

# Public Document Pack

**Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr**  
Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

CS/NG

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, Paul Cunningham,  
Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin,  
Ian Dunbar, Jim Falshaw, George Hardcastle,  
Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd,  
Vicky Perfect, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

26 May 2015

Maureen Potter 01352 702322  
maureen.potter@flintshire.gov.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

A meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **DELYN COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, MOLD CH7 6NA** on **MONDAY, 1ST JUNE, 2015** at **10.00 AM** to consider the following items.

Yours faithfully

Democracy & Governance Manager

## **A G E N D A**

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**
- 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 8)  
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2015 (copy enclosed).
- 4 **WORK OF GRWP CYNEFIN HOUSING ASSOCIATION (PRESENTATION)**  
(Pages 9 - 10)  
To receive a presentation by Mr. Walis George from Group Cynefin Housing Association.

- 5 **UPDATE ON NORTH EAST WALES HOMES & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** (Pages 11 - 28)  
Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
  
- 6 **ALLOCATION OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION** (Pages 29 - 34)  
Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
  
- 7 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE)** (Pages 35 - 40)  
Report of Housing and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator

## **HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **24 APRIL 2015**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at The Old Court House, Church Street, Flint on Friday, 24 April 2015

### **PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)**

Councillors: Dave Cox, Paul Cunningham, Rosetta Dolphin, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

### **SUBSTITUTION:**

Councillor Nancy Matthews for Amanda Bragg

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor Alex Aldridge was in attendance as Local Member

### **APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Jim Falshaw and Hilary Isherwood

### **CONTRIBUTORS:**

Cabinet Member for Housing, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise),  
Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager

For minute number 4 – Work of Pennaf Housing Association

Mr. Graham Worthington, Mr. Deiniol Evans, Mr. Andy Roberts and Mr. Paul Moore

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

## **71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **72. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

### **RESOLVED:**

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

## **73. WORK OF PENNAF HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

The Chairman introduced Mr. Graham Worthington and his colleagues, Mr. Evans, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Moore to the Committee.

Mr. Worthington and Mr. Evans jointly provided a detailed presentation to the Committee about the work of Pennaf Housing Association, the key features of which were:-

- Core Principles
- Governance Structure
- Areas of Operation
- Housing Provision
- General Needs
- Care & Support
- Extra Care
- Community Activities
- Development Schemes on Site
- Yowley Road, Ewloe
- Aston Mead, Queensferry
- Flint Extra Care
- Grow Your Own
- Social Enterprise
- 2015/20 Proposals
- Statutory Partners

On the issue of Extra Care facilities, Councillor Ray Hughes asked if consideration had been given to building extra care homes in rural areas. Mr. Worthington responded that a rural model had been considered but there would be a need to determine whether such a proposal was financially viable and sustainable. Mr. Evans gave an example of a joint venture that had been developed in Llanrwst for 40 units with a doctor's surgery attached.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke of the flats for over 50s in her ward, which she felt were very successful, and asked if there were any plans to develop similar properties to allow the older generation to move out of their larger homes to allow families to move into them. Mr. Worthington agreed that there was a need and said that consideration would be given to what could be undertaken based on demands in areas.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Worthington and Mr. Evans for their presentation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be received.

**74. FLINTSHIRE'S STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)**

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) introduced a report to provide an update and an opportunity to influence Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

She detailed the background to the report and commented on the work that had been undertaken as part of the SHARP project, explaining that clearance of the maisonettes sites in Flint was nearing completion. The four bidders who had been invited to take part in the tender process were detailed in the report and final evaluation of the bids would need to be undertaken to allow for the contract to be awarded during May 2015, after Cabinet approval had been obtained. It was anticipated that work on site would start in late 2015 or early 2016 and work had commenced with colleagues in Planning and other areas to ensure that the Council was as prepared as possible. The Commissioning Objectives were detailed in appendix 1 and paragraph 2.03 and included that the quality of the properties would be of a high quality and design. The Chief Officer explained that an indicative list of development sites had been provided to Bidders and the sites that had been approved by Cabinet in September 2014 were detailed in the report.

A Task and Finish Group had been established which included Members, staff representatives and tenants to look at the scheme in details and it had agreed that some of the principles of lifetime homes would be adopted. The Chief Officer explained that this would include designing properties to minimise future costs and she commented on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme. Appendix 3 detailed the Flintshire Housing Standard which included the provision of adequate built in storage in each of the properties. A list of the sites which had already been approved and proposed additional sites were reported in appendix 2 as well as sites which required further feasibility work. The Chief Officer explained that one area where work had not been fully completed was the garage review. She reminded Members that of the 500 homes that were proposed over the five year period, 200 would be Council properties and 300 would be affordable homes.

The Chairman welcomed the exciting work that was being undertaken. In response to a comment from the Chairman, the Chief Officer said that Flintshire's procurement model had been shared at a Wales-wide Housing Group meeting; in this area Flintshire was more advanced than other Councils.

In referring to the number of sites arising from the review of the Housing Revenue Account garage sites, Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke of the importance of space both inside and outside of properties. She sought clarification on the anticipated size of a one bed two person flat and in response, the Chief Officer explained that the sizes shown would be a minimum and would comply with Welsh Government design quality standards. She agreed to send further information to the Committee about anticipated sizes for properties. The concerns of Members would be noted and considered as schemes were developed and finalised.

Councillor Ray Hughes commented on one bedroom bungalows that had been built in the past and suggested that these were no longer appropriate. In response, the Chief Officer explained that some bungalows would be built as part of the proposals but reminded Members that they were

expensive compared to building houses and apartments. The Council currently had a large number of bungalows and extensive amendments to them were having to be undertaken to achieve the WHQS. It was possible that a scheme would need to consist of apartments and bungalows to ensure that it was sustainable and viable but the Chief Officer reminded Members that it may not be possible to provide two bedroomed bungalows.

The Chief Officer introduced Rhys Davies and explained that he would provide a 3d model of Flint to show how the town would look if all of the regeneration proposals were developed.

In response to a question from Councillor Gareth Roberts, the Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager explained that following consultation, it was proposed that solar panels would be placed on the roof of the tower blocks rather than on the South side of the buildings. The Chief Officer confirmed that the houses would have garden areas.

The Local Member, Councillor Alex Aldridge, welcomed the work that had been undertaken to regenerate Flint. He felt that what was proposed would be a legacy for the future and he gave significant praise for the design which included off street parking. He commented on the work that was to be undertaken on the high rise flats and said that all Members should be proud of the new Council homes and the Extra Care facility that were to be provided in Flint. He also indicated that he had spoken to the Chief Executive about the possibility of putting the proposals for Flint up for a national award to highlight what could be achieved by the use of public and private funding. He added that the most important aspect was that the work, particularly the emptying of the maisonettes, had been achieved by ensuring the tenants were kept well informed. The Cabinet Member for Housing added that the scheme was two years ahead of schedule.

Councillor Paul Cunningham concurred with the comments of Councillor Aldridge and praised the concept of the regeneration of Flint and thanked Pennaf for their work. Councillor David Cox welcomed the proposals for the church.

The Chief Officer reminded Members that following the meeting, they would be able to undertake a walkabout of the town to view the regeneration area and see the work that was due to happen.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposed Flintshire House Standard Design Principles and Standards be agreed; and
- (b) That the indicative sites identified for inclusion within the SHARP for further investigation and feasibility investigation work be agreed.

**75. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

The Facilitator advised that the Update on Tenant Involvement which had been due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 20 May 2015 would now be submitted to the 8 July 2015 meeting. It had previously been agreed that the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be invited to attend the 20 May 2015 meeting for the Welfare Reform Update. However, if the new structure of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees was agreed at the Annual Meeting, then Welfare Reform would be within the remit of this Committee and therefore there would be no need to invite the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Nancy Matthews praised the work that had been undertaken since she had previously been on the Committee. Councillor George Hardcastle asked the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) to thank the Housing Team for their hard work on behalf of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

**76. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am)

.....  
**Chairman**

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY**  
**DATE:** **1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2015**  
**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER, COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE**  
**SUBJECT:** **NORTH EAST WALES HOMES - UPDATE**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To update the committee on North East Wales Homes (NEW Homes) first full year of operation and progress made against the Business Plan.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 North East Wales Homes started trading on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014. The company has the following agreed mission objectives:

- To increase the range of housing options for the “squeezed middle” housing market.
- To build a portfolio of affordable properties to rent in Flintshire.
- To provide a competitive offer to landlords to encourage growth of the private rented sector.
- To use the income derived from our assets to help subsidise the affordable offer to tenants.
- To build an asset base to enable a long term vision of building future affordable homes.
- To stay true to our commitment to increase access to affordable housing.
- To provide a professional service with financial stability.

2.02 The strategic and operational activities undertaken by NEW Homes is governed by a Board of eight Directors consisting of 5 Elected Members, 1 council officer and 2 independent members who have experience in the housing field. The role of the Board to date has been to oversee operational and financial development against the three year business plan, oversee the development of all policies and procedures, set the marketing and promotion strategy and develop a longer term growth strategy to fulfil the mission as laid out in the business plan.

2.03 NEW Homes does not employ its own staff so council staff have worked to set up and deliver the operational functions including the

property management, repairs, marketing and financial and legal functions. The council recharges the company for this staff time.

**3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**  
**OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

3.01 The most recent operational update is attached at Appendix 1. This shows the progress of the three main portfolio areas against the projections in the Business Plan

**3.02 New-Build Properties secured through Section 106 Agreement**

The NEW Homes Business plan projected 19 new build properties in 2014/15 from developers meeting their affordable housing provision obligations through Section 106 Agreements. These units are transferred into the company as unencumbered assets to be let as affordable housing and form a profitable element of the company's stock portfolio. Appendix 1 shows the company has taken ownership and is currently managing 15 of these properties.

The table below describes the pipeline of future agreed properties.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Housetype</b>	<b>Original Projected Transfer Date</b>	<b>Revised Projected Transfer Date</b>
St Mary's Drive, Northop Hall	Anwyl	4 x 3 Bed Houses	June 2015	June 2015
St Mary's Drive, Northop Hall	Anwyl	3 x 2 Bed Houses	February 2016	February 2016
Overleigh Drive, Hawarden	Redrow	1 x 2 Bed House	July 2015	December 2015
Overleigh Drive, Hawarden	Redrow	3 x 3 Bed Houses	July 2015	December 2015
High Street, Saltney	Edwards Homes	4 x 2 Bed Houses	March 2016	March 2016
Cymau Lane, Abermorddu	Anwyl	3 X 2 Bed Houses	N/A	TBC

3.03 There is a tendency for developers to delay the affordable housing provision until the last part of the scheme. This is understandable to

some extent, as this enables the developer to generate the necessary funds to subsidise the affordable housing provision.

- 3.04 However, this delay creates difficulties for NEW Homes to develop meaningful business planning projections, and limits the company's capacity to grow and develop new housing opportunities.
- 3.05 Equally, it has proved difficult for NEW Homes to influence both the siting, floor dimensions and specification of properties initially secured through Section 106 Agreements. Poor siting of properties from a NEW Homes perspective can affect both the attractiveness of the scheme to tenants owing to their often peripheral location, and also its ability to borrow against these assets if sited on easements or similar site issues.
- 3.06 Some developers have been more receptive to adopt some of the specification standards requested by NEW Homes recently, despite no obligation for them to do so as the Section 106 Agreement has already been agreed with the Council. NEW Homes will continue to adopt a proactive approach with all developers with approved schemes already in place.

### **3.07 Management Offer**

- 3.08 NEW Homes has also launched a landlord management offer. The Business Plan projected that the company would be managing 26 units by the end of 2014/15. The company has signed up nine properties to date. There has been little marketing early on and staff time has been spent on set up so it is expected these numbers will grow in the next six months.

### **3.09 Over 55 Lease Scheme**

- 3.10 The Over 55 Lease Scheme is the third portfolio area which enables an elderly home owner to lease their property to NEW Homes and access more suitable council accommodation. The development of this package has developed slowly due to some legal complexities relating to the allocation of Council properties. These are now resolved and there is an expectancy that home owners will want to take advantage of this opportunity.

### **3.11 NEW Homes Future Growth Strategy**

- 3.12 The Board of NEW Homes held an Away Day on 30 January 2015 which established a number of new priorities in addition to those already assumed in the Business Plan. These included the development of a robust growth strategy through the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) and through direct private borrowing.

- 3.13 This has also included reviewing its existing management offer. Analysis of the income and costs related to managing NEW Homes own new-build stock to that of managing stock for other landlords has been undertaken. As you would expect managing unencumbered assets is highly profitable compared to earning a management fee for managing stock owned by a landlord.

### **3.14 Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)**

- 3.15 The number of affordable homes managed by NEW Homes will continue to grow in future years through Flintshire's Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP). A projected total of 193 units will be under NEW Homes management between January 2016 - December 2019.

- 3.16 Running alongside the procurement has been the work of the Flintshire House Standard Task and Finish Group. The Group consists of Tenants, Elected Members and officers and is facilitated by external expertise. The group has been developing a specification for a 'Flintshire Housing Standard'. This standard will inform the design and specification of the proposed new Council, affordable rent and private, for sale housing.

- 3.17 The Housing Standard will form a benchmark to ensure consistent, good quality of internal layout, and fixtures and fittings high standards of energy efficiency and external appearance in keeping with local circumstance, low maintenance product specifications, adequate parking and a public realm designed to promote cohesive and inclusive communities. Bidders have been consulted on the feasibility of the housing Standard during the tender process and their comments have been taken into account by the Task and Finish Group.

### **3.18 Private Borrowing**

- 3.19 The review of the Business Plan is also exploring the opportunities available for NEW Homes to borrow. This could be from the private market directly – either through borrowing secured against its own housing stock or through unsecured borrowing, with the Council potentially acting as a guarantor, or the council could borrow and or lend to NEW Homes creating a return for the council and providing NEW Homes with the capacity to grow and meet local need.

- 3.20 To ensure that the new and existing priorities for the company are sustainable financial and wider resourcing implications will be modelled and properly presented for the Council and NEW Homes Board to review and approve.

### **3.21 New Products**

3.22 Focus is also being given upon developing new products and services to both potential future landlords and tenants alike. These include the development of different management packages, tenant selection and property services for private landlords.

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Community and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and give their views on;

- Progress made by NEW Homes to date against Business Plan projections;
- NEW Homes future Growth Strategy projections and proposals.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 NEW Homes generated a surplus of £19K during 2014/15.

### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None directly arising from this report.

### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None directly arising from this report.

### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 NEW Homes aims to assist the “squeezed middle” access good quality, affordable housing. This section of society often cannot access Council housing waiting list for accommodation as their income levels are too high, but are unable to access the private accommodation due to high mortgage costs.

8.02 By providing a broad range of housing products and services, NEW Homes aims to improve housing conditions for all sectors of the community – particularly vulnerable and traditionally disadvantaged groups.

### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None arising directly from the report.

### **10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None as a result of this report.

## **11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None as a result of this report.

## **12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 - NEW Homes Financial and Operational Update

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

As referred to in the report.

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# Financial & Operational Update

May 2015

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At the end of March 2015, North East Wales Homes (NEW Homes) is projecting a profit before tax of £19,575 compared to the Business Plan profit before tax of £88,789, creating an adverse variance of £69,214.

The variance can be explained as follows:

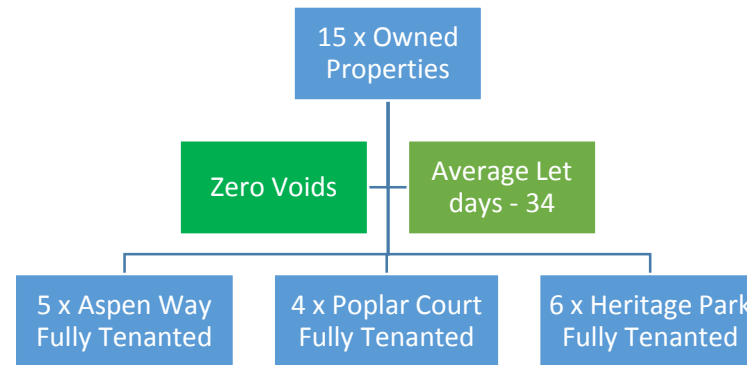
Gifted units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Business Plan £112,920</li><li>•Actual £55,374</li><li>•Variance (£57,546)</li></ul>
Managed Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Business Plan £32,022</li><li>•Actual £4,074</li><li>•Variance (£27,948)</li></ul>
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Business Plan £8,775</li><li>•Actual £1,935</li><li>•Variance (£6,840)</li></ul>

The yearend financials have now been submitted to the external accountant, Sage & Co Business Advisors in St Asaph, for review and audit on the management of client monies. As soon as the report has been completed we will distribute.



## Gifted Properties

The Business Plan projected 19 gifted units for the full 12 months. Transfer of Heritage Park and Poplar Court took place on June 24th creating a maximum charging period of 9 months, transfer of Aspen Way took place on October 15<sup>th</sup> creating a maximum charging period of 5 months. The delays were due to Welsh Government transferring ownership from Flintshire County Council to NEW Homes, and have contributed an adverse variance of £57,546.



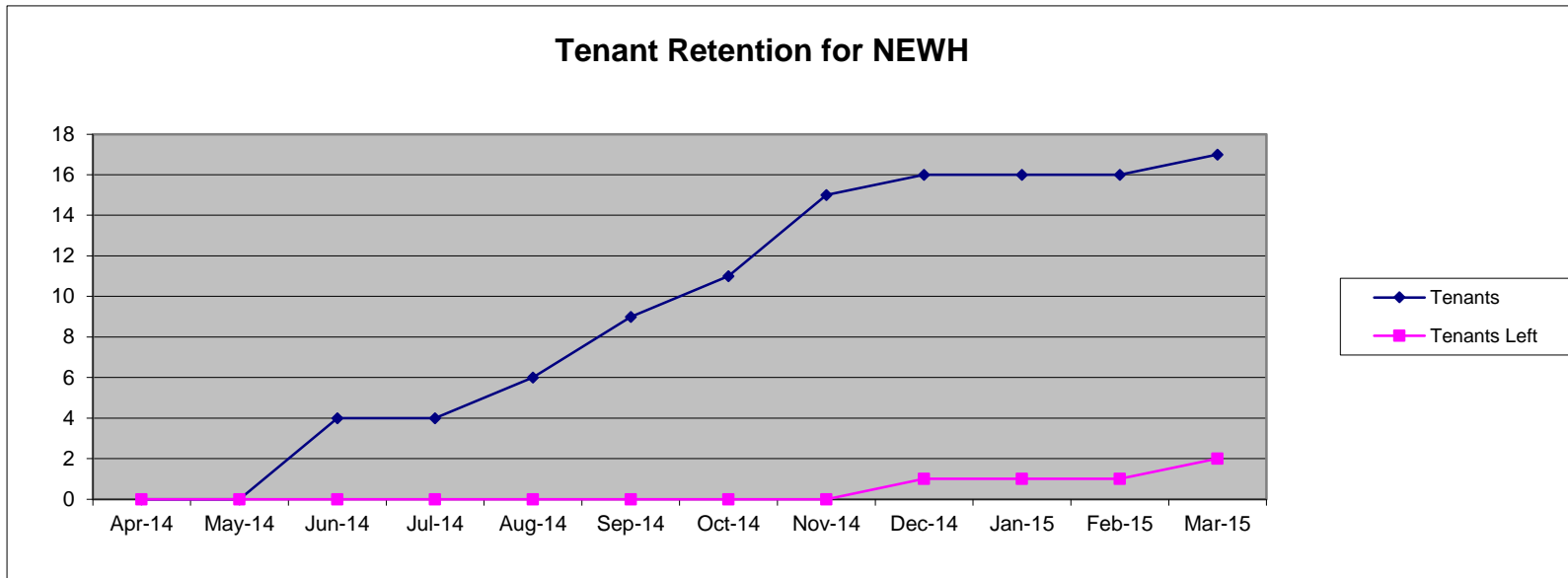
Average let days are at 34 days due to the handover from FCC to NEW Homes timescale. We have now changed the process and will be letting direct through NEW Homes therefore reducing let times for future developments.

## ARREARS

We currently have 1 former tenancy in arrears, this is due to the tenants circumstances changing and therefore not being able to afford the property any longer. A payment plan has been agreed with them and we are awaiting the first instalment.

Income	£55,374
Arrears	£299
%	0.54%

NEW Homes Tenant Retention rates are very positive ...



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These numbers then convert to a % conversion rate as follows ...

Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	94%	94%	88%

One tenant has ended their tenancy due to a relationship breakdown and they found they could no longer afford the rent at the property. Since then we have had another tenant end their tenancy as they are now in a position to purchase their own home. We feel that this is a positive outcome as this is the purpose of intermediate rent.

We are in the process of creating a tenancy feedback form based on the tenants journey to date, we will be in a position to start collating this information for next board. Based on the feedback already received regarding the parking bays and lighting, we have now marked up the parking spaces for each property at Heritage Park and Poplar Court. Housing Maintenance are still looking into the lack of external lighting at Heritage Court, this may require planning, we are awaiting the options and costs.

## New Developments

During 2015/16 we are expecting the following properties to be transferred in to our stock. Dates are still to be finalised so that we can start to market and allocate to persons on the waiting list.



St Marys Drive, Northop Hall

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- 2 x 3 bed properties - expected in June 2015
- 3 x 2 bed properties



High Street, Saltney

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- 4 x 2 bed properties - expected Spring 2016



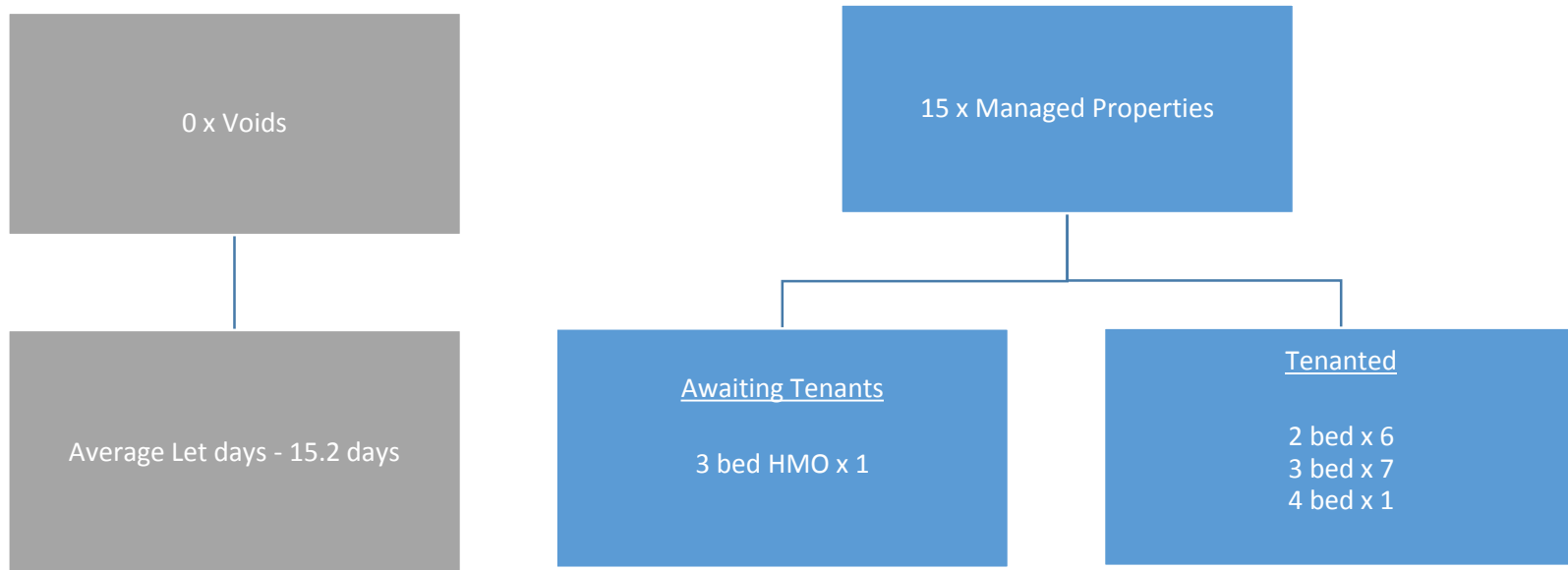
Overleigh Drive, Hawarden

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- 1 x 2 bed properties - expected in December 2015
- 3 x 3 bed properties - expected in December 2015

### Managed Properties – Signed up

The Business Plan projected 26 properties for the full 12 months. We currently have 15 properties signed up, of which 14 are tenanted. The remaining 1 is the HMO in Buckley which is currently being viewed by prospective tenants. We are hoping to have this fully occupied by early May 2015.



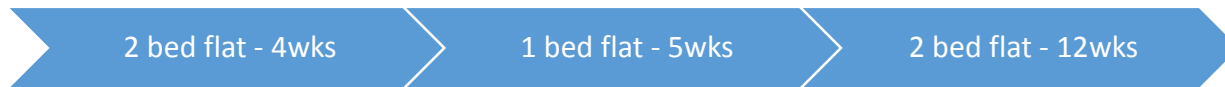
Average let days are at 15.2 days, this is due to some properties taking longer than anticipated, by NEW Homes staff and the landlords, for repair works to be completed at the properties.

## Managed Properties – Pipeline

Pipeline	
10 Houses into Homes Mix of 1-2 bed	Houses 1 x 2 bed 1 x 3 bed

### Houses into Homes

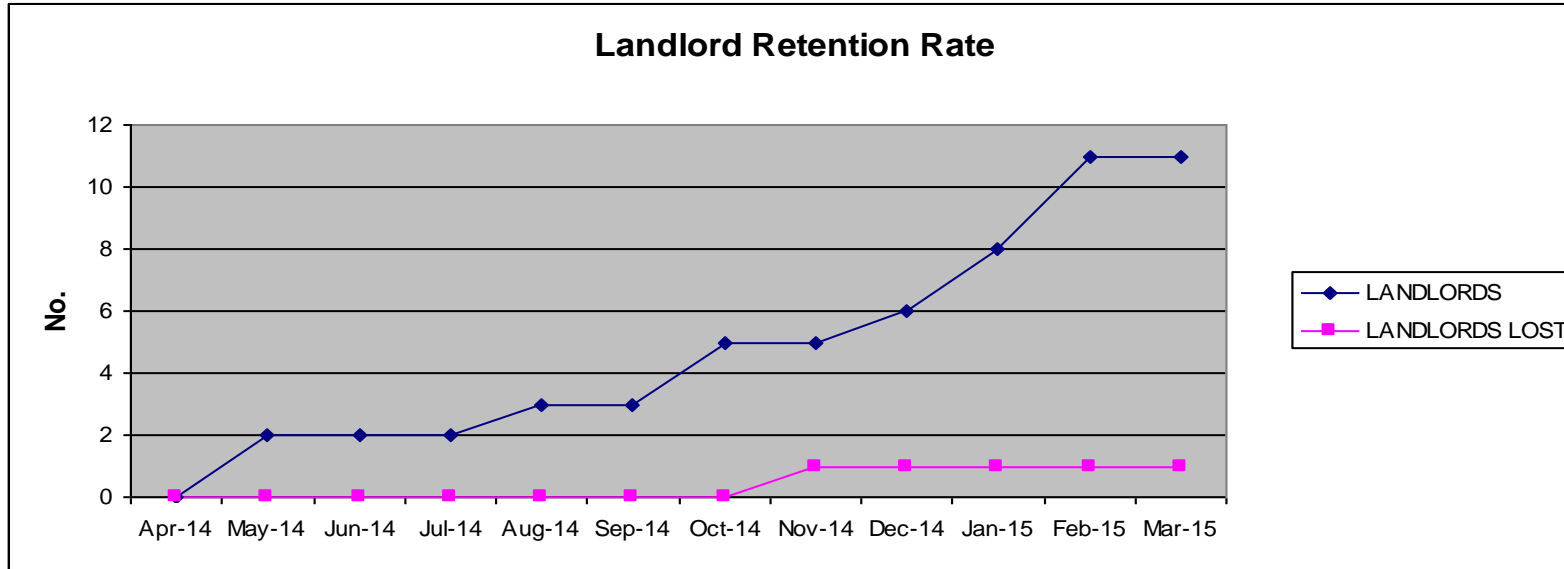
Houses into Homes units are situated above the shops in Deeside and will be a mix of 1 and 2 bed flats. We have been advised that there are 3 properties that are near completion and will be ready to tenant shortly.



### General Lets

We are hoping to convert the 2 and 3 bed houses into business in the next couple of months once the landlords have reviewed and signed the paperwork.

Landlord Retention rates are very positive ...



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These numbers then convert to a % conversion rate as follows ...

Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	83%	88%	91%	91%

The reason for the reduction of 1 landlord was due to him wanting us to let his property within a specific timescale, this could not be met as the criteria for tenanting the property changed within that time frame from the original agreement.

### Over 55's Choice

The Over 55's choice is generating interest from those individuals who wish to downsize and access the councils designated older persons properties. A lease agreement has been drawn up and we now have 1 person assigned to the scheme.

We also have met with further 4 home owners who have made enquiries for this service. They are currently reviewing the terms and we await further instructions.



The Business Plan projected 10 units for the full 12 months, however due to delays with the lease agreement and the amount of units that would be suitable for these home owners within Flintshire County Council we revised the projection to zero units for this financial year and now have 1 person signed up and the property to be tenanted in March.

These delays have contributed an adverse variance of £6,600 over the full 12 months.

GROWTH

- SHARP - Contract procurement underway, expect to award developer in June 2015  
Portfolio Development
- Managed units - Target not met. Further marketing required if product is to continue
- Gifted Units - Slow handover and letting times, target not met
- Over 55's - Target not met due to delays on lease agreement

PEOPLE

- Time - Staff time falls within SLA projections
- Training - Courses are being reviewed and the HHSRS is to be booked

CUSTOMER

- Customer Satisfaction - developing a landlord and tenant satisfaction monitoring process
- Complaints - one complaint dealt with within timescales successfully

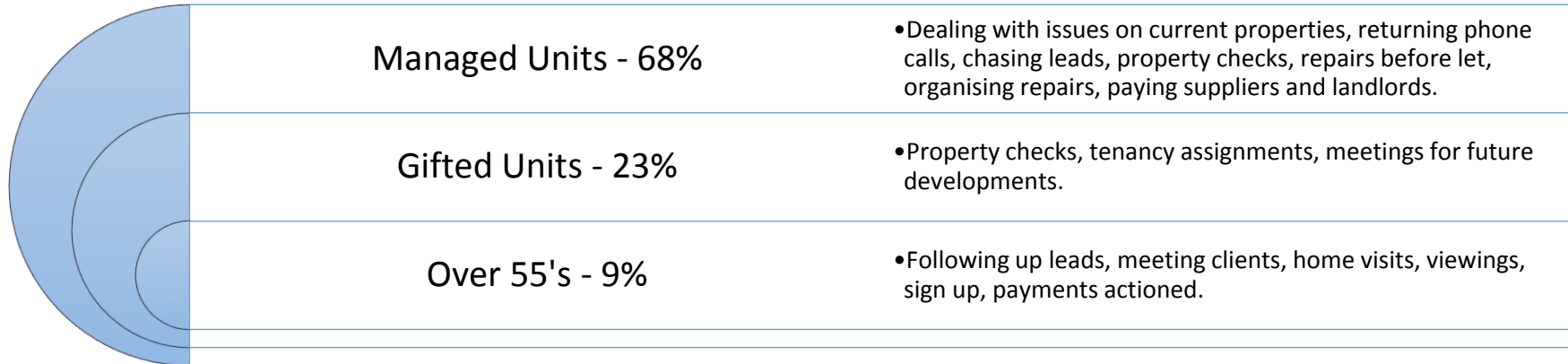
RESOURCES

- Performance - met targets for lettings, viewings and service quality but below for gifted lettings
- Insurance - In place
- Policies - Portfolio developed - further work as business grows



## STAFF TIME

The current split of time spent in each area of the business is as follows ...



## STAFF TRAINING

Staff have recently undergone some internal training on performance management. This has been a very effective course and very well put together.

We are in the process of booking on to a course to complete the HHSRS (Housing Health & Safety Rating System) course which is 2 days training. This course highlights any areas of concern with any properties we are viewing that would require attention before being let.

## ADVERTISING

Van advertising – we are in talks with Barbara Milne of Flintshire County Council to come up with an advert for the side of the Council stock. Two wording options have been supplied and we are awaiting draft designs and a costing. As soon as this become available we will email out for board agreement.

Website – The website template is now ready for content inclusion. This needs to be prepared and passed to the IT team when ready.

Pop ups – We would like to design new pop up displays to draw business in and place at the planning entrance in County Hall. This has been put on hold until any changes to the current offer/packages is decided on, at which point we can move it forward.

Facebook – Continued and increased use of the NEW Homes Facebook page.

Twitter – Continued and increased use of the NEW Homes Twitter account.

Inside Flintshire magazine – An advert is currently being designed with Barbara Milne and will be in the next issue of 'Inside Flintshire Magazine'. The magazine is a free magazine which has a monthly edition and is delivered to approximately 10,000 people a month in the County - see handout.

Rightmove – Costs have been obtained from Rightmove to advertise our properties on their website. Charges vary from £395+VAT per month to £620+VAT per month.

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2015**

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

**SUBJECT:** **ALLOCATION OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 This discussion paper provides information on the issues affecting the level of demand for some sheltered housing properties in the county and proposes the next phase to explore solutions.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 There are 2613 units of sheltered accommodation in the county. The provision consists of a range of accommodation types as follows:-

- 1360 bungalows
- 63 bedsits
- 642 flats
- 408 mini group bungalows
- 140 mini group flats

2.02 The demand for these properties varies across schemes. This variance in demand can be a result of the properties being unsuitable either by the physical fabric of the building, size or the location. There have also been changes to the older persons service offer in Flintshire with the creation of flexible, tenure neutral floating support, alternative models and changing expectations of older people.

2.03 Currently, some properties are let to applicants who do not fit the age criteria for sheltered housing. This paper provides information on some of the factors affecting demand and proposes the next phase of work needed to ensure the council makes best use of stock by meeting housing need and maximising rental income.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 Older People Housing Need

Flintshire has an ageing population, a report by Betsi Cadwalder in 2013 stated that 37% of the Flintshire population are aged over 50. The Flintshire Housing Strategy states that numbers of people aged over 65 are set to rise by 40% over the next 15 years. The strategy projects that a large proportion of people over 60 will be homeowners. There is evidence of a growing number of older people and the council needs to be planning to meet their accommodation needs appropriately.

### 3.02 Accommodation Support

Until 2011, older people in need of accommodation and support applied for sheltered housing in order to benefit from the warden service provided to these properties. The implementation of the Sheltered Housing Improvement Project has widened the availability of the support service for older people to a tenure neutral service. Support officers who recently visited older applicants to discuss the changes to the housing register reported that a few applicants were happy to remain in their current accommodation once they were informed they could receive the support service there. This flexibility in support improves the service offered to older people who do not need to move to receive support. However, this may affect the level of demand for sheltered accommodation. The CBASS service supports 115 people outside of sheltered accommodation and receives approximately 12 new referrals a month to support older people in their own home.

### 3.03 Range of Options

The last five years has seen a change in the range of accommodation and care/support options for older people. There are 111 units of Extra Care accommodation that have been developed since 2009. There are a further 143 units planned for 2017/18. This provision of high quality accommodation provides another option for older people and in particular those with care needs. These developments are an asset to the county and increase options for older people. However, it is important for the council to plan for the effect this may have on the demand for existing sheltered accommodation.

### 3.04 Household Expectations

As a housing provider, the council needs to be aware of customer expectations. Some of the sheltered housing provision which was popular no longer meets customer expectations. Older people in the county and in particular those downsizing are not keen to accept a bedsit, often there are no applicants on the list to offer the property to or high refusal rates are experienced. Some of these schemes have become hard to allocate even though they have been refurbished and are otherwise suitable accommodation. Some of the existing provision is not suitable for older people due to the location, immediate

surrounding area, support networks or access issues.

### 3.05 Demand for Smaller Units

Changes to legislation and welfare reforms are increasing the demand for smaller accommodation units for the under-50 age group. The council requires small units for those single households and couples affected by the Spare Room Subsidy. This need will increase with the introduction of further welfare reforms limiting housing benefit for people aged under-25. Whereas some properties are unpopular or unsuitable for older applicants, they can provide an affordable, suitable housing solution for younger single households. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 extends the duties of the council to prevent and alleviate homelessness for all those who approach in housing need. Small units are essential to accommodate those who cannot afford their current accommodation. There are some areas in Flintshire where the only smaller units are sheltered stock and therefore no accommodation for other groups. The housing register is split by age category as follows:-

Age over 60	27%
Age 50-59.	13%
Age 30-49	37%
Age under 30	23%

### 3.06 Accessible Units

There are 40 applicants on the specialist housing register with high level complex needs requiring a bespoke solution. In addition, there are applicants on the general register with medical conditions, disabilities or other housing needs where sheltered provision may be the most appropriate or only suitable accommodation option. Over the past year, 25% of sheltered allocations were let to an applicant who does not fit the age criteria for sheltered housing. This issue needs addressing and a strategic approach taken as opposed to the ad hoc basis by which allocations are currently agreed.

### 3.07 Sheltered Stock Assessment

This paper will not breakdown the individual cases but summarise the general issues that need to be reviewed in more detail on an individual basis taking into consideration the needs of the community and the current scheme profile. The main issues that lead to low demand sheltered stock are:-

- The physical fabric of the building - steep stairs, no lift, steep access.
- Location – based on steep hills or rural locations where access to services is limited and can lead to social isolation for older people

- Changing family dynamics – older parents who still have dependent children.
- Property size and type - bedsits

These problems are leading to some properties being allocated to applicants with very low housing need and in some cases has created long term void properties. The rent loss through void sheltered properties in 2014/15 was 0.71% and this has been a trend over the last three years, this compares to 1.46% void rental loss across the total housing stock. This demonstrates over half of the void rent loss is attributable to sheltered housing void levels.

### 3.08 Next Phase of Work Required

Addressing the issues created by low demand sheltered housing and planning for the future accommodation needs of an ageing population, emerging demands for single households and those with disabilities requires a strategic approach. It is proposed that a Working Group carries out a full review and assessment of the sheltered housing stock in consultation with local Elected Members and Cabinet Members based on all the necessary information including:

- Profile of presenting need in that area
- Void rent loss and levels
- % of refusals and offers
- Occupancy levels
- Tenant profile information
- Scheme repair costs

The group would then make recommendations for consideration informed by local knowledge to make best use of the properties to best meet housing need.

Possible solutions that could be considered as part of the review of sheltered schemes may include:-

- Reducing age eligibility
- Conversion of scheme to meet needs
- Change of use (re-designation)
- Pro-active marketing
- Exploring partnerships with Health and Social Care

## 4.00 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Committee notes the issues raised in this paper around the demand for some sheltered properties.

4.02 Committee supports the proposal for the next phase of work to address these issues.

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 If the current void sheltered properties were able to be let it would bring £0.170m additional income per year into the Housing Revenue Account.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 The provision of suitable and affordable accommodation to meet housing need will make a positive contribution to tackling poverty in the county.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None specifically associated with the content of this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 The consultation required will be included in the remit of the Working Group.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None.

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

None.

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## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** **COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **MONDAY 1 JUNE , 2015**

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

**SUBJECT:** **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

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

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

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

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

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

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None as a result of this report.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None as a result of this report.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None as a result of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None as a result of this report.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None as a result of this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 N/A.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme

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

None.

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**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
8 July, 2015	<p><b>Quarterly Performance Reporting</b></p> <p><b>Update on Tenant Involvement</b></p>	<p>To consider Q4/Year End performance outturns for improvement targets.</p> <p>To consider tenants satisfaction results and the involvement of tenants in service improvements.</p>	<p>Performance Reporting</p> <p>Performance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)</p> <p>Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)</p>	<p><b>30 June 2015</b></p>
2 September, 2015	<p><b>Rent Arrears</b></p>	<p>To provide the committee with an understanding of the current position</p>	<p>Performance monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Community &amp; Enterprise)</p>	
7 October, 2015					
4 November, 2015					
9 December, 2015					

<b>12 January, 2016</b>					
<b>10 February, 2016</b>					
<b>27 April, 2016</b>					
<b>8 June, 2016</b>					
<b>13 July, 2016</b>					

**REGULAR ITEMS**

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

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