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To: Cllr Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, 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

29 October 2015

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, 4th November, 2015 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 - 10)

Purpose:

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2015 (copy enclosed).

4 **DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES OF RECENT REGENERATION PROGRAMMES** (Pages 11 - 20)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: For Member review of the delivery and outcomes of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme, Communities First programme and European funding programmes

5 **GROWING THE LOCAL ECONOMY** (Pages 21 - 26)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: To seek Member support in the Council's vision to grow the local economy in towns and rural areas.

6 **FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES** (Pages 27 - 46)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed.

Purpose: To consider options and proposals to develop Local Lettings policies for new council housing

7 **ALTERNATIVE SITES FOR THE EXTRA CARE FACILITY IN HOLYWELL**

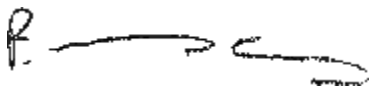
Purpose: To provide the Committee with a verbal update on the alternative sites identified for the proposed Extra Care Facility in Holywell

8 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 47 - 56)

Report of Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator enclosed.

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

Yours faithfully



Peter Evans
Democracy & Governance Manager

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 OCTOBER 2015

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 Wednesday, 7 October, 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)
Councillors: David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor Nancy Matthews (for Amanda Bragg)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Tony Sharps and Carolyn Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Helen Brown, Cabinet Member for Housing; Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise); Service Manager, Housing Programmes; Service Manager, Customer Support; Service Manager, Council Housing; Service Manager, Enterprise & Regeneration Programmes; Manager - Advice and Homelessness Service and Supporting People Manager

Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment (for minute number 41)

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

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2015 were submitted.

Matters Arising

A response to queries raised on the Council's new call handling arrangements was circulated to the Committee at the start of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

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

36. NEW HOMES BUSINESS PLAN 2015/20

The Service Manager, Housing Programmes presented the North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2015/20 and updated Members on progress made since the company had been established. He spoke about work

undertaken to develop the business plan and the aim to work strategically with the Council's SHARP project and housing associations to address key areas of housing need. It was noted that the findings of the recent joint Local Housing Market Assessment which had indicated an annual shortfall of 246 affordable dwellings in Flintshire. In referring to the affordability of the market compared with average salaries in Flintshire, the Service Manager said that NEW Homes would also help to deliver long-term housing opportunities for those unable to access affordable properties who were not eligible for social housing.

Through the first phase of the SHARP project, NEW Homes would benefit from 300 new properties, starting with the first scheme proposed at The Walks in Flint. Feedback would be sought from a community consultation event on 9 October 2015 so that the scheme could be finalised prior to seeking approval at Cabinet: a similar approach would be taken for all future schemes. An update was also given on the 13 new build properties from developers under Section 106 Planning Agreements which were shortly to be transferred to the company.

A piece of work was underway to explore opportunities to borrow against existing assets to purchase circa eight new properties, which could be let on affordable rent in areas of proven housing need. Future proposals including how this would be funded would be brought to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Peter Curtis welcomed the progress made by the company, particularly in view of the likely increased demand for affordable rent as a result of changes to Working Tax Credits and rent increases in the private sector.

In response to a question from Councillor Nancy Matthews on borrowing, the Chief Officer explained about options to borrow against existing assets potentially from the Council which could then reap a return for the Council. In terms of the scheme proposed in Flint, the recommendation would be to use long-term leasing financing from a private finance company. NEW Homes would receive the rental income to cover management and maintenance costs and would pay leasing finance costs over 30 years, after which the properties would revert to the company for £1 per property. Approval of the business plan would be sought from Cabinet before bringing forward each capital scheme for individual approval.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Mike Reece asked about the potential for the Council to take on derelict properties. The Chief Officer explained that various options were currently being explored to develop the number of properties in the company's portfolio within the legal powers available. Whilst the Empty Homes Scheme was already in place, other options could be considered such as re-purchasing unused ex-Council properties and bringing them back up to standard for letting.

Councillor Ian Dunbar welcomed the forthcoming community consultation event in Flint and asked that this be rolled out across other areas of the county to help inform local schemes. In highlighting the importance of meaningful consultation involving communities, the Service Manager gave an example of positive feedback generated from a consultation exercise in Connah's Quay to engage with local residents affected by a particular scheme. Following a question on the level of resources required to take forward the plans, the Service

Manager referred to recent staff changes within the service, implementation of the new management structure and the good working relationship between NEW Homes and the Council.

In response to a comment by Councillor David Cox on the importance of providing social housing, the Service Manager advised that 200 of the properties to be made available through SHARP would be for social housing starting with the scheme in Flint. Whilst it was not possible for NEW Homes to alone meet affordable housing need in the county, the intention was to work with the Council to prioritise housing in identified areas of need.

When asked by Councillor George Hardcastle about timescales, it was reported that work on the scheme at Flint was due to start in February 2016 followed by the site in Connah's Quay subject to planning approval. Learning from these initial schemes would be vital before progressing further schemes from the 12 sites identified through SHARP which would be subject to future consideration by the Committee prior to approval at Cabinet. It was anticipated that the entire programme for 500 properties would take around five years. It was also explained that as part of the contract and performance indicators, there was a need to use an element of local labour to create employment and training opportunities and that 'Meet the Buyer' events provided opportunities to engage with tradesmen and generate involvement by small and medium enterprises on future housing projects.

This was welcomed by Councillor Curtis who made the point that local labour should be utilised on all schemes wherever possible.

In response to a further query from Councillor Hardcastle, the Chief Officer gave a reminder that the Welsh Government had reduced the maximum discount for Right to Buy and that the Council would be supporting the suspension of Right to Buy for the new build Council homes. Under the SHARP programme, Right to Buy would not apply to the rented properties.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation to the Chief Officer and those on the NEW Homes board for their progress.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommends the NEW Homes Business Plan 2015/16 to Cabinet.

37. WELFARE REFORM - PHASE II

The Manager - Advice and Homelessness Service introduced an update report summarising the changes to be introduced to social security benefits over the next three years and, based on information available, the probable impact generated. He advised that a more detailed briefing session open to all Council Members would be arranged for the end of November 2015.

The Manager provided an overview of the proposed reforms set out in the report and the potential impact on households in Flintshire. Whilst the impact of the first phase of welfare reforms had been felt across the majority of

communities, this would continue in the second phase creating additional pressures for lower income households with children, especially those in social housing. Significant changes to Working Tax Credits and Universal Credit would have a greater impact on low income, working households. The appendix to the report illustrated the consequences of the reduction to the benefit cap ceiling, which was expected to affect a higher proportion of unemployed households with children. It was noted that the Government intended to implement around 70% of the proposals starting in April 2016, with some of the legislation possibly amended, however this would need to progress swiftly to achieve its aim of reducing expenditure on working-age benefits by a further £12 billion by 2018/19. The increase in child poverty for households with a parent in employment was expected to grow further as more proposals were implemented.

The Chairman commented on the increased number of households that would be affected by the changes and the consequences for the Council in dealing with this.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin commented on the need for individuals to make appropriate family choices according to their income levels. She asked if any support was available to help hard-working households with low income who were likely to be particularly affected by the significant drop in the benefit cap ceiling. The Manager said that by remaining in employment, those individuals could help towards excluding them from the benefit cap. When the benefit cap had first been introduced in 2013, the Council had successfully targeted and helped a number of households to identify solutions to exempt them from the benefit cap, however there were some households with issues that meant that they were not able to work. With regard to the reduction in the amount of 'out of work' benefits to which a working age household is entitled, it was confirmed that this included any reduction in the amount of Council Tax.

Whilst agreeing with the point made, Councillor Peter Curtis pointed out that some individuals were not able to gain employment in their areas and that employers needed to do what they could by paying decent wages. He went on to refer to the responsibility of the Government to help keep people with disabilities out of poverty.

Councillor Nancy Matthews raised a query on eligibility for free school meals which impacted on school claims for the Pupil Deprivation Grant. It was explained that households currently in receipt of Child and Working Tax Credits were not entitled to free school meals whereas households in receipt of Child Tax Credits only, with income below £15K per annum, were eligible for free school meals. In Wales, households with children currently receiving Universal Credit would be passported to free school meals, however the system was likely to change as Universal Credit was rolled out.

Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation to the Manager and his team for their work, together with that of the Welfare & Benefits team.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That the Committee continue to support the ongoing work that is being undertaken by the Council, together with its partners, to mitigate the full impact of present and future welfare reforms from falling upon Flintshire's most vulnerable households.

38. SARTH POLICY

The Service Manager, Customer Support presented an update on progress over the first five months of the Single Access Route To Housing (SARTH) Common Housing Register and Policy. She provided background information on the establishment of the partnership project and consultation process leading up to the implementation of the SARTH policy in April 2015.

The report set out the criteria and priorities for the four different bands to which applicants were allocated, in compliance with the statutory 'reasonable preference' categories. Information was provided on the phased approach to triage applicants from the former points register before transferring them to the new register, which gave an opportunity to ensure data was live. Following the resolution of some operational issues, calls would be recorded over the coming week for training purposes. Proposals to develop the local lettings policy would be shared at the next meeting and would address low demand of some sheltered accommodation schemes.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin thanked officers for the clarity of the report and asked about Band 1 applicants who were deemed to be in urgent housing need. The Service Manager explained that Band 1 included those leaving the armed forces and that the service worked alongside other teams to provide a solution and could arrange temporary accommodation if needed, however each case was determined individually. Councillor Dolphin said that the high demand for one bedroom properties across the county could be a focus for NEW Homes and that housing association flats could be a better option for over 55s than bungalows. She went on to give an example where a larger property had been allocated to a single parent and spoke of the difficulties in explaining this to other applicants. The Service Manager explained that applicants were generally matched to the type of property requested, however larger properties could be allocated if available and subject to an affordability assessment.

Following a question by Councillor Peter Curtis on prioritising those with a local connection, it was explained that the regional policy clarified this to be applicants within the county.

Councillor George Hardcastle said that tenants with rent arrears should not be held accountable if they were willing to downgrade, but unable to do so because of the lack of smaller properties. The Service Manager advised that each case was considered on its own merits and that applicants such as this would not have their priority reduced.

In response to a comment from Councillor Gareth Roberts, the Service Manager explained that applicants were only entitled to register where they had a housing need by meeting the criteria of one of the 'reasonable preference' groups.

Following a suggestion by Councillor Mike Reece, the Service Manager agreed to arrange dates for November 2015 where Members could meet the Housing Options and Estate Management teams to receive information on the process from triage through to allocating properties.

RESOLVED:

(a) That progress of the project since January 2015 be noted; and

(b) That the Committee supports the next stage of the project to make best use of housing stock.

39. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator introduced the current Forward Work Programme for consideration by the Committee.

As the NEW Homes Business Plan formed part of this agenda, it would be removed from the items scheduled for the next meeting and replaced by the update on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

Following a request by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, the Chief Officer agreed to provide a verbal update at the next meeting on alternatives sites identified for the extra care facility in Holywell.

Councillor George Hardcastle asked if a future item could be scheduled to consider whether programmed upgrade work could be suspended for Council tenants with historic rent arrears. Councillor Helen Brown advised that work was currently being carried out on this issue but would not be ready for consideration by the Committee until the new year.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment, the Forward Work Programme be noted.

40. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

41. COUNCIL HOUSE ALLOCATIONS SERVICE

The Chief Officer presented a report to give assurance on the robustness of processes and management of the allocation of council homes which was compliant with legislation (1) in the transition to the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) shared allocation system and (2) following a recent disciplinary case. In relation to the disciplinary case, she clarified that this had been an isolated case, dealt with swiftly and in line with the Council's procedures.

Councillor Bernie Attridge spoke about the internal processes in place to deal with such matters, and reminded Members that they were able to seek information from management on such confidential matters if they wished. This prompted debate by Members of the Committee on sharing information and reporting to the Committee. The Chief Officer commented on the expectation for officers to use discretion in their work and that this was evidenced.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin stated her confidence in officers in the way that the case had been dealt with. This was supported by other Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee is assured over the level of control over the processes for allocating social housing.

42. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.10 pm)

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Chairman

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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 4th November 2015
Report Subject	Delivery and Outcomes of recent Regeneration Programmes
Report Author	Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the strategy for regeneration in Flintshire and a brief summary of the main regeneration programmes and projects that have been delivered in Flintshire since 2010. The report sets out the current and anticipated changes to the main regeneration programmes and the future direction of travel for regeneration activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That Scrutiny Committee is reassured that the Council is maximising opportunities for regeneration in Flintshire and notes the outcomes of recent programmes and is supportive of the future priorities identified in this report.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES OF RECENT REGENERATION PROGRAMMES
1.01	Overall, the economy of Flintshire is one of the most buoyant in Wales, acting as a driver for the economies of North Wales and North West England. However, this vibrancy masks a number of regeneration challenges, including: • pockets of deprivation where the benefits of the economy are not being fully shared and where there are higher levels of

	unemployment and ill health and lower skill levels; • town centres struggling to adapt to a changing national trend in consumer behaviour; • some urban areas with a poor physical environment; • areas of poor quality private sector housing; These are not only issues in their own right; if unresolved, they also undermine the competitiveness of the County and the quality of life for residents.
1.02	The Flintshire Regeneration Strategy, published in 2009, set out a vision for regeneration in the County until 2020 based on three strategic objectives: 1. To develop a sustainable, world class, modern economy, based on business enterprise and a highly motivated, well trained workforce supported by modern technology, which maximises the County's physical and human assets. 2. Strengthen the rural economy through encouraging diversification and revitalise towns by developing them as successful local centres, each with their own distinctive character which complement each other and the wider retail offer across the County and neighbouring Counties. 3. Develop a range of initiatives aimed at local people who are suffering poverty, disadvantage and hardship. The most deprived communities will be helped to give them an equal opportunity of benefiting from the future economic success of Flintshire. The programmes of work summarised in this report were developed in response to the priorities of the Strategy.
1.03	The housing renewal programme is not covered in this report as it has been reported to the Committee previously. However, the programme forms an integral part of the approach to regeneration by encouraging investment, improving the appearance of target areas and improving the housing stock; bringing environment, social and economic benefits.
1.04	Similarly, the approach to business development is omitted from this report as it is covered in a separate report on the economy in Flintshire.
1.05	<u>Town centre regeneration</u> Smaller town centres across the UK have declined over recent decades due to shifting customer preferences towards supermarkets, out-of-town retail parks and internet shopping. This has been exacerbated during the economic slowdown by the closure of a number of major High Street retailers such as Woolworths. The Council undertook a comprehensive health check review of the main town centres in the County in 2008. The review identified that all town centres were, in different ways, experiencing decline and needing support.
1.06	The Town Action Plan programme, approved by the then Executive in 2009, set out to develop long term plans to support each town centre working closely with local stakeholders. The main strands of activity in the programme have been:

	1. improving the image and appearance of the town centres; 2. encouraging investment; and 3. attracting customers. The projects completed, underway or under development against each of these is shown in Appendix 1.
1.07	The need for physical investment identified in many of the long term town centre plans led the Council to develop a bid to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme to secure new resources for the area. The bid was submitted in 2011 and £4m was approved in 2012 for projects in Flintshire and Wrexham. There were two programmes of work: 1. Streetscape improvements across the town centres to improve their appearance to customers. 2. Grant aid of up to £80,000 or 80% to encourage businesses to bring vacant High Street properties back into active employment use. Nine properties were brought into use through the project. The programme of works was part-funded from the Council's capital programme. The project concluded in June 2015.
1.08	The funding programmes for regeneration change continuously and the current position for the main programmes is: <u>European programmes</u> The 2007-15 European funding programmes have largely ended. The first projects are now being approved across Wales under the 2015-2020 programmes. The new programmes will continue to support: • research, development and business innovation; • renewable energy; • supporting people into employment and raising skill levels; In addition to national projects developed by Welsh Government and national voluntary bodies, regional projects are under development through the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) which also seeks to co-ordinate project development to ensure it meets regional needs. The type of regeneration projects funded through the previous programme are not eligible for support under the new priorities.
1.09	<u>Vibrant and Viable Places</u> The Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) programme is the flagship Welsh Government regeneration programme providing capital investment to transform settlements. The programme was launched in May 2013 and included a two-stage competitive application process open to local authorities across Wales. Flintshire County Council was one of eleven successful authorities in this process and was awarded £6.024M in July 2014 towards the Deeside regeneration programme.
1.10	Deeside was identified by the then Executive Committee in March 2011 as a strategic priority for regeneration. Cabinet approved the inclusion of Deeside in the VVP proposal on 16 July 2013. The VVP proposal centred

	around linking the economic opportunities emerging from the Deeside Enterprise Zone to the areas of need and in particular to regenerating deprived communities, areas of poor quality housing and areas with a poor physical environment.
1.11	The current programme spans the 2014/2015, 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 financial years. The main programmes of work in the 2014/2017 period are: • Installation of energy efficiency improvements to 494 Council homes. • Private sector housing improvements to 150 properties. • Grants schemes to improve shop front and convert upper floors to 24 residential units. • Environmental improvements. • Purchase of vacant and derelict sites for regeneration and housing. • Work experience programme for 130 unemployed people.
1.12	The process to develop the 2017/2020 programme and the priorities for funding have not yet been released by the Welsh Government. However, early indications from Welsh Government officials indicate a similar process and largely unchanged priorities can be expected. It is anticipated that that all local authorities will be invited to submit proposals shortly after Christmas 2015.
1.13	<u>Rural Development Programme (RDP)</u> The Rural Development Programme for the period 2007-2015 was managed by the Council on behalf of the Welsh Government. The Council co-ordinated the rural partnership and ensured that delivery partners met the complex administrative requirements of the programme and that the benefits of the programme were maximised.
1.14	In addition, the Council secured funding from the programme to support regeneration in the County. £744,763.95 of funding was secured in 2012 for a programme of works including: 1. Support for streetscape improvements in Mold and Holywell town centres. 2. A grant scheme to improve the appearance of High Street properties in Mold and Holywell. Up to 50% or £10,000 was offered and 6 properties were improved. 3. A programme of parking improvements, signage and public art in Talacre and Gronant to improve the appeal and function of the destination.
1.15	The Rural Development Plan 2007-2015 programme has also come to an end and the new programme is under development by Welsh Government for the period 2015-2020. There are two elements of particular relevance to regeneration: 1. LEADER – the programme is managed locally through Cadwyn Clwyd, the rural development agency, and steering by a multi-sector partnership. The programme will develop new approaches to rural service delivery and enterprise development.

	2. Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF) – this programme provides capital funding to community projects through direct competitive bids to Welsh Government. The Council is working with partners to identify and develop suitable projects for both funding streams.
1.16	<u>Communities First</u> The Communities First programme is the Welsh Government's flagship programme to tackle poverty in Wales. The programme was originally launched in 2001 and went through a major overhaul in 2012. This saw the development of the current structure in Flintshire; two delivery areas based on clusters of deprived communities in Holywell, Flint and Mold in the West and Shotton and Connah's Quay in the East.
1.17	The Communities First programme is based on three themes: 1. Prosperous Communities – in particular helping people to re-engage with the labour market. 2. Healthy Communities – encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles. 3. Learning Communities – encouraging people to re-engage with learning activity and undertake entry-level qualifications. Each cluster is able to develop a programme of activities based around these themes that meets local needs. Clusters are required to develop a plan for engaging and consulting their local communities to ensure the programme meets local needs. A team of staff is employed in each area to deliver the programme.
1.18	Examples of Communities First programme activities include: • Business Entrepreneurship Network – provides mentoring, learning and networking opportunities to potential entrepreneurs. To date, 87 members have joined the network and 27 businesses have been established. • Jobs Clubs are run weekly from a number of Communities First locations to provide informal support to jobseekers in a community setting. • Jobs Fairs are run periodically to enable jobseekers to engage with employers. The last Jobs Fair, in April 2015, was attended by 793 people of whom an estimated 157 gained employment. • Communities First has established a new social enterprise, West Flintshire Community Enterprise, to deliver training and enterprise activity. The enterprise has developed a retail outlet on Holywell High Street to showcase the work of 40 local craft producers and provide work experience.
1.19	In 2014 Flintshire was selected by Welsh Government as a pilot area for the LIFT programme. The programme provides one to one mentoring support, training and work experience to enable unemployed people to overcome barriers to learning and employment. The programme has been in operation for just over a year and to date 90 people have been engaged and 12 supported into employment or learning.

1.20	The Communities First programme is funded until 31 March 2016. It is anticipated that new bids for funding will need to be submitted for funding but, as yet, the timescales, priorities and levels of funding have not been released by Welsh Government. The LIFT programme will continue until at least 2017 and Welsh Government has released a new programme to engage with unemployed people, delivered in the Communities First areas, called Communities4 Work (C4W) will be start in Flintshire in 2016.
1.21	The key future priorities and challenges for regeneration in Flintshire are considered to be to: • refresh the overarching strategy for regeneration in Flintshire; • develop a co-ordinated strategy for the regeneration of Deeside to maximise the benefits arising from the economic growth in the area; • maximise the value of the current VVP programme and develop a competitive proposal to Welsh Government for the next round; • refresh the approach to supporting town centres to reflect the continuing challenges they face; • take advantage of the recent service restructure to more closely integrate the different regeneration functions; • refocus the more limited resources available to the service towards securing external funding to deliver regeneration priorities; • co-ordinate the growing range of labour market support projects funded by the new European programmes to ensure that they have the greatest local impact; and • review and refocus the Communities First programme to maximise the benefits to deprived communities.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	None arising from this report.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	Every element in the regeneration programme has been the subject of extensive consultation; in the development of the Strategy; in the development of each plan and programme; and as each project has been implemented.
3.02	The development of each programme in the future will require consultation with strategic partners, local stakeholders, businesses and local communities.

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	None arising from this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – list of town centre projects

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. **Contact Officer:** Niall Waller, Service Manager, Enterprise & Regeneration Programmes **Telephone:** 01352 702137 **E-mail:** niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	**Communities First** – the Welsh Government flagship programme to tackle poverty in deprived neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods are selected based on those considered the most deprived across Wales. **Communities 4 Work (C4W)** - a new Welsh Government programme to help people to re-engage in learning and employment. The programme will begin in Flintshire in 2016 and will be delivered in the Communities First areas. **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** – one the main European funding programmes to support economic development. **LEADER** – The European approach to rural development in operation since 1991 focussing on community-led innovation in service delivery and enterprise development. The LEADER approach is included in the 2015-2020 rural programme. **LIFT** – the Welsh Government pilot programme, implemented in Communities First areas, to provide intensive support to unemployed people. **North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB)** – the partnership to develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to economic development across North Wales. **Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF)** – the new rural programme providing capital support to rural community projects. **Rural Development Plan (RDP)** – the European funding programme dedicated to the development of rural areas. The majority of the programme supports the land-based industries including farming and forestry but a small proportion supports wider rural development activity. **Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP**) – the Welsh Government flagship programme for regeneration in Wales. The programme provides capital funding between 2014/15 and 2016/17 for eleven priority areas in Wales, including Deeside.

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Appendix 1 - Current Town Action Plan projects in development – November 2015
(Projects in bold completed or under way.)

Town	Improving image and appearance	Encouraging investment	Attracting customers
Buckley	• **Public realm improvements on Brunswick Road.** • Public realm & highways improvements on Precinct Way.	• **Secure developer for Precinct site.** • Improve poor quality commercial buildings. • Undertake assessment of commercial demand for town centre development sites.	• Deliver Flintshire Connects. • Promote town centre retail offer locally. • Support occasional events and markets.
Deeside	• Environmental improvement scheme Connah's Quay Dock. • Scope out Wepre Brook green landscaping scheme. • **Environmental improvement scheme Wepre Brook bridge area.** • **Environmental improvement scheme Shotton High Street.** • **Improve Ash Grove car park.** • Improve public realm along links to river. • Improve sustainable transport infrastructure through TAITH and potentially V&VP funding.	• **Assemble civic complex site.** • **Improve poor quality commercial buildings through ERDF grant scheme.** • **Tackle vacant units through empty shops scheme.** • **Support housing above retail units.** • **Purchase underperforming properties or sites for redevelopment.** • **Prepare overarching Deeside Plan.**	• **Deliver Flintshire Connects.** • Promote town centre retail offer locally.
Flint	• Tree planting along coast road. • **Church Square environmental improvements.** • **Old Courthouse renovation.** • **Townscape Heritage Initiative.** • **Housing investment to replace maisonettes.**	• **Improve poor quality commercial buildings.** • Tackle vacant units through empty shops scheme. • Private sector housing development.	• **Deliver Flintshire Connects.** • Strengthen market. • Support events programme, especially linked to heritage and castle. • Improve walking and cycling routes around and out of town. • Promotional campaigns to customers and businesses. • **Heritage Trail.** • **Development of primary care centre.**

Town	Improving image and appearance	Encouraging investment	Attracting customers
Holywell	• Complete streetscape improvement plan. • **Improve pedestrian links into town.** • Improve pedestrian link between Well and town centre. • **Improve High St streetscape.**	• **Improve poor quality commercial buildings.** • Tackle vacant units through empty shops scheme. • Find new use for empty Co-op unit.	• **Support and grow events programme.** • Develop walking package for Flintshire focussed partly around Holywell, including Pilgrim's Way. • Strengthen market. • **Promotional campaign and better web information.** • **Support development of heritage trail and public art project.** • **Link to Churches Tourism network project.**
Mold	• **Public realm improvements Daniel Owen Square.** • Public realm improvements to New St car park and pedestrian routes into town. • Public realm improvements to town gateways and arrival points. • Develop HLF bid for Bailey Hill. • **Improve appearance and function of indoor market.**	• Masterplan for key opportunity sites in the town centre to encourage development interest. • **Improve poor quality commercial buildings.** • Tackle vacant units through empty shops scheme.	• Deliver Flintshire Connects. • Support local food hub development. • **Support events programme.** • Strengthen market. • **Target coach companies to encourage visits.** • **Promotional campaign and better web information.**
Saltney	• Public realm improvements along High Street.	• Improve poor quality commercial buildings. • Tackle vacant units through empty shops scheme.	• **Improve access to river for cyclists and walkers.**
County-wide projects		• Empty shops scheme – minor improvements to properties to enable occupation.	• **Marketing campaigns.** • **Markets development.**

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 4th November 2015
Report Subject	Growing the Local Economy
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report By	Chief Officer Community and Enterprise
Strategic / Operational	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire's economy is one of the most successful in Wales and act as a major driver for the North Wales and North West England sub-regions. The Council works collaboratively with Welsh Government and with regional and sub-regional partnerships to maximise and sustain this success.

The area, though, faces competition from other regions of the UK and more widely and the report sets out key areas of work to maintain the economic success of the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	For Committee to support and recognise the ongoing activity to sustain a vibrant and strong economy in Flintshire.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING GROWING THE LOCAL ECONOMY
1.01	Flintshire's economy is one of the most vibrant in Wales and is a major part of the economies of both North Wales and North West England. The County recovered successfully from the economic shock created by the rapid loss of the heavy industries in the 1980's and has secured significant and ongoing investment and job growth in manufacturing and other key sectors. Major employers in Flintshire now include, for example, Toyota UK Engine Plant, Kimberley Clark, Iceland, Kingspan, Tata Steel and Warwick International. Industry is concentrated in Deeside and along the Flintshire coastline.
1.02	Deeside Industrial Park is a successful base for industry with 9,000 jobs in sectors including engineering, pharmaceuticals, technology and energy, and acts as a magnet to investors, customers and suppliers. Nearby Hawarden Business Park is a hub of innovation, whilst the Airbus complex in Broughton currently employs around 6,000 people with an additional 20,000 employed in supply chain activity.
1.03	During the past twelve months alone Flintshire has secured business expansion throughout the county across all company sizes and sectors and has welcomed new investment from across the UK, Europe, Japan and America resulting in 1,700 new jobs including; Calbee, a Japanese company creating 100 jobs; Triumph, a US company creating 50 jobs; and Two Sisters, an Indian-owned company creating 30 jobs.
1.04	The Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ), designated by Welsh Government in 2012, seeks to capitalise upon the success of the economy in Flintshire and to accelerate growth and job creation in the area. The Enterprise Zone, one of seven across Wales, has seen 2,300 new jobs created and a further 2,000 safeguarded since its designation. 63% of business enquiries to the Council have been converted into actual investment. The Northern Gateway site in the Enterprise Zone represents a significant growth opportunity for the area. Between now and 2030 the ambition is for the creation of 7,000 new permanent jobs. £85m of private and £10m of public investment is forecast for the Northern Gateway and £98m of private and £22m of public investment for the DEZ. The flood defence works have been completed by Welsh Government for the Northern Gateway site and funding for investment in the road infrastructure, phased over the next five years, has been agreed. In addition to jobs growth the site will deliver up to 1000 new homes.
1.05	The manufacturing sector is crucial to Flintshire's economy, employing

	31.2% of the workforce. The advanced manufacturing sector, providing well paid and more highly skilled employment, is of particular importance. The proposed Deeside Advanced Manufacturing Centre is now at an advanced stage for Welsh Government Ministerial approval and public sector investment. A partnership with Swansea University is proposed; the University having just opened its considerable new engineering and technology faculty.
1.06	The economy of Flintshire sits within two overlapping economic sub-regions: North Wales and the Mersey Dee area. The Council works with partners in each region to maximise competitive position and to sustain economic vitality. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) brings together public and business partners to develop strategies for business growth including priorities such as skills planning, infrastructure development and supply chain development. Flintshire is one of five economic growth hubs within the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA). The MDA area has a critical mass of businesses in the advanced manufacturing and engineering, high technology, energy and financial services sectors, and a skilled and agile workforce. The Mersey Dee area has a greater combined Gross Value Added (GVA) (estimated to be £14 billion.) than that of Cardiff and Swansea combined. The GVA figure for Flintshire and Wrexham combined is £5.6 billion with an average annual increase of £147m since 2011. A similar future increase is predicted based on the major transformational projects and level of private sector investment in the region. There is an estimated potential to create 40 – 50,000 jobs over the next 15 – 20 years. To achieve this, the key strategic priorities for the MDA are: • transport infrastructure including road, rail and airport access; • skills and employment; specifically focussing on developing advanced skills in science, manufacturing and engineering to support economic growth priorities and higher value job.
1.07	Whilst a small number of very large companies play a crucial role in the County's economy the small to medium sized companies in the County employ a large proportion of the workforce between them and are therefore also vital to the success of Flintshire. For example, the tourism sector is currently estimated to support 3,138 direct jobs in Flintshire and is estimated to generate £220 million annually from visitors. The Council works very closely with the tourism business sector. This year the Council has redesigned the approach to marketing the area to better engage businesses; launched an Ambassador scheme to showcase successful Flintshire tourism businesses; and improved the Flintshire tourism website.
1.08	A total of £425m is being invested in Wales to extend superfast broadband

	through the Welsh Government 'Superfast Cymru' programme, delivered by BT. The schedule of works is targeted to reach 96% of premises within the footprint of the programme. This large-scale infrastructure programme will be underpinned by support to encourage Flintshire businesses to exploit the new technology, crucial to their future competitiveness. Grants are available to businesses based within Deeside Enterprise Zone to obtain an ultrafast broadband connection. The Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher Scheme offers Welsh Government funded grants of up to a maximum value of £10,000 (subject to scheme conditions).
1.09	The County and sub-region, despite its current success, faces strong competition from other regions of the UK and from wider afield including areas of comparative local strength such as advanced manufacturing. In order to sustain this economic success the Council will need to: • work collaboratively with sub-regional partners to maximise the competitiveness of the area; • secure investment for the modernisation of the transport infrastructure; • Continue to bring new sites forward for future economic growth and investment; • maintain strong and responsive account relationships with businesses; • assist employers to meet their future workforce needs and encourage suitably-skilled school leavers to take up local economic opportunities; • encourage the formation of supply chain networks to retain business spend within the local economy; • facilitate the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone and the Northern Gateway site; • support unemployed people to take advantage of the economic opportunities; and • meet the wider needs of employers in terms of the housing mix, physical environment, public services and town centre vitality.
1.10	The council, along with MDA and EAB partners has supported the Cheshire and Warrington LEP growth bid to the UK Government. The growth bid covers 3 strategic areas including Crewe, Warrington and the Chester / Mersey / Dee area. If successful Cheshire councils and Warrington council will develop a combined authority. Key priorities for the bid include greater control of public land, an ability to recycle land receipts into a local investment fund, retention of business rates growth, strategic transport infrastructure investment, Welsh and English government alignment to support strategic cross border projects, devolution of business support function, locally developed skills and training provision and health commissioning transformation.
1.11	Should the bid be successful Flintshire's future economic growth will be

	linked to playing a part in this growth plan. In addition, the EAB and MDA have made contact with the Northern Powerhouse through both ministerial discussions and council's political leadership. A number of meetings are planned to consider the North Wales and Mersey Dee "offer and ask" to support the growth of the Northern Powerhouse economy.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	None arising directly from this report.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT**
3.01	The Council works closely with, and is informed by: • North Wales Economic Ambition Board • Mersey Dee Alliance • Deeside Enterprise Zone Advisory Board • Higher and Further Education Institutions • Private Industry

4.00	**KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION**
4.01	None arising directly from this report.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	None.

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	None. **Contact Officer** :Niall Waller, Service Manager Enterprise and Regeneration Programmes **Telephone**: 01352 702137 **E-mail:** niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	**Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ)** – the Welsh Government designated area for support to encourage business growth. The Enterprise Zones are currently designated for support until 2017 with Enhanced Capital Allowances for DEZ designated until 2020 at the Northern Gateway site. **Enhanced Capital Allowances (ECA)** – incentives provided by the UK Government in designated areas within Enterprise Zones to promote capital investment by companies. **Gross Value Added (GVA)** – the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area. **Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA)** – the partnership between the public sector in North East Wales and North West England to "work together on common strategic interests to ensure a sustainable future for the area and facilitate a coherent approach to social, economic and environmental issues." (MDA) **North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB)** – the partnership to develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to economic development across North Wales.

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 4th November 2015
Report Subject	Framework for the Implementation of Local Lettings Policies
Report Author	Chief Officer, Community and Enterprise

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents an overview of the framework for the implementation of local lettings policies (Appendix 1) by setting out the approach and procedure that could be adopted by the Council, to respond and address local housing issues. This would help to create sustainable, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods and communities where people want and aspire to live. It also recognises the importance of balancing the needs of new tenants and the interests of existing tenants to create mixed and sustainable neighbourhoods.

A local letting policy would be applied in either a defined geographical area or on a new build development, for a percentage of the lettings made e.g. 50% or 75% of lettings made via the policy.

The framework gives consideration to good practice and the relevant legal and legislative requirements and guidance by setting out a clear aim and objectives, evidence required, consultation, approval process and the need to monitor and review the effectiveness and outcomes achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Committee approve the proposed framework for the implementation of local lettings policies (Appendix 1).
2	Delegated authority is granted to the Chief Operating Officer, Community & Enterprise and Senior Manager, Council Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to implement the framework for local lettings policies, for new developments in response to identified need and evidence.
3	An annual report is produced for Committee to monitor and review the overall effectiveness and outcomes of any local lettings policies that have been implemented. The annual report would be presented to Committee 12 months after the implementation of the first local lettings policy.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES**
1.01	The law on the allocation of housing is governed by Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, which sets out that a Local Authority must have an allocations scheme in place for determining priorities and procedures, in relation to the allocation of housing and that allocations must be made in line with this. Under section 167 (2), reasonable preference must be given to certain categories such as persons who are homeless, overcrowded or occupying insanitary accommodation.
1.02	Within both the Housing Act 1996 and the code of guidance to local authorities on the allocation of accommodation and homelessness 2015, provision has been made that enables Local Authorities to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description, regardless of whether they fall within the reasonable preference categories provided that overall compliance with section 167 can be demonstrated. This means that a Local Authority can have local lettings policies provided they do not dominate the allocations scheme and that there are clear links to community sustainability, supported by evidence, with procedures that inform strategic priorities and are regularly reviewed and monitored for effectiveness.
1.03	The common allocations policy recognises that partners may wish to implement initiatives to help tackle local housing issues through the use of local lettings policies. Examples of local housing issues which may require the development of a local lettings policy are: • Concentrations of deprivation • Large new developments where it is felt that a new community needs to be established • Rewarding positive behaviour by supporting transfers for existing tenants even when they do not have reasonable preference • Supporting tenant employment opportunities through job related moves and those people who are making a positive contribution to a particular area in an economic or voluntary capacity • The needs and sustainability of rural communities e.g. where affordability of housing is an issue • Under-occupation and/ or overcrowding • Some properties, usually in defined locations, can only be let subject to additional occupational criteria as they are subject to a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. • Regeneration areas
1.04	A proposed framework for implementing local letting policies (Appendix 1) has been developed and gives consideration to the relevant guidance and common allocations policy. This will support the Council to adopt sustainable solutions to help improve people's lives, respond to local housing issues and create safe, healthy and vibrant neighbourhoods

	where people want and aspire to live, whilst recognising the importance of balancing the needs of new tenants and the interests of existing tenants to create mixed and sustainable neighbourhoods.
1.05	The proposed framework for implementing local lettings policies sets out the approach and procedure that would be taken by the Council, when considering whether to implement a local lettings policy. This policy could be applied in either a defined geographical area or on a new build development.
1.06	In line with good practice and the relevant guidance, the framework sets out the overall aim for implementing local lettings policies *'to respond and address local housing issues, helping to create sustainable, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods and communities where people want and aspire to live',* with the objective: • To help tackle identified areas of low demand helping to ensure we maximise the investment in our existing homes • To maintain the long term sustainability of established and new areas creating vibrant, healthy and great places to live • To help support and encourage balanced and cohesive communities where people choose to live • To improve community safety by addressing and preventing issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and harassment • To protect both the interests of local residents and our homes by seeking to prevent or reverse social decline and deprivation The degree and extent to which these objectives are applied will vary between each local letting policy, in recognition of the different local housing issues and the sustainability of the community.
1.07	The proposed framework outlines the evidence required to demonstrate the need for a local lettings policy. This includes a decision making process to ensure that there is an approval process in place for each scheme where a local lettings policy will be applied, an agreed time period, consultation, monitoring and review arrangements, to assess the overall effectiveness of any local lettings policy. It also provides a procedure and process map to be followed to ensure compliance with the framework.
1.08	The evidence and objectives of the local lettings policy would then be used to inform the criteria which may include for example, rewarding positive behavior by supporting transfers to existing tenants and people who are accessing local job opportunities including voluntary and community work.
1.09	In line with good practice, the decision to implement a local lettings policy should only be considered for a percentage of the lettings made in either a defined geographical area or new build development e.g. 50% or 75% of lettings made via the policy and agreed at the outset.
1.10	Whilst there is no specific guidance specifying the time period a local letting policy can be in place, good practice recommends agreeing a limited time period for the use of a local letting policy from the outset based on supporting evidence. This would then be monitored and subject to

	review on an annual basis to assess the overall effectiveness and outcomes achieved. A review of good practice examples, show a variety of time periods are adopted based on local evidence, all of which are subject to an annual review. There are some cases, such as an age restriction scheme e.g. over 55 years of age, which may not be time limited as once approved, they would remain the same.
1.11	Legal advice has been sought and considered in the development of the proposed framework.
1.12	Consideration should be given for adopting the proposed framework for implementing local letting policies for the new council housing being provided through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), which will see 500 new Council and affordable housing being developed across the county. This could help respond to local housing issues, improve the quality of people's lives and the sustainability of the community.
1.13	**Next Steps** Subject to the approval of the framework for implementing local lettings policies, it is proposed that the Council considers the need to implement local lettings policies for some of the new developments, by starting the process of gathering the evidence to demonstrate whether or not there is a specific need for a local letting policy.
1.14	This would initially be carried out for Flint Walks, the first new development due to be completed in April 2016 and would follow the procedure outlined in the framework. This includes consultation with local Elected Members, residents groups and any other Housing Associations operating in the area. An equality impact assessment would also be undertaken. A report for approval would then be made outlining the evidence and recommendations including any lettings criteria linked to the overall framework objectives. This would also include the initial time period for use, subject to annual review and the percentage of lettings to be made via the policy.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	Whilst there are no financial implications associated with this report, there will be staff resources required to undertake the evidence gathering and consultation process outlined within the framework. This will be contained within the existing staff resources for Council Housing Services.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	Consultation will be carried out in line with the framework and the process for approval to implement a local lettings policy. This will include consultation with local Elected Members, residents groups and other Housing Associations.

3.02	An annual report will be produced for Committee to monitor and review the overall effectiveness and outcomes of any local lettings policies that have been implemented. It is envisaged that the first annual report will be presented to Committee 12 months after the implementation of the first local lettings policy.

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	The framework for the implementation of local lettings policies aims to manage key risks relating to equality and access, neighbourhood and community sustainability by: • Setting out when adjustments will be made to the main Common Allocations Policy to meet specific local housing issues • Comply with current legislation and good practice • Develop a consistent and sustainable approach to neighbourhood management • Contribute to sustainable, diverse and balanced communities

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	Appendix 1: Framework for the Implementation of Local Lettings Policies

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	None. **Contact Officer:** Jacqueline Perry, Housing Manager **Telephone:** 01352 701640 **E-mail:** Jacqueline.perry@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	**Local Lettings Policy:** An area specific policy used in response to specific local housing circumstances, by allowing flexibility within the allocations process to include additional criteria to be considered when letting properties within that area. **Common Allocations Policy:** A single access route to housing developed in partnership with social landlords in a specific local authority area, to deliver a uniform assessment of housing need, providing fairness and consistency to customers. People in our communities are prioritised according to their housing need and in line with legal requirements. **Sustainable Communities:** Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe, inclusive, well planned and offer equality of opportunity and good service for all.

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Framework for the Implementation of Local Lettings Policies

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V1.0

October 2015

Document Information

Revision History

Date	Description	By
25/09/15	Drafted for initial review and consideration by Senior Managers and Legal.	Jackie Perry
4/10/15	Draft reviewed following legal advice.	Jackie Perry

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Introduction

The Common Allocations (SARTH) policy recognises that partners may wish to implement initiatives to help tackle local housing issues through the use of local lettings policies. Examples of local housing issues which may require the development of a local lettings policy are:

- Concentrations of deprivation
- Large new developments where it is felt that a new community needs to be established
- Supporting tenant employment opportunities through job related moves and those who are making a positive contribution to a particular area in an economic or voluntary capacity
- Rewarding positive behaviour by supporting transfers for existing tenants even when they do not have reasonable preference
- Under-occupation and/or overcrowding
- The needs and sustainability of rural communities e.g. where affordability of housing is an issue
- Some properties, usually in defined locations, can only be let subject to additional occupational criteria as they are subject to a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Regenerations areas

The framework for implementing local lettings policies sets out the approach that will be taken by Flintshire County Council and gives due consideration to Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, which enables Local Authorities under Section 167 (2E) to allocate accommodation to people of a particular description whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the Local Authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Section 167, where reasonable preference must be given to certain categories e.g. persons who are homeless, overcrowded or occupying insanitary conditions.

The framework also considers the code of guidance for Local Authorities on the allocation of accommodation and homelessness 2015, by ensuring that any local lettings policies that are implemented have a clear aim linked to community sustainability, are supported by evidence, must not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race or disability, have procedures that inform strategic priorities and are regularly reviewed and monitored for effectiveness.

Local Lettings Framework Statement

Flintshire County Council continuously seek sustainable solutions to help improve people's lives, respond to local housing issues and create safe and pleasant neighbourhoods, where people want and aspire to live. As a landlord we recognise the importance of balancing the needs of new tenants and the interests of existing tenants to create mixed and sustainable neighbourhoods.

The overall aim of this framework is to:

- Set out when adjustments will be made to the main Common Allocations Policy (SARTH) to meet specific local housing issues
- Comply with current legislation and good practice
- Develop a consistent and sustainable approach to neighbourhood management

- Contribute to sustainable, diverse and balanced communities

Local Lettings Framework Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of implementing a framework for local lettings policies is to respond to and address local housing issues, helping to create sustainable, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods and communities where people want and aspire to live.

The overall objectives of the framework for implementing local lettings policies are:

- To help tackle identified areas of low demand helping to ensure we maximise the investment in our existing homes
- To maintain the long term sustainability of established and new areas creating vibrant, healthy and great places to live
- To help support and encourage balanced and cohesive communities where people choose to live
- To improve community safety by addressing and preventing issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and harassment
- To protect both the interests of local residents and our homes by seeking to prevent or reverse social decline and deprivation

The degree and extent to which the overall aim and objectives are applied will vary between each local letting policy in recognition of the different local housing issues and the sustainability of the community, which will be supported by clear evidence.

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Local Lettings Policy

The decision to implement a local letting policy will require the prior consent of a Senior Manager and Cabinet Member for Housing. Local letting policies may be used in defined geographical areas or on new build developments. In the main, the majority of the SARTH lettings policy will apply, however local lettings policies will include additional criteria that will be considered when letting properties in order to address local housing issues and sustainability within a neighbourhood. A local lettings policy can be considered for use on a percentage of the lettings made in a defined geographical area or new build development, in line with best practice e.g. 50% of lettings will be made via the local lettings policy.

In adopting a local lettings policy there should be:

- A clear aim and objectives for the scheme supported and agreed in advance by a Senior Manager and Cabinet Member for Housing
- A limited time period for the use of the local letting policy, agreed from the outset and subject to review on an annual basis
- Consultation with local Elected Member, residents group and other RSLs working within the neighbourhood
- Monitoring, review and reporting systems in place

Evidencing the need for Local Letting Policy

When considering whether to introduce a local letting policy, a report must be submitted to the Senior Manager and Cabinet Member for Housing covering the following:

- Purpose of the scheme
- Stock turnover levels
- Average re-let times for the area compared to average re-let time for the area as a whole
- Current demand for the area
- Number of refusals before a property is accepted
- Number of ASB cases within the area
- Any repair costs related to ASB or criminal damage
- Other local housing issues e.g. employment, mixture of household composition

The procedure for approval to implement a local letting policy is summarised in Appendix 1.

Sensitive Lettings

There are some circumstances where it may be beneficial to allocate a void property as a ‘sensitive let’. This will generally be used to address/ manage specific issues, such as the makeup of a particular block of flats by having flexibility to avoid lifestyle clashes. In cases where ‘one off’ sensitive lets need to be made, consent must be obtained from a Senior Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. When making the decision to consider a sensitive let, the existing community balance and any problems that have previously been experienced should be considered and taken in to account.

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The criteria may include:

- A mix of household sizes to give a balanced community
- Age of the potential tenant
- Employment status
- Convictions

The decision to make a sensitive let via the use of these criteria would be made to support the long term sustainability of the neighbourhood and/or benefit those residents who have experienced significant ASB in the past, normally over a prolonged period of time.

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Monitoring and Review

Flintshire County Council will monitor and review the effectiveness of any local lettings policies that it implements through the agreed service standards and performance management key performance indicators (KPIs).

Local Lettings Service Standards

The following service standards have been agreed to support the framework for implementing local lettings policies:

- All local lettings policies will be reviewed annually and a review of the impact reported every year to the Chief Operating Officer, Community and Enterprise and Cabinet Member for Housing

- Consultation will take place in the neighbourhood with any residents groups, where appropriate prior to the introduction of a local lettings policy

- The number of sensitive lettings made will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis

Performance Management

To manage and monitor the effectiveness of any local lettings policies that are implemented, the following performance management KPIs are in place:

- Measures of levels of ASB
- Tenancy turnover
- Average re-let times
- Average length of tenancy
- Termination reasons

Equality, Diversity and Access Implications

The impact of this framework for implementing local lettings policies will be monitored, to ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity to individuals and minority groups. To support this, all customers will be asked to provide details of their ethnic origin and any other demographic information when they sign a tenancy with the Council.

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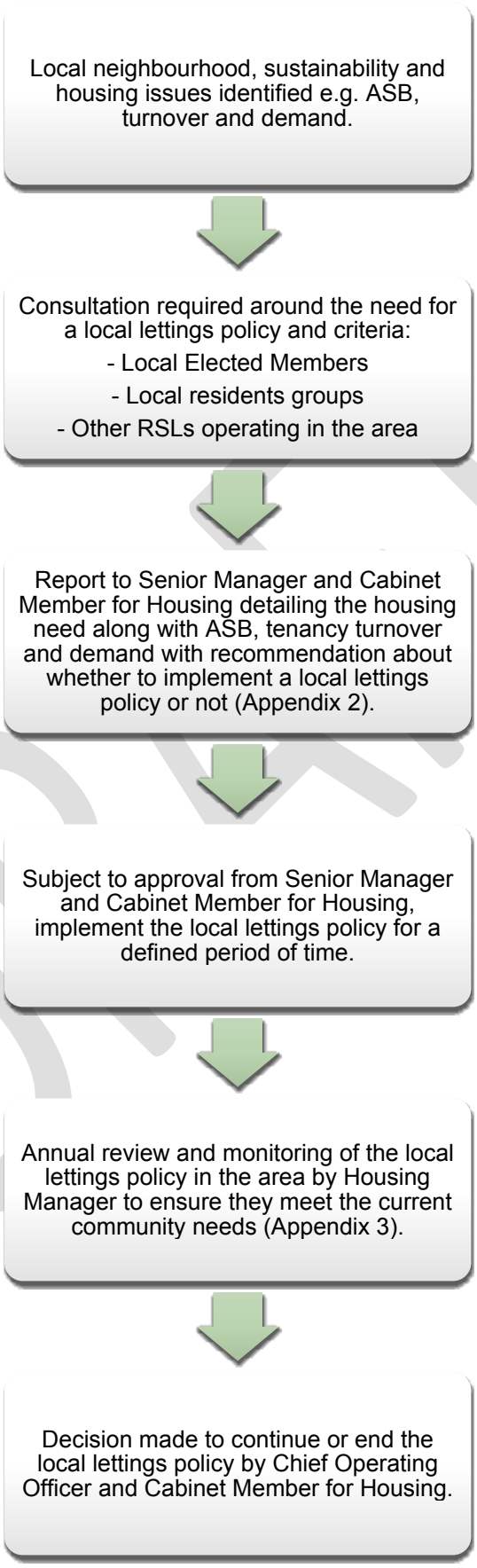
Local Lettings Process Map



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Appendix 1 Local Lettings Policy Procedure

1. Clear Objectives
The Officer involved in the introduction of local lettings policy must be able to demonstrate the identified need for implementing the policy. To do this, a detailed report must be produced for the Senior Manager and Cabinet Member for Housing for approval. A template report setting out the information required to support the implementation of a local lettings policy is outlined in Appendix 2.

2. Control Measures
To establish the need for a local lettings policy, various measures need to be considered and there must be evidence of one or more of the following needs:

- To help tackle identified areas of low demand helping to ensure we maximise the investment in our existing homes
- To maintain the long term sustainability of established and new areas creating vibrant, healthy and great places to live
- To help support and encourage balanced and cohesive communities where people choose to live
- To improve community safety by addressing and preventing issues of ASB and harassment
- To protect both the interests of local residents and our homes by seeking to prevent or reverse social decline and deprivation

This will involve evidence of management problems (e.g. no waiting list for a period, tenancy turnover rates, and incidents of ASB), which may be supported by evidence derived from further investigations e.g. consultation questionnaires. This evidence will be dependent upon the nature and scope of each individual local lettings policy.

3 Consultation
Before developing a local lettings policy, consultation is required with local elected members, customers and other registered social landlords working in the neighbourhood. This will need to take place in a range of forms dependent upon the nature of the individual local lettings policy to be considered. Consideration should also be given as to whether there are particular development / planning agreements in existence that may require 'change of use' permission. An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out in order to assess the adverse impact the policy may have on customers.

4. Approval
Local lettings policies must be approved by a Senior Manager and Cabinet Member for Housing.

5. Monitoring and Review of Local Lettings Policies
At the outset, a time period should be agreed for each local lettings policy and subject to review on an annual basis. In some cases, such as an age restriction scheme e.g. over 55 schemes these may not be time limited as once approved, they would remain the same.

The use of local lettings policies should be reviewed each year by the
Housing Manager (Appendix 3) to ensure they meet the current needs of the community. A review of the impact of any local lettings policies should be reported, at least every year to the Chief Operating Officer, Community & Enterprise and Cabinet

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Member for Housing with delegated authority for a decision on whether to continue to implement the policy. An annual report will be produced for Scrutiny Committee to monitor and review the overall effectiveness and outcomes of any local lettings policies that have been implemented.

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Appendix 2 Report for Approval of Local Lettings Policy

REPORT TO:

DATE:

REPORT BY:

SUBJECT: LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY FOR (AREA)

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT
The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for a local lettings policy in (insert area) to help us achieve a balanced community and sustainable tenancies.

2.00 BACKGROUND
Outline the reasons why a local lettings policy is required along with a breakdown of the area profile to include:

- Location of properties
- Description of properties - how many units
- Age profile of residents
- Average length of tenancies

3.0 SUPPORTING DATA AND EVIDENCE
Here, set out the supporting evidence and include:

- Stock turnover levels
- Average re-let times for the area compared to average re-let time for the area as a whole
- Current demand for the area
- Number of refusals before a property is accepted
- Number of ASB cases in the areas
- Repair costs related to ASB damage
- Indices of deprivation
- Employment

4.0 RECOMMENDATION
The review period is to be included and the outcome linked to the relevant objectives of the framework for implementing a local lettings policy:

- To help tackle identified areas of low demand helping to ensure we maximise the investment in our existing homes
- To maintain the long term sustainability of established and new areas creating vibrant, healthy and great places to live
- To help support and encourage balanced and cohesive communities where people choose to live
- To improve community safety by addressing and preventing issues of ASB and harassment
- To protect both the interests of local residents and our homes by seeking to prevent or reverse social decline and deprivation

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT

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Within this section, you will need to confirm that:

- An EIA has taken place and that residents attended the session
- Detail the outcome of the EIA
- Detail any adverse impact identified for any groups
- Confirm what actions have been agreed to react to any adverse impact

9.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

In developing this local lettings policy, consultation has taken place with (insert details of who/ where) and demonstrates the extent of consultation undertaken.

DRAFT

Appendix 3: Annual Local Lettings Policy Review Report

REPORT TO:

DATE:

REPORT BY:

SUBJECT: ANNUAL LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY REVIEW

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT
The purpose of this report is to review the use of the local lettings policy in (insert area) which aims to help support and achieve a balanced community, sustainable tenancies and reduce the level of ASB by improving community safety.

2.00 BACKGROUND
Outline the reasons why the local lettings policy was introduced in the specific area and the overall aim and objectives of the policy.

3.00 CURRENT POSITION
Provide details on the current position e.g. if there is evidence to support that local housing issues are improving and the sustainability of the neighbourhood.

Include year on year comparative indicators

Evidence	Previous year	Current position
Stock Turnover		
Re-let Times		
Demand		
Property Refusals		
ASB Cases		
ASB Costs – Repairs		

4.00 RECOMMENDATION
Summarise the findings of the review and make a recommendation for the future use of a local lettings policy linked to the objectives below:

- To help tackle identified areas of low demand, helping to ensure we maximise the investment in our existing homes
- To maintain the long term sustainability of established and new areas creating vibrant, healthy and great places to live
- To help support and encourage balanced and cohesive communities where people choose to live
- To improve community safety by addressing and preventing issues of ASB and harassment
- To protect both the interests of local residents and our homes by seeking to prevent or reverse social decline and deprivation

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COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 4th November, 2015
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme
Report Author	Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

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	
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

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	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. 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 – Current Forward Work Programme

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. **Contact Officer:** Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator **Telephone:** 01352 702305 **E-mail:** ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk

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
9 December, 2015	**Q2 - Mid Year Improvement Plan Monitoring Report and Chief Officer Performance Report.**	To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Assurance/Monitoring	Community & Enterprise Facilitator	
	Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP)	To seek Members support on the first phase Housing schemes tenure and size mix and funding arrangements	Consultation	Service Manager, Housing Programmes	
	Service Charges and Council Housing	To consider the outcomes and next steps following the consultation exercise completed about proposals to introduce service charges for existing council tenants	Consultation	Service Manager Council Housing	
	Flintshire Business Week 2015	To report on the outcomes of Flintshire Business Week	Assurance/Monitoring	Service Manager Enterprise, and Regeneration Programmes	

12 January, 2016	**Housing Revenue Account draft budget and Rent Increase**	To provide the Committee with the draft HRA budget and proposed rent increase	Consultation	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
	Supporting People - Local Commissioning Plan	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.	Consultation	Service Manager Customer Support	
	Council Tax & Business Rate Statutory Policies	To ratify annual policies for the financial year 2016-17 that determine discount schemes and administrative arrangements	Consultation	Income Manager	
10 February, 2016	**Purchase of ex council stock**	To consider proposals and criteria for the repurchase of ex council property	Consultation	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
	Introduction of Council Tax Premium for empty and second homes	To seek the introduction of a local scheme to charge council tax premiums for long term empty property and second homes.	Consultation	Income Manager	

	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	
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	
	Review of the Fair Debt Policy	To review the impact of the Fair Debt Policy previously approved by Cabinet.	Assurance/Monitoring	Community & Enterprise Facilitator	
27 April, 2016	**Improvement Plan 2016/17**	To consult with Members on the Improvement Plan 2016/17	Assurance/Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
	Welfare Reform – Including Universal Credit	To update Members on the impact and risks of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Assurance/Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
	NEW Homes	To review the performance of NEW Homes	Assurance/Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
	Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP)	To review progress on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Project (SHARP)	Assurance/Monitoring	Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	

8 June, 2016	**Q4 – Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report and Chief Officer Performance Report.** **Use of Commuted Sums**	To enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring. To enable the Committee to review the use of Commuted Sums	Assurance/Monitoring Assurance/Monitoring	Community & Enterprise Facilitator Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)	
13 July, 2016					

Items to be scheduled

- Update on the suggestion for WHQS improvements to be delayed for tenants with long-term rent arrears.

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)

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