use discretionary powers to charge a council tax premium of up to 100% of the standard rate of council tax on long term empty homes (unoccupied and unfurnished) and second homes (second homes/holiday homes that are furnished and not a main residence). |
| 1.02 | The Council has, for many years, adopted a policy of not providing a council tax discount on long term empty homes or second homes so a 100% council tax charge is payable on these types of property. |
| 1.03 | <p>The discretion given to local authorities to now charge a premium is intended by Welsh Government to be a tool to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring long-term empty homes back into full use to meet local housing needs• Support local authorities in increasing the supply of affordable housing for purchase or let• Enhance the sustainability of local communities |
| 1.04 | The determination to charge a premium must be made by full council at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which the premium relates. This means that the earliest that a premium may be charged is from 1 st April 2017. A determination to charge a premium in 2018 must be made before 1 st April 2017 and so on. |
| 1.05 | The Council may impose a premium of up to 100% above the standard rate of council tax, i.e. giving an overall charge of 200% council tax on long term empty property and/or second homes. However, in the case of long term empty homes, the premium of up to 100% may only be imposed after the property has been empty and substantially unfurnished continuously for a period of 12 months or longer. |
| 1.06 | <p>When considering whether to charge a premium to long term empty homes and second homes, and if so, at what percentage level, local authorities are required to have regard to a number of factors. These include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers of long term empty homes and second homes in the County• Distribution of these properties across the County and an assessment of their impact• Potential impact on the local economy and the tourism sector• Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes• Potential impact on local public services and the impact on the local community• Measures that are available to assist owners in bringing empty home back into use. |

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| 1.07 | <p>The Council Tax system already provides a number of specific exemptions for unoccupied properties, some of which are time limited exemptions. These exemptions are not impacted by the introduction of the premium so not all empty homes will be automatically subject to a premium. These typically include circumstances where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A property becomes unoccupied and unfurnished (exempt for up to 6 months) • A property is undergoing or in need of major repair work to render it habitable (exempt for up to 12 months) • The only resident is now in long term residential care (unlimited period of exemption) • The only resident has died (unlimited period of exemption until probate has been granted and for up to six months after probate has been granted) |
| 1.08 | <p>However, where a property is no longer eligible for a council tax exemption but it remains unoccupied it can become liable for a premium, but in the case of an empty home, it can only be liable for a premium after it has been empty for a continuous period of one year.</p> |
| 1.09 | <p>In addition to the prescribed list of properties that may be exempt from council tax under existing arrangements, and by virtue of this, also exempt from the premium, WG have also prescribed seven other classes of property which may not be subject to a premium. The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts Wales) Regulations set out the circumstances where it is not possible for local authorities to charge a premium on long term empty property or second homes.</p> |
| 1.10 | <p>The circumstances where a premium does not apply, or only applies after a specified time period, is designated by 'exception classes' as detailed below. Class 1-4 applies to both long term empty homes and second homes but Class 5-7 applies only to second homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class 1 – Properties being marketed for sale (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months) • Class 2 – Properties being marketed for let (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months) • Class 3 – Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of the main property • Class 4 – Properties which would be someone's sole and main residence if they were not residing in Armed Forces accommodation • Class 5 – Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings where the caravan or boat currently has no resident but when next in use will be a person's main residence • Class 6 – Seasonal properties where all year round occupation is prohibited by planning conditions • Class 7 – Job related properties where a property is left empty because the person in relation to the dwelling is now resident in another dwelling which is 'job-related' (as defined by Regulations) |

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| 1.11 | Using the taxation system to encourage owners to bring long term empty property and second homes back into use would provide a sensible financial incentive to do so and potentially go some way to increase the supply of housing in the County. Currently, council tax records indicate that 888 properties as being long term empty or second homes which could be potentially liable for the premium from April 17, although some might be subject to an exception from the premium. |
| 1.12 | The analysis in Appendix 1 to this report shows the breakdown of long term empty property across the County. |
| 1.13 | The reasons why properties can be left empty can vary but typically the circumstances include cases where the last resident has passed away and the family have not yet disposed of the property even though probate has been granted over 6 months ago. In some cases, properties can be difficult to sell or rent because of the condition of the property. In other cases, owners may be refurbishing the property but taking a significant period of time, well beyond 12 months, in order to bring the property back into use. |
| 1.14 | There is also evidence to demonstrate that some owners simply sit on empty properties for long periods of time without having plans in place to bring the properties into use, this is often despite the best efforts of the Council to work with owners to encourage them to bring their asset back into use, either by accessing loans or grants. |
| 1.15 | If a determination is made to charge a premium from April 2017 an effective communication strategy would need to be developed to communicate more widely with taxpayers throughout 2016, particularly with those who might be affected from April 2017. |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | The Council will be able to retain all additional funds generated by implementing a premium and the decision to charge a premium would not be incorporated into the Tax Base for the calculation of Revenue Support Grant. |
| 2.02 | The introduction of a council tax premium might also require a review of staffing levels in the Revenues service in 2017-18 to administer and collect the council tax premium, safeguarding collection levels. This can be achieved using existing HR policies and re-deployment opportunities from within the existing workforce. |
| 2.03 | To address the housing shortage in Flintshire and address the budget gap in 2017-18 as a result of reducing levels of central government grants, the efficiency proposals in the Community & Enterprise portfolio have made an assumption of the introduction of a premium and potential income of circa £0.50m. |
| 2.04 | Taking into account the 12 month lead-in time before a premium can be charged, coupled with external economic factors and the way in which owners of empty property might respond to these changes, it is difficult to |

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| | accurately predict the level of income that the premium might bring or indeed the impact of these changes on housing availability. |
| 2.05 | In addition to this, local authority Taxation Practitioners across Wales are still in the process of understanding the more complex details of these new Regulations, especially with the way in which the exceptions will work from 2017-18. |
| 2.06 | In view of this, at the time of drafting this report, it is very difficult to accurately estimate the net number of properties that might be liable for the premium from April 2017, especially those that might qualify as an exception from the premium. |
| 2.07 | Early indications across the region though are that most Councils will opt to introduce a 50% premium in the first year of implementation with the aim of reviewing the level of premium from 2018-19, having full regard to the impact of housing availability. |

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| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | The referral of this matter to Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee will enable feedback to be considered by cabinet before final adoption of the scheme by full Council in March 2016. |

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| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | The implementation of a council tax premium also brings an increasing need to balance a number of Council priorities. Firstly, minimising council tax levels and avoiding financial hardship for the owners of empty properties, especially those who might be genuinely trying to bring properties back into use. Secondly, the need to use the local taxation system to address the issue housing shortages within communities and addressing the negative impact on communities that empty homes can bring. |
| 4.02 | The safeguards put in place by WG to exempt certain classes of property from the premium, in some cases, for specified period of time, strike the right balance and provide owners with ample opportunity, in most cases, to bring their empty property back into use within a reasonable period of time. |
| 4.03 | There will be a need to consider additional safeguards to mitigate tax avoidance or tax evasion as part of the implementation plan, ensuring owners are paying the right amount of council tax. The cost of additional safeguards, including additional staff resources, is estimated to be approximately £20,000 per annum but would ultimately not lead to a budget pressure when taking into account the additional tax income being raised through the premium. |
| 4.04 | If a determination is made to charge a premium from April 2017 an effective communication strategy would need to be developed to communicate more widely with taxpayers throughout 2016, particularly to those who might be affected from April 2017. |

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| 4.05 | The opportunity to work with taxpayers and signpost owners to other services, such as the Councils Empty Homes team or the North East Wales Homes service, will also help to mitigate the impact of the introduction of the premium in 2017-18 and provide very practical help to owners of long term empty homes to potentially access grants and loans or assist owners in letting empty homes. |
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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1 - to this report provides an analysis of the existing number of LTE'S by Town/Community Council area and further analysed by Council Tax property band. |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Finance Act 1992 (sections 12a (3) and 12b (4)) • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 • Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regs 2015 <p>Contact Office: David Barnes, Revenues Manager Telephone: 01352 703652 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | <p>Council Tax: is a locally set property tax set by each local authority based on the estimated value of a domestic property, which in Wales, is based on property valuations from April 2005.</p> <p>Council Tax Exemptions: In some cases a property is exempt from Council Tax. This means that owners do not have to pay anything for the time the property qualifies for an exemption. Some exemptions can only be given for a limited length of time, others can be given for an unlimited time period, depending on the circumstances of the owner and/or property.</p> <p>Long Term Empty property : is defined as a property which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of six months or more, but to be liable for a premium, it would be unoccupied and unfurnished for a continuous period of one year or longer.</p> <p>A second home: is defined as a property which is not a person's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished.</p> |

APPENDIX 1 - ANALYSIS OF LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES - BY PARISH AND BAND

| Parish | Band | | | | | | | | | Grand Total |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | |
| Broughton | | | 10 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | | 22 |
| Buckley | 5 | 5 | 24 | 10 | 12 | 9 | | | | 65 |
| Connahs Quay | 17 | 13 | 26 | 12 | 8 | 8 | | | 1 | 85 |
| Hawarden | 10 | 5 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 2 | | | 55 |
| Hope | 2 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | 26 |
| Kinnerton | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | 7 |
| Llandfynydd | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | | 8 |
| Penyffordd | | 2 | | 6 | 2 | 4 | | 1 | | 15 |
| Queensferry | 8 | 4 | 6 | 1 | | | | | | 19 |
| Sealand | 2 | 1 | 13 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 28 |
| Saltney | 2 | 2 | 10 | 4 | 3 | | | | | 21 |
| Shotton | 6 | 8 | 12 | 1 | 3 | | | | | 30 |
| Treuddyn | | 1 | 2 | 6 | 2 | | 1 | | | 12 |
| Bagillt | 3 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 1 | | | | | 25 |
| Brynford | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | | | 8 |
| Caerwys | | 1 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 8 |
| Cilcain | 2 | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | 1 | | 15 |
| Flint | 12 | 19 | 23 | 8 | 9 | 3 | | | | 74 |
| Gwernaffield | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 12 |
| Gwernymynydd | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | 4 |
| Halkyn | 3 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | | | 20 |
| Holywell | 28 | 20 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | | 70 |
| Leeswood | | 9 | 13 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 25 |
| Llansasa | 6 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 47 |
| Mold | 10 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 59 |
| Mostyn | | 7 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 18 |
| Argoed | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | | 1 | | | 14 |
| nannerch | | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 8 |
| Nercwys | 1 | 2 | | 4 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 11 |
| Northop | 1 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 | | | 27 |
| Northop Hall | | | 3 | | 2 | 1 | | | | 6 |
| Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | 8 |
| Whitford | | 1 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 27 |
| Ysceifiog | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | 9 |
| Grand Total | 122 | 144 | 249 | 145 | 117 | 59 | 30 | 11 | 11 | 888 |

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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday, 10 th February 2016 |
| Report Subject | Council Tax & Business Rate Statutory Policies 2016-17 |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Corporate Management |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) |
| Type of Report | Operational |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year there is a need to approve several policies for the administration of Council Tax and Business Rates, these are:

- Council Tax Discounts on second and long term empty homes
- Council Tax Discretionary Discounts
- Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief
- Business Rates 'top-up' Discretionary Rate Reliefs to small businesses

The adoption of these policies for 2016-17, is part of the Council Tax setting process for 2016-17 and the circumstances where the Council will award local taxation discounts and/or reliefs to ensure council tax and business rate bills are calculated correctly. The recommendations are to continue with all existing policies, which in summary are:

- Not awarding Council Tax discounts on second and long term empty homes
- Considering Discretionary Council Tax discounts only in cases of civil emergencies and natural disasters
- Providing Discretionary Business Rate Relief as set out in the policy
- Not awarding 'top-up' Discretionary Discounts to businesses already qualifying for Small Business Rate Relief.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | Provide feedback to cabinet on the continuation of all existing policies prior to final approval in February 2016. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL TAX & BUSINESS RATE STATUTORY POLICIES 2016 – 17 |
| 1.01 | <p><u>COUNCIL TAX ON SECOND AND LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES</u></p> <p>The Council has long had a policy of not awarding Council Tax discounts to second/holiday homes (defined as Prescribed Classes A and B) and long term empty properties (Prescribed Class C). These are defined by Regulations as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class A – A property which is unoccupied and furnished but where occupation is prohibited by law for over 28 days each year• Class B – A property which is unoccupied and furnished and where occupation is not prohibited by law• Class C – A property which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished beyond the normal exemption period (usually after 6 months) |
| 1.02 | <p>The policy applies to the whole County and the decision not to award discounts for any of the Prescribed Classes is also reflected in the 2016-17 Tax Base calculations.</p> |
| 1.03 | <p>The adoption of a policy in 2016-17 of not awarding discounts to second and long term empty homes is consistent with nearly all other Welsh Councils and especially in view of the recent introduction of the Housing Act 2014 which will also provide an opportunity from April 2017 to charge a council tax premium of up to 100% on these type of properties in order to bring these properties back into use.</p> |
| 1.04 | <p>A separate report to introduce council tax premiums on second and long term empty homes from 2017-18 will be considered by cabinet and then full Council in March 2016.</p> |
| 1.05 | <p><u>COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNTS</u></p> <p>Section 13a of the Local Government Finance Act allows the Council to use discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable, effectively granting a local Council Tax Discretionary Discount.</p> |
| 1.06 | <p>If the Council exercises this power it must act with regard to all relevant considerations and the interests of taxpayers as the full cost of awarding a Discretionary Discount would, in effect, be financed by other Council Tax payers.</p> |
| 1.07 | <p>The current policy together with the recommended policy for 2016-17 is for the Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management to consider Discretionary Discounts through the use of delegated powers only in cases of civil emergencies or natural disasters.</p> |

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| 1.08 | <p><u>BUSINESS RATES – DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR CHARITABLE, VOLUNTARY AND NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Discretionary Rate Relief for Charitable, Voluntary and ‘Not for Profits’ organisations is currently awarded on a continual basis, subject to a minimum of 12 months and one full financial year notice if any ratepayer is impacted by a change in policy. In other words, if notice of a change is not given by 31st March, relief would continue at the same level for a further two years.</p> |
| 1.09 | <p>Although the Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) scheme is approved annually by cabinet, the principles of who gets rate relief and at what level, has not been considered in detail since 2010. Cabinet has already agreed to undertake a review of DRR to provide efficiencies for the Council and help bridge the budget gap from 2017-18 and beyond.</p> |
| 1.10 | <p>Notwithstanding this, until any new DRR scheme can be introduced from 2017-18, the recommended policy for 2016-17 will provide the same level of rate relief to the same organisations as in 2015-16.</p> |
| 1.11 | <p>The policy for 2016-17 is strengthened to effectively deal with the emergence of new organisations that are structured and set-up as ‘not for profit’. The policy introduces more clarity around qualification rules for Community Interest Companies and Social Enterprises to demonstrate they exist as ‘not for profits’ where the premises are used for charitable, philanthropic or religious purposes, or concerned with recreation, education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts.</p> <p>The recommended policy for 2016-17 is determined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premises used ‘wholly or mainly’ for charitable purposes by organisations registered with the Charity Commission (<i>20% discretionary ‘top-up’ relief is awarded, with the exception of Charity Shops operated by national organisations, who receive the 80% Mandatory Relief element only</i>) • Premises used ‘wholly or mainly’ by ‘not for profits’ organisations and who share the same characteristics as those organisations that are registered charities. This category consists of Community Centres, Village Institutes and Halls, other than those operated by Precepting Bodies (<i>20% ‘top-up’ relief is awarded</i>) • Premises occupied ‘wholly or mainly’ by sporting clubs societies or other ‘not for profit’ Community Interest Companies or Registered Social Enterprises and used for the sole purpose charitable, philanthropic or religious purposes, or concerned with recreation, education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts (<i>100% Discretionary Relief is awarded with the exception of golf clubs who are usually awarded 50% Discretionary Relief</i>) |
| 1.12 | <p>Not for profit’ organisations will be considered as those not conducted or maintained for the purpose of making a profit and whose surpluses are used to further achieve their aims and objectives rather than distribute income to the organisations shareholders. For easy understanding these will typically be member or community serving organisations.</p> |

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| 1.13 | <p>The key test to establish ‘not for profits’ will centre around whether they are genuinely run as ‘not for profit’, To aid decision making considerations will be made around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the memorandum and articles of association to determine the type of organisation, and that it is not for profit and/or for a social purpose associated with charitable, philanthropic or religious purposes, or concerned with recreation, education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts - ensuring these elements are built into this document with clarity and what happens to any traded surpluses • Consideration of the initial business plan and audited accounts to check whether traded surpluses are re-invested each year for advancement of their mission and social purpose. • Assessing on an annual basis, submitted audited accounts and any revisions to the memorandum and articles of association to ensure the application of surpluses are as detailed in their memorandum and articles and to monitor/prevent building up of excessive reserves. |
| 1.14 | <p><u>BUSINESS RATES – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF FOR ALL OTHER BUSINESSES</u></p> <p>The Council can also provide discretionary relief in any circumstances in line with the Localism Act 2011. This is subject to the condition that, except in the limited circumstances specified, the Council may only grant relief if it would be reasonable to do so having full regard to the interests of council tax payers who would ultimately finance the full cost of providing rate relief in these circumstances.</p> |
| 1.15 | <p>The proposed policy in 2016-17 is for the Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management consider any applications received for discretionary discounts falling outside the scope of the policy in section 1.03 to be considered on their own merits using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for reductions will be required in writing with a full business case and documentary evidence in support of the need for relief • The Council’s finances allow for a reduction to be made • It must be in the interests of Council Tax payers and the wider public interest to grant a reduction • All other eligible discounts/reliefs have been considered prior to seeking discretionary rate relief |
| 1.16 | <p><u>BUSINESS RATES – DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESSES</u></p> <p>Welsh Government provide Small Business Rate (SBR) Relief to most businesses with a rateable value of £12,000 or less, financed by Welsh Government. The Welsh Government SBR scheme also contains provision for local authorities to award discretionary ‘top-up’ relief to small businesses not qualifying for 100% SBR reductions, although the cost of</p> |

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| | providing 'top-up' awards to small businesses is financed completely by the Council. |
| 1.17 | The proposed policy in 2016-17 is not to award additional discretionary 'top-up' relief to small businesses already qualifying for partial SBR. |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | On the basis of a continuation of all existing policies as set out in this report, costs can be met from within existing budget provisions during 2016-17 for the awarding of Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Voluntary and 'Not for Profit' organisations. |

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| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | Referral to Scrutiny Committee allows feedback to be considered by cabinet prior to final approval of the report. |

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| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | The approval of these policies, prior to the commencement of the next Council Tax and Business Rate billing period starting on 1 st April 2016, will ensure that all statutory policies are in place to deal with applications for reliefs and discounts. Furthermore, residents will also have knowledge of the Council's approach to charging Council Tax on second and long term empty homes during 2016-17. |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | None |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Finance Act 1988 – section 47 • Local Government Finance Act 1992 – section 12 • Non Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 Localism Act 2011 – section 69 <p>Contact Officer: David Barnes Job Title: Revenues Manager Telephone: 01352 703652 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
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| 7.01 | <p>Mandatory Rate Relief: Where a business property is occupied by a charity or a Community Amateur Sports Organisation and the property is put to use 'wholly or mainly' for charitable purposes, there is an automatic entitlement to a 80% reduction in the rate bill, the cost of which is picked up by Welsh Government.</p> <p>Discretionary Rate Relief: Voluntary Groups and 'Not for profit' organisations which are not registered charities are not eligible to receive Mandatory Rate Relief, but they are eligible to receive discretionary rate relief up to 100% (either as a 'top-up' to Mandatory Rate Relief or as an award in its own right based on the policy of a local authority). To be entitled to Discretionary Rate Relief, organisations must satisfy certain rules and conditions where the premises are occupied and put to use for charitable or otherwise for used for philanthropic, religious, education, social welfare, science, literature, the arts or recreational purposes.</p> <p>Council Tax second homes: are defined as domestic properties appearing in the Council Tax Valuation List which are not a person's sole or main residence and which are substantially furnished, although they might sometimes be occupied periodically.</p> <p>Council Tax long term empty homes (LTE'S): are defined as a domestic properties appearing in the Council Tax Valuation List but which is both un-occupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of usually 6 months or more.</p> <p>Rateable Value: is a monetary value on the likely letting price assigned to commercial buildings based on the size, location and other factors used to determine the rates payable by the person responsible for payment of business rates on each commercial property appearing in the Rating List. All Rateable values are calculated by the Valuation Office Agency which is an executive arm of HMRC (HM Revenue & Customs).</p> <p>Small Business Rate Relief: is a Welsh Government funded scheme that has been extended to 31st March 2017 to provide rate relief on a sliding scale to most small businesses operating from commercial premises with a rateable value of £12,000 or less. Properties with a rateable value of £6,000 or less are eligible for 100% rate relief. This means that businesses won't pay business rates on those properties. The rate of relief decreases from 100% to 0% for properties with a rateable between £6,001 and £12,000.</p> <p>Tax Base: is a measure of the Council's Council Tax 'taxable capacity' taking into account the number of chargeable properties and the number of exemptions and discounts.</p> |



COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | Wednesday 10 th February 2016 |
| Report Subject | Flintshire Social and Affordable Housing Delivery |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) |
| Type of Report | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Elected Members with an update on the provision of new social and affordable housing schemes in Flintshire.

The report details the policy framework including the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (FUDP), Local Housing Market Assessment, Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and Flintshire Affordable Housing Register which inform the number, property and tenure types and location of all new affordable housing in Flintshire.

The report will also focus upon the primary mechanisms for delivering new social and affordable housing in Flintshire including the Council's Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP), Social Housing Grant (SHG) Programme and affordable housing secured through Section 106 Planning Agreements with private developers.

The final part of the report will discuss future policy development and initiatives to maximize the number of affordable units secured by the Council for Flintshire residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | <p>Scrutiny Committee supports the overall approach to the delivery of new social and affordable housing in Flintshire, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flintshire’s Social Housing Grant (SHG) Programme for the delivery of 277 new social and affordable new homes during the period 2015/16-2018/19; • Proposals for the projected delivery of 132 new homes through Section 106 Planning Agreements agreed to date for the period 2015/16- 2017/18; • Supports the development of policy initiatives to increase supply of local affordable housing provision. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | Introduction |
| 1.01 | <p>The report provides an update to Scrutiny Committee members on progress made on the delivery of all new Council, housing association and Section 106 housing schemes across Flintshire. The vital role good quality affordable housing makes in securing economic and health security is well understood. New housing will provide new jobs, skills, economic growth and healthier individuals and communities across Flintshire. The development of new local housing also makes a significant contribution to economic growth.</p> |
| 1.02 | Policy Framework |
| 1.03 | <p>Flintshire utilises a number of different evidence sources to determine the housing need across the county in terms of numbers of new housing required, tenure types, affordability levels and location choices. Key strategic policy documents and guidelines which inform future housing development in Flintshire include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (FUDP); • The Local Housing Market Assessment Report. • The Housing Register known as SARTH (Single Access Route To Housing); • Flintshire Affordability Register. |
| 1.04 | Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (FUDP) |
| 1.05 | <p>The FUDP is the adopted development plan for the 15 year period 2000 – 2015. The aim of the FUDP is to provide a framework for making rational and consistent decisions on planning applications and to guide development to appropriate locations. This identifies sites where new housing, employment and other development can take place, as well as setting out policies to protect important countryside, habitats, resources and heritage.</p> |

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| 1.06 | Although the adopted UDP became time expired at the end of 2015 it remains the adopted development plan for the County whilst it is being updated and replaced in time by the Local Development Plan (LDP). Any proposals for affordable housing must take into account the advice in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance documents. The Council's Planning and Housing Programmes Team have developed excellent working arrangements which enable a positive approach to planning to enable appropriate, sustainable development to come forward. A key element of this is the development of open and transparent working arrangements with private developers, working proactively with them on the options available and the provision of advice on affordable housing needs and priorities for the Council. |
| 1.07 | Flintshire and Wrexham Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) |
| 1.08 | <p>Flintshire has jointly commissioned the Flintshire and Wrexham Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) This has confirmed that housing need for social housing dwellings is currently outstripping supply and will do so for the foreseeable future. Specifically, it identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual shortfall of 246 affordable dwellings across Flintshire; • The suggested affordable housing tenure split for Flintshire identified by the assessment is for 56% social/affordable rent and 44% intermediate tenure; • A clear need for smaller two bedroom properties for under and over 65s; • Around one third of all households in Flintshire can only afford an intermediate affordable house priced at £100,000 or less (or the equivalent total housing costs). |
| 1.09 | Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) |
| 1.10 | SARTH is a partnership project between all the major social landlords in North East Wales, covering the local authority areas of Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire. In addition to the above Councils, the partnership also includes Clwyd Alyn, Grwp Cynefin and Wales and West Housing Associations all of which operate in Flintshire. |
| 1.11 | The SARTH policy was implemented in April 2015. Applicants are given priority on the register based on the statutory ' <i>reasonable preference</i> ' categories which include homelessness, overcrowding, living in unsanitary conditions, medical grounds or hardship. As long as an applicant meets one of these ' <i>reasonable preference</i> ' groups then they are entitled to register. Additional priority is then given based on the urgency of need and local connection. Within each band applicants are listed in date order of their application. Applicants can choose their preferred property type and location and are advised on availability of stock in their chosen areas. |

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| 1.12 | The housing need demonstrated by SARTH helps inform the Council as to the localities types and numbers of social housing required which in turn determines which RSL proposed development schemes are supported by the Council and Welsh Government with SHG funding. There are currently 922 applicants have been accepted under the SARTH registration criteria for different property types across Flintshire. |
| 1.13 | Currently, the areas of high demand on SARTH are Shotton, Buckley, Flint, Mold and Connahs Quay with half of the people on the register choosing one of these areas as their first choice. These are the areas where affordable housing development is being focused through the SHARP and SHG programmes. |
| 1.14 | There is varying levels of demand in other areas across Flintshire and limited demand in some villages. Before the SARTH data cleanse, the numbers on the register did not necessarily accurately reflect current demand, the subsequent cleanse and more accurate figures has highlighted some areas of limited demand for sheltered properties and larger family houses. |
| 1.15 | To support the development of future housing development in these communities and ensure an equitable and sustainable distribution of new affordable housing development across Flintshire, robust interrogation of SARTH and other housing needs data available to the Council will be undertaken by the Housing Programmes Team. In some instances, potential applicants may not have registered on SARTH or Flintshire Affordability Register as the Council and its partners do not currently have the type of property they seek available or have new schemes planned in the communities they live. |
| 1.16 | This will necessitate the need to work closely with key local stakeholders to both identify local housing priorities and potential sites for new development. This will be supported through increased marketing of potential schemes to attract new applicants through local consultation events and use of the Council's website and social media. |
| 1.17 | Flintshire Affordable Register |
| 1.18 | Flintshire County Council supports low cost home ownership schemes, which enables people currently priced out of the housing market to own a home of their own. The scheme is administered through a Flintshire Affordable Register on behalf of the Council by Grwp Cynefin. The most popular product is equity share and this helps first time buyers into home ownership. The subsidy is not a loan that needs to be repaid and there is no rent payable. It simply means the Council owns an equity share (usually 30%) in the home. When the purchaser decides to sell the home on, the council gets back its equity share and recycles it, to ensure it is available to the next household eligible on the register to buy the home. |
| 1.19 | Grwp Cynefin undertakes all marketing for the new properties directly to households on the database and works closely with developer sales teams to assess and nominate a household for a vacant affordable new home. The information held on individual applications is robust, and as |

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| | <p>applications are reviewed on a 6 monthly basis, either updated or if no response is received, are deleted, therefore insuring that information held is always current. Currently for 2015/16 a total number of 417 household applications are contained in the Affordable Register.</p> |
| 1.20 | <p>Flintshire has three main mechanisms for the delivery of new social and affordable housing. There are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flintshire’s Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) which aims to deliver 500 new Council (200) and affordable homes (300) over the next five years. The Council homes will be managed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The affordable housing element will be managed by NEW Homes. • Social Housing Grant (SHG) which is a grant programme allocated to Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) by local authorities from the Welsh Government. The grant aims to provide new affordable housing for rent or low cost home ownership. • Section 106 Agreement properties from developers meeting their affordable housing provision obligations through Section 106 Agreements. The purpose of these agreement is to ensure that the homes go to local people most in need of affordable housing, and the rents or prices are affordable, and remain so in the future. • North East Wales Homes, (NEW Homes) is a Housing company based in Flintshire and owned by Flintshire County Council which became operational on the 1st April 2014. NEW Homes owns, leases and manages properties across Flintshire. |
| 1.21 | SHARP |
| 1.22 | <p>The SHARP is a five year programme with a projected annual spend of £10M per annum. Cabinet approved construction of the first scheme at Custom House School, Connaught Quay in February 2016 which will see 12 new Council homes being delivered. Additional Phase 1 schemes and sites are currently being finalised and will be presented to Council for approval in March 2016. SHARP currently does not receive any form of grant funding from the Welsh Government towards the construction costs of these schemes currently. Welsh Government (WG) is currently reviewing the option of making grant funding available to local authorities in Wales wishing to commence a house building programme and an All-Wales Working Group has been established to inform the new funding regime. The introduction of grant subsidy could be announced by WG in Summer 2016 and could provide a significant financial benefit for the Council’s SHARP, meaning the programme could be extended further.</p> |
| 1.23 | NEW Homes |
| 1.24 | <p>NEW Homes was established to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing available across the county - increasing housing choice for those who may not qualify for social housing but for whom market housing is unaffordable or difficult to access. NEW Homes currently has 49 properties under its management across its different housing products.</p> |

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| 1.25 | In recent years the Council has successfully negotiated with private developers the transfer of new build Section 106 properties to NEW Homes. This innovative approach has seen NEW Homes receive 19 new build properties to date from developers meeting their affordable housing provision. These units were transferred into the company as unencumbered assets to be let as affordable housing and form a profitable element of the company's stock portfolio. A further 9 units are due to be transferred to NEW Homes during 2015/16 from 3 schemes across the county, with 3 final properties in 2016/17, providing a total of 31 homes. |
| 1.26 | In October 2015, Cabinet approved the NEW Homes Business Plan 2015/20 which sets out key elements of the company's proposed growth plan to increase the number of properties managed and owned as affordable housing over the next five years by 320. The business plan has also been approved by NEW Homes Board as a strategic planning document; subject to ongoing scheme by scheme final approval and validation of financial appraisals by the company's board and the council's cabinet. This includes any new homes to be developed via the SHARP programme, and any property acquired through borrowing against existing assets. Twice yearly monitoring of NEW Homes progress against its business plan projections is reported to Scrutiny Committee. |
| 1.27 | Social Housing Grant (SHG) |
| 1.28 | Appendix 1 details the current SHG funding programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19. During this period a projected £14.61M SHG will be spent to deliver 277 new homes in the county. SHG can be used to provide housing for rent or low cost home ownership through new build or the use of existing buildings. SHG can be used to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ schemes to increase the supply of affordable housing for rent ▪ schemes for older people including Extra care schemes ▪ Homebuy - to assist people to purchase a home schemes to address low demand and to support community regeneration schemes for people who need support with independent living. |
| 1.29 | SHG provision from Welsh Government contributes between 58% and 25% of the funding of the total costs of a development scheme (dependent on housing tenure) with the remaining costs being met by the Housing Association in receipt of the grant. There are four local Housing Associations which operate in Flintshire in receipt of SHG funding. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grwp Cynefin • Pennaf • Wales & West • First Choice Homes. |
| 1.30 | Section 106 Planning Agreement Properties |
| 1.31 | In order to ensure that all planning applications that involve affordable housing meet key requirements, applicants are required to complete a Section 106 Planning Agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to |

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| | <p>ensure that all affordable housing is of a high quality and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The homes go to local people most in need of affordable housing; • The rent or prices are affordable and remain so in the future. |
| 1.32 | Emerging Themes and Policy Development |
| 1.33 | <p>Appendix 2 shows that a projected 132 properties will be secured by Section 106 Planning Agreement between 2015/16 – 2017/18. A number of private developers have recently contacted both Grwp Cynefin and the Council advising there is limited demand for these properties in some areas. These affordable properties could be lost to the Council in perpetuity. Clearly rising property prices in Flintshire, along with increased mortgage costs continue to play a key role in excluding many households across Flintshire from accessing the home ownership market.</p> |
| 1.34 | <p>To address this, the Council will continue to work with key housing partners and stakeholders to speed up the rate of occupancy of affordable properties through a number of different measures. This will involve working with the Council's Planning Team to review existing Section 106 Agreements on new housing schemes with private developers. This will include improved monitoring arrangements incorporated into Section 106 Agreements with developers which will clearly outline a clear marketing strategy for all future affordable schemes which will continue to be closely and regular monitored by both the Housing Programmes and Planning Teams. This will be accompanied by a review of eligibility criteria for applicants wishing to access the Flintshire Affordable Register will be undertaken and completed this year.</p> |
| 1.35 | <p>A revised marketing strategy for not only Section 106 properties, but all new Council, housing association, NEW Homes properties across Flintshire through improved information sharing with the Housing Options Team on new schemes and re-launch of the Council's own website and other multi-media tools such as twitter and face book to advertise the availability of current and forecast new schemes will also be strengthened. These initiatives will widen the potential audience for the new affordable homes and will enable more people to access both affordable rent and home ownership throughout Flintshire. This will also be supported by briefing and training by Grwp Cynefin on the Affordability Housing Register for key Council staff.</p> |
| 1.36 | Housing Association and Section 106 Housing |
| 1.37 | <p>The Council is already successfully negotiating the transfer of Section 106 properties to NEW Homes. This approach will continue to be followed where there is a proven affordable housing rental market and / or insufficient purchase market. The Housing Programmes will also continue to support and inform negotiations between private developers and local housing associations to purchase these properties for both social and intermediate rental markets. This will ensure that local people on different incomes will continue to have access to quality accommodation.</p> |

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| 1.38 | NEW Homes also aims to borrow against its existing assets to secure new affordable housing units. Initial plans included in the financial modelling will see NEW Homes acquire 8 properties to let at affordable rents. This is a prudent level of borrowing against assets owned, and early indications are that private markets could be interested in lending to NEW Homes for this purpose. Prior to commencement of this area of the company's growth plans detailed financial appraisals will be approved by the NEW Homes board and the council's cabinet. |
| 1.39 | Commuted Sums |
| 1.40 | In some cases, there may be practical reasons which make on site provision of affordable housing difficult or unviable. In these cases, the provision of a commuted sum is considered by the Council. Where a commuted sum is agreed, the Council will accept that the commuted sum should be a value equivalent to the cost of providing the percentage of serviced land required by the policy. |
| 1.41 | To date, the Council has received £536K in commuted sum payments from private developers in lieu of affordable housing development, with a further £1.01M to be received during the next three years. |
| 1.42 | In October 2014 Cabinet approved guidance to ensure that commuted sums received for the purposes of the provision of affordable housing are spent in a consistent and fair way reflecting the requirements of the Commuted Sums Policy in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial contribution towards the development of both affordable rented accommodation and low cost home ownership schemes. • The development of supported housing schemes at affordable rents and key worker initiatives. • Initiatives that support regeneration projects such as offering loans to tackle empty homes or poor housing conditions, in return for affordable housing nominations for an agreed number of years. • Affordable self-build projects. • The purchase of land for affordable housing. • Mortgage Rescue. • Top up and/or replacement of Social Housing Grant (SHG). |
| 1.43 | The Guidance states that the council will use commuted sums to develop affordable housing within 5 years from the date the sum was received, with the council returning un-spent commuted sums to the developer. |
| 1.44 | With this in mind, the Housing Programmes Team will lead on developing respective options for spending commuted with local community council to ensure that value for money is achieved when delivering new affordable housing through this mechanism. |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | Flintshire is currently developing self-financing options for the SHARP which will be presented to Cabinet for approval in March 2016. WG are scheduled to announce proposals for local authorities to receive grant funding for new housing development in Spring 2016. |
| 2.02 | For the period 2015/16 – 18/19 277 new homes will be funded by the Council's £14.61M SHG programme. Each of these schemes will need be approved by the Council to secure WG funding. |
| 2.03 | There is no financial transaction for the 132 Section 106 affordable properties realised through the Council's planning system. These will remain affordable in perpetuity. |
| 2.04 | The Council has £536K in Commuted Sums available to invest in local schemes. |

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| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | No consultation undertaken. |

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| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | A SHARP Risk and Opportunity Register has been established which is overseen by the SHARP Project Partnership Board. |
| 4.02 | A Risk and Opportunity Register has been jointly developed with local housing associations to oversee the SHG Programme. |
| 4.03 | Monthly Design Meetings are held with housing associations to oversee housing development |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1 – Social Housing Grant Programme 2015/16 – 2018/19 |
| 5.02 | Appendix 2 – Section 106 Planning Agreement Dwellings 2015/16 – 2018/19 |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | Contact Officer: Melville Evans – Housing Programmes Manager Telephone: 01352701436 E-mail: Melville.evans@flintshire.gov.uk |

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| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | Affordable Housing - Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. |

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| 7.02 | Social Housing - Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and housing associations and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime |
| 7.03 | Housing Associations - Housing associations are independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. Any trading surplus is used to maintain existing homes and to help finance new ones. |
| 7.04 | Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) - which aims to deliver 500 new Council (200) and affordable homes (300) over the next five years. The Council homes will be managed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The affordable housing element will be managed by NEW Homes. |
| 7.05 | Social Housing Grant (SHG) Programme - which is a grant programme allocated to Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) by local authorities from the Welsh Government. The grant aims to provide new affordable housing for rent or low cost home ownership. |
| 7.06 | NEW Homes - North East Wales Homes, (NEW Homes) is a Housing company based in Flintshire and owned by Flintshire County Council. NEW Homes owns, leases and manages properties across Flintshire. The company was established to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing available across the county; increasing housing choice for those who may not qualify for social housing but for whom market housing is unaffordable or difficult to access. In addition NEW Homes provides a professional service to landlords as a managing agent as a means to increase the supply of quality affordable housing. |
| 7.07 | Section 106 Planning Agreement - properties from developers meeting their affordable housing provision obligations through Section 106 Agreements. The purpose of these agreement is to ensure that the homes go to local people most in need of affordable housing, and the rents or prices are affordable, and remain so in the future. |
| 7.08 | Commutated Sums – sum accepted by the Council from developers in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision outlined in section 106 agreements. |

Appendix 1 - Welsh Government SHG Funding Programme in Flintshire 15 /16 to 18/19

| Construction completions and starts - year 2015/16 | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Locality | Address | Housing Association | Dwelling numbers | Dwelling types | Tenure Type | Forecast /actual start date | Forecast/ actual completion date | Total SHG payable (£) |
| Hawarden | Lower Aston Hall Lane | Pennaf | 21 | 2 x 4B house & 12 x 2B houses, 6 x 3B houses and 1 bungalow | Social Rent | Feb-16 | Dec-16 | 735K |
| Flint | Lys Raddington (Extra Care) | Pennaf | 73 | 40 x 1bd flats & 33 x 2bd flats | Social Rent | Mar-16 | Jul-17 | 928K |
| Mold | Glanrafon Road | Wales & West | 14 | 4 x 2bd flats and 10 x 1bd flats | Social Rent | On site | Oct-16 | 873K |
| Mold | 11 Meadowside | First Choice | 3 | Supported Bungalow | Social Rent | On site | Feb-16 | 299K |
| Flint | Coed Onn | Wales & West | 23 | 14 x 2 bd houses, 6 x 3bd houses, 2 x 2bd bungalows and 1 x 2bd bungalow w/c | Social Rent | Feb-16 | Dec-16 | 519K |
| Construction completions and starts - year 2016/17 | | | | | | | | |
| Locality | Address | Housing Association | Dwelling numbers | Dwelling types | Tenure type | Forecast /actual start date | Forecast/ actual completion date | Total SHG payable (£) |
| Penyffordd | Penyffordd near Chester | Grwp Cynefin | 7 | 4 x 2bd houses, 2 x 3bed houses & 1 x 3bd bungalow | Social Rent | Mar-17 | Dec-17 | 455K |
| Connah's Quay | Tivatton Close | First Choice | 4 | Supported Housing | Social Rent | Apr-16 | Sep-16 | 286K |
| Flint | Ystad Goffa | Wales & West | 21 | 13 x 2bd houses, 4 x 2bd flats and 4 x 1bd flats | Social Rent | May-16 | Apr-17 | 1.8M |
| Flint | Earl St. | Wales & West | 10 | 5 x 1bd flats w/c & 5 x 2bd flats | Social Rent | Sep-16 | Aug-17 | 650K |
| Holywell | Halkyn Rd | Wales & West | 47 | 30 x 2bd houses, 11 x 3bd houses, 3 x 2bd flats, 3 x 1bd flats w/c & 2 x 2bd bungalows | Social Rent | Jul-16 | Jul-17 | £4.09M |
| Construction completions and starts - year 2017/18 | | | | | | | | |
| Locality | Address | Housing Association | Dwelling numbers | Dwelling types | Tenure Type | Forecast /actual start date | Forecast/ actual completion date | Total SHG payable (£) |
| Connah's Quay | Clarence St & Nelson St stalled sites | Wales & West | 20 | 2 & 3bed houses (No TBC) | Social Rent | Mar-17 | Apr-18 | 1.3M |
| Buckley | Health Centre | Grwp Cynefin | 24 | 15 x 2B Flats & 9 1B Flats | Social Rent | Mar-17 | Apr-18 | 1.78M |
| Construction completions and starts - year 2018/19 | | | | | | | | |
| Locality | Address | Housing Association | Dwelling numbers | Dwelling types | Tenure Type | Forecast /actual start date | Forecast/ actual completion date | Total SHG payable (£) |
| Ewloe | Boars Head | Wales & West | 10 | 7 x 2bd houses & 3 x 3bd houses | Social Rent | Mar-18 | Jan-19 | 900K |

TOTAL 14.615M

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APPENDIX 2 Projected Section 106 Agreements for affordable homes 15/16 - 17/18

| Site Names | Location | Affordable dwelling numbers agreed | 2015 - 2016 | 2016 -2017 | 2017 -2018 |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| South of Retail Park | Broughton | 76 | 27 | 15 | 15 |
| Compound Site | Broughton | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Lane End Brickworks | Buckley | 45 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| Llwyni Drive | Connah's Quay | 41 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Croes Atti | Flint | 62 (or 92 if current application approved) | 2 | 10 | 10 |
| Overlea Drive | Hawarden | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Bridge Farm, Fagl Lane | HCAC | 13 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| West of Abermorddu School | HCAC | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| High Street | Saltney | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Cae Eithin | Northop Hall | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| | | TOTAL | 69 | 35 | 28 |

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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday, 10 th February 2016 |
| Report Subject | Flintshire Supporting People Commissioning Plan |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Housing |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) |
| Type of Report | Operational |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2016-18. The programme has been subject to significant reductions over the past three years. It is pleasing to note that the grant has been protected in 2016/17. This provides the team some time to work with providers to identify different ways of working which can deliver savings whilst protecting service delivery. This report does propose to move ahead with planned reductions of services that are not deemed a priority to fund. Any savings will be used to provide short term support to meet emerging pressures as a result of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

| | |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Committee supports the Local Commissioning Plan 2016-18 for the Supporting People Programme Grant. |
| 2 | Committee supports the spend plan for 2016-17. |

REPORT DETAILS

| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE FLINTSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING PLAN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|------------|----------|------|---------|------------|----------|------|---------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1.01 | <p>In 2012, the Welsh Government merged together the Supporting People Grant and Supporting People Revenue Grant and created the Supporting People Programme Grant. This grant funds the provision of services that enable vulnerable people to gain and retain independence by remaining in their own home and prevents people from needing to access health, social care and homelessness services, etc.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.02 | <p>Members will be aware that the Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant has suffered significant reductions as a result of the austerity measures that have seen some of the deepest public sector cuts for a generation being implemented by the government to reduce the budget deficit. Table 1 below, shows the year on year reduction in the grant since April 2013 in Flintshire.</p> <p>Table 1</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="309 943 1339 1158"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="309 943 555 1043">Financial Year</th> <th data-bbox="555 943 770 1043">Total SPRG</th> <th data-bbox="770 943 1131 1043">Reduction in SPPG (compared to previous years' SPRG)</th> <th data-bbox="1131 943 1339 1043">% Reduction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1043 555 1081">2013/14</td> <td data-bbox="555 1043 770 1081">£6,824,035</td> <td data-bbox="770 1043 1131 1081">£296,221</td> <td data-bbox="1131 1043 1339 1081">4.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1081 555 1120">2014/15</td> <td data-bbox="555 1081 770 1120">£6,468,843</td> <td data-bbox="770 1081 1131 1120">£356,092</td> <td data-bbox="1131 1081 1339 1120">5.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="309 1120 555 1158">2015/16</td> <td data-bbox="555 1120 770 1158">£5,809,813</td> <td data-bbox="770 1120 1131 1158">£659,026</td> <td data-bbox="1131 1120 1339 1158">10.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This represents a total budget cut of 18.4% over 3 years.</p> | Financial Year | Total SPRG | Reduction in SPPG (compared to previous years' SPRG) | % Reduction | 2013/14 | £6,824,035 | £296,221 | 4.1% | 2014/15 | £6,468,843 | £356,092 | 5.2% | 2015/16 | £5,809,813 | £659,026 | 10.4% |
| Financial Year | Total SPRG | Reduction in SPPG (compared to previous years' SPRG) | % Reduction | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2013/14 | £6,824,035 | £296,221 | 4.1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2014/15 | £6,468,843 | £356,092 | 5.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2015/16 | £5,809,813 | £659,026 | 10.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.03 | <p>Strategic Priorities</p> <p><u>Meeting the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</u></p> <p>The implementation of these two acts are likely to have a substantial impact on Supporting People. Both have a heavy focus on early intervention where people need support to live independently, which aligns well with Supporting People's key aim of preventing homelessness through early intervention, therefore it is anticipated there will be increased demand on services.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.04 | <p>In 2014, Flintshire Supporting People Team and the Support Gateway are embedded in the Housing Solutions Service. There is a joined up approach between the Housing Support Workers and the Homeless Officers. This has provided a lean approach to managing the increasing levels of people at risk of homelessness. The Flintshire Supporting People Planning Group is chaired by a Senior Manager from Social Services creating a key link at a strategic level.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| 1.05 | <p><u>Contributing to the Tackling Poverty Agenda</u></p> <p>Supporting People along with Housing and Homelessness was incorporated into the Communities and Tackling Poverty Ministerial portfolio. Welsh Government have highlighted the opportunities for greater links to be forged between Supporting People and the Tackling Poverty programmes; Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.</p> |
| 1.06 | <p>Flintshire has started work to map how these programmes can be more closely aligned. There is some practical join up between Families First and Supporting People with links between the boards, sharing of commissioning tools and expect that alignment to become closer over the next twelve months through some joint commissioning of projects.</p> |
| 1.07 | <p><u>Managing the Reductions</u></p> <p>The continued reduction to the Supporting People Programme Grant has been a significant and growing concern for the authority. The services funded by the grant prevent some residents from accessing more costly social and health care and homelessness services and positively support the authority in its attempts to mitigate the extreme financial pressures that are being generated by other reductions in public expenditure, such as the welfare reforms. Therefore, it has been essential for the Flintshire Supporting People Team to adopt a proactive and strategic approach in their management of the year on year reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant and, in doing so, lessen the negative impacts upon service delivery to customers.</p> |
| 1.08 | <p>It is pleasing that the Supporting People Programme Grant has been protected from reductions in 2016/17. This provides some much needed time for the Supporting People Team to work with providers to identify efficiencies that as far as possible protect vulnerable service users.</p> |
| 1.09 | <p>There are some ongoing projects to remodel services that will continue through 2016/17 in partnership with service providers. The Supporting People Team has sought agreement from the Supporting People Planning Group for changes to some services which will deliver savings in 2016/17. These are reductions where services have been deemed ineligible or not a priority for Supporting People to fund. These savings in 2016/17 will be invested in the short term to support new emerging pressures as a result of the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Supporting People Planning Group has identified a gap in provision for males fleeing domestic abuse across the North Wales region. The Supporting People Planning Group will also align with the wider Tackling Poverty Programmes to identify where investment will meet emerging pressures, tackle poverty and prevent homelessness within the County.</p> |
| 1.10 | <p><u>CONSIDERATIONS</u></p> <p>Cabinet are asked to approve the 2016–18 Supporting People Commissioning Plan (attached at appendix one). The proposals to reduce expenditure contained within this report are in line with the council's and the Regional Collaborative Committee's strategic priorities.</p> |

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| 1.11 | The Supporting People Team is committed to making efficiencies through ensuring service providers are delivering their support services as efficiently and effectively as possible and have been involved in discussions about delivering services differently to achieve savings and maintain service delivery. This has included the use of volunteers, identifying where a floating support model can be more efficient than supported housing and considering changes to overnight support provision. |
| 1.12 | <p>Services continue to be assessed in line with the model from the 2014-16 Commissioning Plan which assesses providers in terms of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Is the service eligible for Supporting People funding? ii. Has the service been subject to value for money assessment? iii. Does the service contribute to key strategic priorities of the Supporting People Programme? iv. Is there clear evidence of demand for the service? v. Could the same outcomes be achieved by delivering services in a different way? vi. Are there other services/funding streams in the County that could deliver the outcomes? vii. Is there opportunity for partner or regional collaboration? viii. What is the service user impact, if the service is ceased or reduced? |
| 1.13 | The outcomes of the assessment of service providers has enabled the Supporting People Team to identify potential efficiency savings of £206,500 in 2016/17 which equates to a 3.5% reduction. The plan also suggests some remodelling work to be implemented in 2017/18. The efficiencies will be achieved through the remodelling of existing services; ceasing services that are not deemed to be strategically relevant to the aims of the Supporting People Programme; maximising alternative funding streams; and, by promoting greater levels of collaboration amongst service providers. |
| 1.14 | Within the service areas where efficiencies have been identified, the Supporting People Team has closely appraised the implications for service users and, importantly, they have identified alternative options where service users may access appropriate support to lessen any negative impacts generated by a reduction in service provision. |

| | | |
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| 1.15 | Table 2 | |
| | Service Areas | Efficiency Savings |
| | Domestic Abuse | No change |
| | Families <i>Achieved through a reduction within a family hostel</i> | £15,000 |
| | Substance Misuse | No change |
| | Chronic Illness <i>Achieved through decommissioning a regional project for HIV/AIDS.</i> | £14,000 |
| | Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment | No change |
| | Offenders | No change |
| | Young People | No change |
| | Mental health | No change |
| | Housing Support (Generic) | No change |
| | Housing Support (Aged over 55) <i>Achieved through withdrawal of support from Abbeyfield Flint with the agreement of the provider</i> | £14,500 |
| | Community Care <i>A continuation of a planned withdrawal from services ineligible for Supporting People Programme Grant.</i> | £163,000 |
| | Total | £206,500 |
| 1.16 | The Supporting People Team are currently working with individual service providers, agreeing the measures that will need to be taken in order to achieve future efficiency savings and to ensure service users are supported through any changes in how their particular support services are to be delivered. | |
| 1.17 | To ensure that the provision of a comprehensive range of quality assured housing related support services within Flintshire will be sustainable over the longer-term, the Supporting People Team are continuing their proactive engagement with all service providers, challenging and redefining the traditional models of how housing related support is delivered. The Supporting People Team remain committed to a strategic approach for identifying the savings required. | |
| 1.18 | Released funding will be used to ensure Flintshire has suitable and safe arrangements for males fleeing domestic abuse; provide support posts to ensure Flintshire can meet the requirements of the new Housing and Social Services legislation and provide support for planned changes to the young people accommodation and support services. The detail and specification of any spend will be agreed through the Tackling Poverty Programmes. | |

| | |
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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | A growing body of research has demonstrated the financial benefits to the public purse that are attained due to the positive outcomes from |

| | |
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| | interventions delivered through the Supporting People programme. The key research in Wales indicates that for every £1 spent on the provision of housing related support, £1.68 is saved across other budgets, with the health, social care, and homelessness budgets seeing the most significant savings, primarily due to the preventative nature of Supporting People services. |
| 2.02 | Thus, the year on year reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant is a concern as it may result in the authority incurring additional expenditure in the delivery of crisis intervention services and in the fulfilment of its social care and homelessness statutory duties. |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | Service providers have been consulted upon how the support services that they are currently delivering will be impacted by the efficiencies being made within the 2016/17 Supporting People Programme Grant. |

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | The services provided through the Supporting People programme aim to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people by supporting them to live independently in the community. These include the provision of services that help people to maximise their household income and manage their financial commitments. The successful outcomes from such services play an important role in helping to tackle poverty and prevent homelessness within the County. |
| 4.02 | Whilst the Flintshire Supporting People Team will attempt to identify efficiencies that will generate the least impact upon service users, it has to be recognised that any future reduction in service provision may result in some vulnerable people not having ease of access to the support services that they require in order to avoid their household from falling into poverty and/or becoming at risk of homelessness. |

| | |
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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix One - Local Commissioning Plan |

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | Contact Officer: Katie Clubb, Customer Support Manager Telephone: 01352 703518 E-mail: Katie.clubb@flintshire.gov.uk |

| | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | <p>Supporting People Team – the team sits within the Customer Support Service area and is responsible for the contract management, reviewing and commissioning of Supporting People Services.</p> <p>Supporting People Programme Grant - In 2012, the Welsh Government merged together the Supporting People Grant and Supporting People Revenue Grant and created the Supporting People Programme Grant. This grant funds the provision of services that enable vulnerable people to gain and retain independence by remaining in their own home and prevents people from needing to access health, social care and homelessness services, etc.</p> <p>Housing related support - is provided to help vulnerable people develop or maintain the skills and confidence necessary to live as independently as possible. Housing related support can include help and advice with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing life and domestic skills • Budgeting and managing money • Accessing other services and opportunities • Establishing safety and security <p>Supported Housing - This is a service where the support is linked accommodation for people who have support needs as well as housing needs. Support can vary from simple information and advice on benefits to more in-depth help with independent living skills, accessing education and employment, overnight support and assistance with finding move-on accommodation.</p> <p>Floating Support – This is where support is not linked to a particular property and is flexible and can support a number of people wherever they reside.</p> <p>Decommissioning Strategy – The Supporting People Planning Group agreed a decommissioning strategy which ensures that the decision to end funding to a service has taken into consideration a number of factors including any impact on service users.</p> <p>Tackling Poverty Programmes – The Welsh Government has recognised the following programmes as contributing to the Tackling Poverty agenda: Supporting People, Flying Start, Communities First and Families First.</p> |

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Flintshire County Council Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan 2016-18

Contents

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|-------------------------------|
| Introduction |
| Strategic Priorities |
| Need, Supply and Service Gaps |
| Consultation Evidence |
| Service Development |
| EIA |
| Spend Plan (Appendix One) |

| | |
|---------|------------------------------|
| Date | December 2015 |
| Version | 1 |
| Status | Draft for Scrutiny Committee |

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Supporting People?

The Supporting People Programme is a Welsh Government funded programme that provides housing related support to vulnerable people. The programme aims to support people to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence through the provision of a range of innovative housing related support services.

Housing related support aims to prevent the problems that can cause people to become homeless. The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage accommodation by assisting to develop or maintain the necessary skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.

1.2 What is Housing related support?

Housing related support is provided to help vulnerable people develop or maintain the skills and confidence necessary to live as independently as possible. Housing related support can include help and advice with:

- Developing life and domestic skills
- Budgeting and managing money
- Accessing other services and opportunities
- Establishing safety and security

1.3 This plan details the priorities for the next two years and the detailed spend plan for 2016 – 2017.

2. Strategic Priorities

2.1 Context

The Supporting People Programme is focused on early intervention by preventing homelessness or a move to higher dependency institutional settings where possible, which can often result in savings to other front-line services such as social care, health and criminal justice.

There are significant legislative and policy changes affecting Supporting People, along with continued economic pressures on wider public services. It is therefore imperative that we focus our efforts to ensure the services we deliver remain strategically relevant and take advantage of opportunities to streamline our work through increased collaboration with key partners.

Flintshire Supporting People's current strategic priorities are listed below:

2.2 Managing the ongoing budget cuts

Flintshire Supporting People Programme Grant has suffered significant reductions as a result of the austerity measures that have seen some of the deepest public sector cuts for a generation being implemented by the government to reduce the budget deficit. Table 1 below, shows the year on year reduction in the grant since April 2013 from a Flintshire perspective.

Table 1

| Financial Year | Total SPRG | Reduction in SPPG (compared to previous years' SPRG) | % Reduction |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2013/14 | £6,824,035 | £296,221 | 4.1% |
| 2014/15 | £6,468,843 | £356,092 | 5.2% |
| 2015/16 | £5,809,813 | £659,026 | 10.4% |

This represents a total budget cut of 18.4% over 3 years.

Flintshire is pleased that the Supporting People Programme Grant has been protected in 2016/17. This provides the necessary time for the team to continue to seek to mitigate these cuts as far as possible through careful planning and negotiation with service providers and other stakeholders locally and regionally. More time is needed to prevent decommissioning and allow for the development of alternative delivery models to protect the services delivered to vulnerable people.

2.3 Meeting the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The implementation of these two acts are likely to have a substantial impact on Supporting People. Both have a heavy focus on early intervention where people need support to live independently, which aligns well with Supporting People's key aim of preventing homelessness through early intervention, therefore it is anticipated there will be increased demand on services.

In 2014, Flintshire Supporting People Team and the Support Gateway are embedded in the Housing Solutions Service. There is a joined up approach between the Housing Support Workers and the Homeless Officers. This has provided a lean approach to managing the increasing levels of people at risk of homelessness. The Flintshire Supporting People Planning Group is chaired by a Senior Manager from Social Services creating a key link at a strategic level.

2.4 Contributing to the Tackling Poverty Agenda

Supporting People along with Housing and Homelessness was incorporated into the Communities and Tackling Poverty Ministerial portfolio. Welsh Government have highlighted the opportunities for greater links to be forged between Supporting People and the Tackling Poverty programmes; Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.

Flintshire has started work to map how these programmes can be more closely aligned. There is some practical join up between Families First and Supporting People with links between the boards, sharing of commissioning tools and expect that alignment to become closer over the next twelve months through some joint commissioning of projects.

2.5 Closer regional collaboration

The establishment of the North Wales Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC) in 2012 has enabled a strategic overview of developments that affect Supporting People both locally and regionally through improved information-sharing. This presents opportunities for closer regional working between Supporting People Teams across North Wales, which presents an additional opportunity for making efficiency savings.

The North Wales Regional Strategic Plan demonstrates that Flintshire has led and been involved in the most regional collaborations to deliver efficiencies. Flintshire is also exploring further opportunities for regional and sub-regional commissioning where improvements or efficiencies can be delivered. Supporting People Teams across the region are also working closely together to adopt standardised paperwork and processes, which will deliver time and cost savings to both Supporting People Teams and service providers who work across more than one authority.

Regional and Sub Regional commissioned projects across North Wales: (taken from the North Wales Strategic Plan)

- Regional Contract for HIV/AIDS Project across all six local authorities in North Wales – Contract to end April 2016
- Sub Regional Project between Flintshire and Denbighshire -Supported Lodgings, this provides a service to Young People with Support Needs (Supported Housing)
- Sub Regional Project between Flintshire and Denbighshire - Night Stop by Local Solutions that provides a service to Young People (Accommodation Support) and is a joint funded project between Homelessness and Children's Services.
- Sub Regional Project between Wrexham and Flintshire Domestic Abuse Floating Support with Hafan Cymru

- Denbighshire and Flintshire are exploring the possibility of a sub-regional Key Ring Project.
- Denbighshire and Flintshire are exploring the possibility of sub-regional young person supported accommodation.

3. Need and Supply Analysis

Need and supply

A range of data is used to identify need, assess current provision and shape future development of Supporting People services.

Needs mapping forms are completed for everyone who is identified as having housing-related support needs, with the data recorded whether a referral is taken forward or not. A regional form has been in operation since 2012, providing three years of comparable data for all six North Wales authorities. The needs mapping data helps to identify any shifting trends in the demography and specific needs of those requiring housing-related support, which may require services to be remodelled.

Regular quantitative and qualitative monitoring of Supporting People-funded projects is carried out throughout the year, which informs full service reviews that take place every three years. Monitoring data verifies demand for the project and assesses value for money, quality of the service, compliance against the contract, and identifies areas for improvement.

It is noted that all projects are different which makes it challenging to compare like-for-like or introduce benchmark measurements. However, given the year-on-year reductions to the Supporting People Programme Grant allocation, it is necessary to determine which projects are higher priorities to fund.

There continues to be significant demand for Supporting People services within Flintshire at a challenging time of national economic austerity with heavy cuts to public services impacting greatly upon communities and individuals, particularly those most vulnerable. Supporting People services are funded to support over 950 service users at any one time. In 2014/15, 2953 vulnerable individuals and families received housing-related support through Supporting People services in Flintshire. This highlights the hidden problem of homelessness when compared with the number of people accepted as homeless and having a full duty owed to them by the statutory homelessness team within the county – 89 in 2014/15 (illustrated in Graphic 1). It also clearly indicates the value of the work of Supporting People services, who work to prevent vulnerable people reaching a situation where they have to present to statutory homelessness services, and also pick up a number of those who make enquiries and/or are ineligible for statutory homelessness support.

Graphic 1 – Hidden Problem of Homelessness

(each figure represents 10 people)

Number of people eligible for statutory homelessness assistance in 2014/15.....



Number of people supported by Supporting People services in 2014/15.....



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In 2015-16 Flintshire faced a significant reduction to the Supporting People Grant of just over 10%. Reductions were made to service areas/service groups as follows:-

Domestic Abuse – 18% reduction

This was managed by value for money efficiencies. Flintshire had also planned to introduce a new dispersed refuge project in 2015-16 and this pilot was placed on hold.

Learning Disabilities – 17% reduction

This was managed by the removal of funding from Social Services. This funding had previously been identified as no longer strategically relevant to fund and plans had already been put in place with Social Services to remove this element.

Mental Health – No reduction

Substance Misuse – No reduction

Offenders – No reduction

Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment – No reduction

Young People – No reduction

Families – 17% reduction

This was managed by achieving value for money efficiencies within one of the family projects. In addition, a floating support service was decommissioned. This service was one of the transitional projects that had transferred from Welsh Government in 2012 and was deemed no longer strategically relevant.

Older People – 12% reduction

This was managed by the removal of funding from Social Services. This funding had previously been identified as no longer strategically relevant to fund and plans had already been put in place with Social Services to remove this element.

Generic Services – 4% reduction

This reduction was achieved by not renewing the contract for the Vulnerable Adults Support Worker. This project had not been in operation for some time and cases previously supported via this project are now allocated via the central referral gateway.

Support needs reported in 2014-15 through the needs mapping exercise are following a similar trend to 2013-14 (see Graph 2), with rises in the proportion of forms reporting both domestic abuse and mental health related support needs. There has also been a rise in the proportion of forms specifying needs relating to being young and vulnerable. The sharp fall in the proportion of forms reporting homelessness as a need is highly likely to be due to the Welsh Government spend category changing from 'Homelessness' to 'Generic', which lacks clarity, however it is still reported as the 4th highest need. The top four needs of mental health, domestic abuse, vulnerable young person and homelessness/generic have all had their budgets protected or increased in 2015-16.

There are a number of changes to the needs mapping data for 2014-15 against 2013-14, which are believed to be attributable to changes to the needs mapping form and process, including the move from a paper form to referrers completing the form themselves online. The number of questions remaining unanswered has fallen sharply making the data more reliable, which is encouraging and likely due to the process of a referrer moving through the questions online and being less likely to miss a question out.

Service gaps

The North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee have requested a piece of work be undertaken to identify the unmet need and service gaps across the region, and to produce a robust methodology for the region to adopt in future. Currently, only those spend plan categories with no projects are highlighted as potential service gaps and it is felt that met and unmet need should be more robustly checked and evidenced, in order that support is available to those most in need especially given the pressure on budgets.

Service gaps against the spend plan are currently as follows:

- People with Refugee Status – numbers reporting needs relating to refugee status remain very low, therefore, it is anticipated that anyone presenting with these needs can access support from a generic Supporting People project.
- Men experiencing domestic abuse –whilst there are no male specific services within the county, males are supported by the Aster Hope Floating Support Service. Supporting People is committed to continuing with the work already underway with local providers to identify the need/demand for a male specific refuge.
- People with Developmental Disorders – 2 people across the county presented with a lead need which identified a developmental disorder. Currently, service users are supported in other projects and where appropriate, further wrap around support is provided.
- Young People who are Care Leavers – whilst no projects sit within this service user group, the services for young people do support care leavers. There is no evidence that a specific project for care leavers is necessary, however, further work will be undertaken during 2016/17 in order to identify appropriate pathways of support for all young people.
- Single Parent Families with Support Needs – there are no specific projects for single parents. All family projects support both single people and couples.
- Single People (aged 25-65) – Projects in Flintshire for single people are for those aged 18+ and therefore this category shows a 0 value.

4. Consultation Evidence

There are a number of groups and forums locally and regionally which provide avenues for participation and consultation.

4.1 RCC Membership

The North Wales RCC which provides advice on the delivery of the programme across the region includes representation from each Local Authority through the Cabinet Member and Senior Officer responsible for the programme, BCUHB, North Wales Probation and Supporting People Providers.

The RCC Sub Groups look at pilot projects, and to replace existing task and finish groups (work packages) currently underway. The objectives for this group are to explore Pilot Projects that will demonstrate efficient working patterns on less resources (details of each pilot project can be found in the appendices – Appendix One), to monitor pilot projects, research other funding opportunities, direct the work of all the RCC work packages. Commitment to the motion of the Let's Keep on Supporting People statement (in appendices – Appendix Four)

The membership of this group consists of Local Authority Supporting People Lead Officers or appropriate representative, Provider and Landlord Representatives of the RCC, Regional Development Coordinator, and Nominated Officials from previous RCC work packages to update as and when requested.

4.2 North Wales Supporting People Regional Provider Forum

This is an additional communication and consultation method that sits within the regional framework. Given the fundamental changes that North Wales Supporting People Programme has gone through, this forum aims to maximise communication, give Providers the opportunity to receive updates and present their own information and develop a greater awareness and understanding of the programme.

This forum is a provider led forum, Local Authority Supporting People team members are not invited to this forum, this is provider led which the RCC Provider Reps attend.

This forum aims to ensure smaller agencies have an opportunity to participate and that the forum provides networking opportunities for all partners. This group meets quarterly and is arranged by Cymorth Cymru. The forum is open to both members and non-members of Cymorth Cymru.

4.3 Flintshire

4.3.1 Reviews

Flintshire Supporting People value feedback from all stakeholders about the commissioning and delivery of Supporting People contracts. When projects are reviewed every 3 years, feedback is sought from staff, service users and stakeholders by Supporting People through interviews and questionnaires to ensure that projects are delivering the service as required and that they continue to meet the needs of service users effectively. Any significant issues or themes emerging from the feedback will be addressed within the review recommendations, which may include improvements to existing practices or remodelling a project to better meet demand.

4.3.2 Decommissioning

As laid out in the Flintshire Decommissioning Strategy, when a project is considered for decommissioning, Supporting People will seek the views of service users and stakeholders when completing the Decommissioning Report, and consider how any negative impacts can be alleviated.

4.3.3 Homeless & Supporting People Forum

Flintshire also holds an annual Homeless and Supporting People Provider Forum. At this event relevant information about the Supporting People Programme and related areas such as new policies or welfare reforms. Feedback is sought in small workshops to inform the ongoing work of the Supporting People Team and the Housing Solutions Service.

Flintshire Supporting People Planning Group are consulted throughout the development of this Plan and agree any changes to the content. Following the formal consultation period, the Plan will be submitted to the Partnership Scrutiny Committee before the final document is submitted and signed off by Flintshire County Council Cabinet for submission to the North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee in January 2016.

4.4 Service Users

Flintshire has always placed a high value on the feedback and participation of service users. The team continually seeks ways to ensure this involvement is meaningful and makes a difference.

4.4.1 ODEL Involve - Service User Involvement project

During 2015 Flintshire commissioned a Service User Involvement Project to ensure that service users are consulted with at every stage of planning and delivering Supporting People services.

Aims of the project:

To increase and improve the engagement and participation of people at risk of homelessness, who have been homeless, and those currently in receipt of Supporting People services. To include service users at all stages of developing, commissioning and reviewing Supporting People services within Flintshire.

Objectives:

- To involve and inspire those who have been homeless or are receiving housing related support and involve them in activities that allow them to take positive steps in their lives
- Be able to evidence these improvements, both through qualitative reporting and through applying the Supporting People Outcomes Framework
- Increase the influence of service users on how Supporting People services are commissioned and delivered in Flintshire
- Be able to evidence that the involvement and influence facilitated has had a positive influence on how services are delivered / commissioned and this evidence is presented to all stakeholders

Outcomes:

- The service employs a full time Service User Involvement Coordinator and two Service User Involvement Officers each working 8 hours per week.
- 6 volunteers have currently been recruited and trained since June 2015, who assist with reviewing Supporting People projects.
- The service undertakes service user consultation as part of the Supporting People evaluation by obtaining service user views via peer reviewing and peer mentoring. Written reports are completed in regards to feedback from service users who's service is under review. This report is then included within the final evaluation report of each service.
- All staff and volunteers recruited have undertaken 4 days training ran by TPAS Cymru
- The Service User Involvement Officers will sit on Flintshire Supporting People Planning group and attend Regional Collaborative Committee at the request of the Supporting People team.
- The service completes service user consultation in regards to any remodelling proposals.
- The service will establish service user forums to enable discussions around Supporting People planning and developing of services.
- The service offers a free peer mentoring service to service users who have low level support needs.

- The Service User Involvement Officers and Volunteers have developed skills, gained qualifications, and participated in learning activities which will ultimately bring them closer to the labour market by becoming 'job ready'.

4.4.2 Young People Consultation

Part of the work undertaken during 2015 was to ask young people for their views on the support projects. This work went a step further than the typical satisfaction survey and really sought views on the structure, cost, move on options and links with education and employment.

The findings from this work is now informing some clear changes being implemented with providers to improve the provision for young people and outcomes achieved.

A summary of the recommendations being implemented:-

Rent

- Budgeting to be a priority within support plans and revisited at regular intervals
- Supporting People Team to make arrangements with housing benefit for those that enter employment.
- Rent arrears to be addressed earlier
- Much more focus on entering employment and removing the barriers

Size and Structure

- Explore costing for smaller projects as opposed to traditional 'hostel' projects to consider remodelling the existing provision in Flintshire.
- Realign funding between housing benefit and supporting people to provide more 1:1 support and less 'management' of a project.

Move on Options

- Consideration given to expanding shared housing options instead of the existing move on flats. These set unrealistic expectations and move on is slow. Shared housing to be developed as an interim solution whilst permanent housing solutions are explored and secured.

Education and Employment

- Much more targeted support around access to education and employment making engagement mandatory.
- Improve the links with Careers services within projects.

5. Service Development and Efficiencies

The following table includes a summary of the main activity and service planning developments within each service user group.

| Service User Group | Service Development, Decommissioning and Remodeling Proposals |
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| <p>Women Experiencing Domestic Abuse</p> | <p><i>Applicable to both male and female domestic abuse services:</i></p> <p>All domestic abuse provision is currently being reviewed to ensure that projects are delivering value for money and are achieving strong outcomes.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken within the next 12 months to ensure that current provision is relevant. Consideration will be given to remodeling supported housing provision where there are high void levels to more flexible floating support. The remodeling proposals will include proposals to meet existing gaps in provision for males fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Over the next 12 months we will be looking to further develop strategic links with the Community Safety partnership and re-establish a local or sub-regional Domestic Abuse Forum.</p> <p>The Regional Collaborative Committee is currently establishing a Domestic Abuse Task and Finish Group to review current service provision across the region and strengthen links with the All Wales Domestic Abuse Modernisation Group.</p> <p>Gap – There is a gap in provision for safe accommodation for males fleeing domestic abuse. This has been identified as a growing issue in Flintshire but there is no refuge provision for males in North Wales.</p> |
| <p>People with Learning Disabilities</p> | <p>Any funding for services identified as ineligible for Supporting People is subject to a planned withdrawal.</p> <p>Flintshire is working with Denbighshire County Council to review the floating support services delivered in both counties. Proposals for remodeling will aim to ensure nobody is excluded from the projects based on location. A sub regional contract will be proposed if this can achieve efficiencies and deliver the support required.</p> <p>There is the possibility of developing a sub-regional Keyring Floating Support project between Denbighshire and Flintshire during 2016.</p> |
| <p>People with Mental Health Issues</p> | <p>Performance Monitoring information has evidenced a growing demand in this area.</p> |

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| | <p>Hafal Cymru floating support project was commissioned during 2015 and monitoring and review has evidenced significant demand for this service. possible development of existing mental health services depends on funding cuts and whether remodeling of other service user group areas financially allows for additional provision.</p> |
| <p>People with Substance Misuse Issues (Alcohol, Drugs and Volatile Substances)</p> | <p><i>Applicable to both drug and alcohol services and people with criminal offending history:</i></p> <p>During evaluation and ongoing monitoring meetings it has become evident that the current structure of some projects is not as effective as others and remodeling could achieve better value for money and meet needs more effectively. Supporting People Planning Group has agreed a remodeling proposal to make floating support services more flexible in terms of caseloads and remodel supported housing schemes to a floating support model. This enables support providers to support more service users and tailor the support as required. The team will work with service users and providers and aim for the new model to be fully operational in 2017/18.</p> |
| <p>People with Criminal Offending History</p> | <p><i>See notes in service user group above (People with Substance Misuse Issues (Alcohol, Drugs and Volatile Substances))</i></p> <p>Flintshire has floating support provision targeted at those who have a criminal offending history or who are at risk of offending behavior. The current provision delivers value for money and is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Wrexham prison for male offenders will open in 2017 and will have a focus on education, training and resettlement of offenders. Along with legislative changes within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Social Service and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, this will have a significant impact upon the resettlement of offenders within North Wales.</p> <p>Demand for specialist provision for offenders will be monitored over the next 1 - 2 years.</p> |
| <p>People with Refugee Status</p> | <p>The number of people reporting refugee status remains very low in Flintshire. Demand for support from this service user group will continue to be monitored and if required, a sub-regional project may be considered if it is felt that the needs of this group could not be met by existing services.</p> <p>The regional Supporting People Network is leading on work to support the Syrian Refugee Relocation Scheme.</p> |
| <p>People with Physical and /or Sensory Disabilities</p> | <p>Needs mapping data indicates that the number of people presenting with mobility issues has risen within the past 12 months, it is recognized that this is due to the increased number of older people's services completing needs mapping forms. The Flintshire Support Gateway and performance</p> |

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| | <p>monitoring data has not seen a sharp increase in referrals for people with physical health needs. In Flintshire the current service capacity has been found to meet demand.</p> |
| <p>People with Developmental Disorders (i.e. Autism)</p> | <p>The number of people being referred for support with developmental disorders remains very low in Flintshire. This is due to their being sufficient funding within learning disability teams and our complex needs supported housing project to adequately support the current demand.</p> <p>Supporting People will continue to make links with specialist services to promote knowledge of, and access to, existing Supporting People services.</p> |
| <p>People with Chronic Illness (including HIV)</p> | <p>The service review of this regional project has found that service users could have their needs met more appropriately, and more cost effectively, by generic support services rather than by a specialist service. It has been agreed by the RCC for this project to be decommissioned from April 2016. An exit strategy is in place which consists of completing training within generic services in regards to HIV and related conditions to ensure that there are no barriers to people accessing generic floating support services.</p> |
| <p>Young People with Support Needs, Including Care Leavers (16 to 24 years old)</p> | <p>Young people continue to make up a significant proportion of those requiring housing related support. It is expected that demand from this service user group may rise further given changes to welfare benefit entitlements being introduced. Supporting People will work with our partners to reduce the impact on vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Following recent reviews and ongoing monitoring of all young person projects it has become evident that some models of the current young person supported housing projects are more successful at achieving positive outcomes than others.</p> <p>During 2016/2017 it is a priority for Supporting People to work with our partners and providers to complete a re-structure of young people support provision. Supporting People will undertake further consultation to develop a Young Person Pathway with some changes in place for 2017/18.</p> |
| <p>Families with Support Needs (including single parent families)</p> | <p>Families account for a significant proportion of those accessing Supporting People funded services.</p> <p>The supported housing provision provides a suitable alternative option to placing children in B&B accommodation. The contract levels and future strategic modelling will be considered by the Supporting People Planning Group in 2016/17.</p> |
| <p>Single People with Support</p> | <p><i>Please see Generic / Floating Support / Peripatetic (tenancy support services which cover a range</i></p> |

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| Needs (aged 25 and over) | <p><i>of support needs) section</i></p> <p>Following recent reviews and ongoing monitoring of all supported housing projects it has become evident that some models are more successful at achieving positive outcomes than others. This has been completed alongside the young person supported housing consultation as mentioned in the Young Person Supported housing section above.</p> <p>Along with ODEL Involve (service user involvement project) Supporting People have completed a period of consultation with providers and service users to decipher the most effective supported housing models. Recommendations have been compiled and are currently being considered by Planning Group. Key recommendations fit in 4 areas; Rent, Size & Structure, Move on Options, Education & Employment.</p> <p>During 2016/2017 it is a priority for Supporting People to work with our partners and providers to complete a re-structure of the supported housing model based on the key recommendations with some changes in place 2017/2018.</p> |
| People aged over 55 years of age with Support Needs | <p>During the evaluation process it was agreed that the funding provided to Abbeyfields will be withdrawn from April 2016 due to the project being ineligible for Supporting People funding.</p> <p>Any funding for services identified as ineligible for Supporting People continue to be subject to a planned withdrawal.</p> <p>A significant amount of work has been completed during the past 3 years to implement the Aylward Review recommendations to make older people's services tenure neutral. This had led to the Older Persons Community Support Services replacing the old 'Warden' style service. This project now provides tenure neutral support to people with housing related support needs, not just those who live in a Sheltered Housing complex.</p> <p>The Extra Care Services will be reviewed to ensure that the funding supports short term activity that promotes independence and this function can be rolled out in new schemes.</p> <p>A large proportion of Supporting People grant funding is allocated to projects within this service group area. Over the next 12-18 months it is a priority for Supporting People to ensure that all project are fit for purpose, fit the remit of funding, and deliver value for money.</p> |
| Generic / Floating Support / Peripatetic (tenancy support | Generic housing related support remains one of the highest support needs reported by those accessing Supporting People services. |

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| services which cover a range of support needs) | <p>The Support Gateway ensures that referrals are sent to the most appropriate provider, and that services receive an appropriate amount of referrals based on capacity. The Support gateway has enabled complex case meetings to be held with ease, and has enabled services to receive appropriate referrals. It has also helped the Supporting People team monitor demand for service areas and data has fed into evaluation reports.</p> <p>Whilst projects offering specialist knowledge and support are crucial to support vulnerable people with complex support needs, it remains equally important to provide more generic services that can offer flexible holistic support on a number of issues. Over the next 12 months individual project amendments will extend the minimum capacity supported at one time per full time equivalent Support Worker. During monitoring meetings and the collation of Performance Monitoring Information it has become apparent that some projects are supporting a much higher number of service users than their current contract schedules require. The support is effective and this can be replicated across all projects. It is also a priority to ensure that all floating support services are tenure neutral, enabling referrals to be sent to all generic projects across Flintshire.</p> <p>Supporting People will consider regional or sub-regional opportunities for the provision of floating support services and the coordination of the Support Gateway, both of which may improve flexibility, knowledge across county boundaries and consequentially the services provided to vulnerable people.</p> |
| Alarm Services | A significant amount of work has been undertaken during 2014/2015 to review alarm provision and reduce Supporting People funding to monitoring of alarms only, following the agreement that maintenance of alarms is a Housing Benefit eligible charge. |
| Expenditure which does not link to the Spend Plan Categories above | <p>Welsh Government have issued notice that the Supporting People Programme Grant cannot be used to fund the Local Authority's Supporting People team from 2019/2020 and that between 2016 and 2019, funding for the team must reduce by at least 10% year on year.</p> <p>The Supporting People Team have already begun to make savings in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 by restructuring the team where possible when staff have left.</p> |

Spend Plan

The Supporting People Team is committed to making efficiencies through ensuring service providers are delivering their support services as efficiently and effectively as possible and are involved in ongoing discussions around delivering services differently to realise savings. This has included use of volunteers, identifying where a floating support model can be more efficient than supported housing and considering changes to overnight support provision. Providers will be supported to progress these models through 2016/17.

Assessment of priority follows the assessment model from the 2014-16 Commissioning Plan which assesses providers in terms of;

- i. Is the service eligible for Supporting People funding?
- ii. Has the service been subject to value for money assessment?
- iii. Does the service contribute to key strategic priorities of the Supporting People Programme?
- iv. Is there clear evidence of demand for the service?
- v. Could the same outcomes be achieved by delivering services in a different way?
- vi. Are there other services/funding streams in the County that could deliver the outcomes?
- vii. Is there opportunity for partner or regional collaboration?
- viii. What is the service user impact, if the service is ceased or reduced?

The outcomes of the assessment of service providers has enabled the Supporting People Team to identify efficiency savings of £206,500. The efficiencies will be achieved through ceasing services that are not deemed to be strategically relevant to the aims of the Supporting People Programme and maximising alternative funding streams.

Released funding will be used to ensure Flintshire has suitable and safe arrangements for males fleeing domestic abuse; provide support posts to ensure Flintshire can meet the requirements of the new Housing and Social Services legislation and provide support for the changes planned to the young people accommodation and support services. The detail and specification of any spend will be agreed through the Tackling Poverty Programmes.

Within a service area, where efficiencies have been identified, the Supporting People Team has closely appraised the implications for service users and, importantly, they have identified alternative options where service users may access appropriate support to lessen any negative impacts generated by a reduction in service provision.

Service Plan Amendments 2016/17

| <u>Service Area</u> | <u>Efficiency</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Domestic Abuse | No change |
| Families <i>Achieved through a reduction within a family hostel.</i> | 2016/17 £15,000 |
| Substance Misuse | No change |
| Chronic Illness <i>Achieved through decommissioning a regional project for HIV/AIDS.</i> | 2016/17 £14,000 |
| Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment | No change |
| Offenders | No change |
| Young People | No change |
| Mental health | No change |
| Housing Support (Generic) | No change |
| Housing Support (Aged over 55) <i>Achieved through withdrawal of support from Abbeyfield with the agreement of the provider.</i> | 2016/17 £14,500 |
| Community Care <i>A continuation of a planned withdrawal from services deemed ineligible for Supporting People funding.</i> | 2016/17 £163,000 |
| Total | 2016/17 £ £206,500 |



COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday, 10 th February 2016 |
| Report Subject | Forward Work Programme |
| Cabinet Member | Not applicable |
| Report Author | Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator |
| Type of Report | Operational |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee 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.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

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| 1 | That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary. |
| 2 | That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises. |

REPORT DETAILS

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|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME |
| 1.01 | 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 Improvement Plan. |
| 1.02 | <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit? |
| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | None as a result of this report. |
| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | Publication of this report constitutes consultation. |
| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | None as a result of this report. |
| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme |
| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | <p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702305</p> <p>E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan. |

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CURRENT FWP

| Date of meeting | Subject | Purpose of Report | Scrutiny Focus | Report Author | Submission Deadline |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 March 2016 | Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP) | To seek Members support on the first phase Housing schemes, tenure and mix size and funding arrangements. | Consultation | Service Manager, Housing Programmes | 23 February 2016 |
| | Housing (Wales) Act 2014 – Homelessness | To review the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and how the Council undertakes its new homelessness prevention statutory duty | Assurance/Monitoring | Service Manager Customer Support | |
| | Regional Economy | To update on work being undertaken to strengthen the regional economy. | Assurance/Monitoring | Service Manager, Enterprise, and Regeneration Programmes | |
| 16 March 2016 | Quarter 3 - Improvement Plan Monitoring Report | To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring. | Assurance/Monitoring | Community & Enterprise Facilitator | 9 March 2016 |
| | The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) – Verification in achieving and maintaining the Standard: next Steps | To present the development of a Strategy and approach to verifying achievement of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards | Consultation | Senior Manager, Council Housing Services | |

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| | Council Housing Service - Housing Management Restructure | To seek Committee support and recommend to Cabinet the proposed Housing Management staffing structure | Consultation | Senior Manager, Council Housing Services | |
| | Council Housing Programme Service - Housing Programmes Restructure | To seek Committee support and recommend to Cabinet the proposed Housing Programmes staffing structure | Consultation | Service Manager, Housing Programmes | |
| 27 April, 2016 | NEW Homes | To review the performance of NEW Homes | Assurance/Monitoring | Service Manager, Housing Programmes | 20 April 2016 |
| | Communities First | To update Members on areas applicable for Communities First funding, the most deprived areas of Flintshire and information on the Communities 4 Work Programme. | Assurance/Monitoring | Service Manager, Enterprise, and Regeneration Programmes | |
| | Review of the Fair Debt Policy | To review the impact of the Fair Debt Policy previously approved by Cabinet. | Assurance/Monitoring | Income Manager | |
| 8 June, 2016 | Q4 – Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Reports | To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring. | Assurance/Monitoring | Community & Enterprise Facilitator | 1 June 2016 |

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| | <p>Purchase of ex council stock</p> <p>Welfare Reform – Including Universal Credit</p> <p>Use of Commuted Sums</p> | <p>To consider proposals and criteria for the repurchase of ex council property</p> <p>To update Members on the impact and risks of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.</p> <p>To enable the Committee to review the use of Commuted Sums</p> | <p>Consultation</p> <p>Assurance/Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance/Monitoring</p> | <p>Service Manager, Housing Programmes</p> <p>Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)</p> <p>Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)</p> | |
| 13 July, 2016 | Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP) | To review progress on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP) | Assurance/Monitoring | Service Manager, Housing Programmes | 6 July 2016 |

Items to be scheduled

- Update on the suggestion for WHQS improvements to be delayed for tenants with long-term rent arrears.
- Service Charges for garden service – December 2016

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 | HRA Business Plan & WHQS | To update Members on progress made in meeting the WHQS and HRA business plan budget efficiencies | 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 | Delivery of the Regeneration Programmes | To seek Member support in the delivery of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme, Communities First programme and how European funding is spent | Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) |
| | HRA Efficiencies | To enable the Committee to monitor progress in meeting proposed HRA Efficiencies. | Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) |
| | HRA Subsidy Risk Register | To enable the Committee to monitor ongoing risks following the introduction of self-financing for the HRA. | Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) |