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To: All Members of the Council

8 June 2016

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Flintshire County Council which will be held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 14th June, 2016 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 **PRESENTATIONS**

SOCITM Better Connected Awards

The Council's Web Development and Customer Services teams in recognition of the Council's recent success in the SOCITM Better Connected Awards achieving Best Welsh Unitary Authority website and best Rubbish and Recycling Report a Missed Collection web service.

Youth Work Excellence Awards 2016

Flintshire Youth Forum for their success in being shortlisted in the 'Young Person Led Youth Work Project' category of the Youth Work Excellence Awards 2016.

City & Guilds Winter Service Operations

Streetscene Operatives in recognition of their City & Guilds Winter Service Operations success.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

3 **COUNCIL MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 56)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 16 February 2016, 1 March 2016, 10 May 2016 (AGM) and 10 May 2016 (special).

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

5 VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/17: INVESTITURE WITH CHAIN OF OFFICE AND ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Brian Lloyd was appointed as Vice-chair at the Annual meeting in his absence. He has already signed the declaration of office, but at this meeting will be formally invested with the Vice-chair's chain of office.

6 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose: To receive the communications as circulated.

7 PETITIONS

Purpose: To receive any Petitions.

8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Purpose: To receive any Public Questions.

9 QUESTIONS

Purpose: To note the answers to any questions submitted in accordance with County Council Standing Order No. 9.4(A).

10 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Purpose: The Minute Books, Editions 1 and 2 have been circulated to Members. Members are now entitled to ask questions on these minutes, subject to certain limitations, and answers will be provided at the meeting. Members are requested to bring to the meeting their copy of the Minute Books. Any questions must have been received by the Democracy and Governance Manager prior to the close of business on 8 June 2016.

11 NOTICE OF MOTION

Purpose: To consider the following Notices of motion

Councillor David Roney

Takeaway Litter

This Council calls upon the Welsh Assembly and Westminster Governments to introduce legislation requiring Hot Food Takeaways serving food to people in a motor vehicle to clearly mark all takeaway cartons with the registration number of that vehicle. This will enable the identification of the source of litter and assist in prosecution, saving the residents of Flintshire the cost of litter collection and also preserving the beauty of our countryside.

Abolition of free Theatr Cymru tickets

This Council accepts that Theatr Clwyd operates an industry-standard complimentary ticket policy to develop audiences and encourage sponsor and media patronage. The policy should not extend to giving complimentary tickets and drinks to Theatr Board Members, Councillors, Senior Officers and other officials who should be expected to meet the costs of their tickets and drinks at the Theatr. The Theatr Clwyd Board should remove these privileges from its policy.

12 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE COMMISSION** (Pages 57 - 78)

Report of Chief Executive enclosed

13 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/17** (Pages 79 - 150)

Report of Chief Executive enclosed

14 **POLICY AMENDMENTS - MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION & PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS** (Pages 151 - 176)

Report of Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) enclosed

15 **CLWYD PENSION FUND COMMITTEE**

The Council is advised that the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee have nominated Councillor Haydn Bateman as Vice-Chair for the 2016/17 municipal year. This is subject to Council approval, and so it is recommended that the nomination of Councillor Haydn Bateman as Vice-Chair of the Clwyd Pension Fund Committee for 2016/17 is confirmed.

Yours faithfully



Peter Evans
Democracy & Governance Manager

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be filmed for live broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 6 months.

Generally the public seating areas are not filmed. However, by entering the Chamber you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and / or training purposes.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
16 FEBRUARY 2016

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 16 February 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Ann Minshull, Tim Newhouse, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, David Williams, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Rosetta Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Jim Falshaw, Dennis Hutchinson, Hilary isherwood, Rita Johnson, Nancy Matthews and Billy Mullin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Corporate Finance Manager, Finance Manager - Corporate Accounting and Systems, Housing Asset Manager, Finance Manager – Community Services and Committee Officers

83. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016 had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chris Dolphin declared a personal interest in minute number 90 (Council Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17) as his son worked for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Councillor Richard Jones declared a personal interest in minute number 90 (Council Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17) as his wife ran a business in Buckley.

85. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

A copy of the Chairman's communications had been circulated to all Members before the meeting.

The Chairman explained that he had attended a concert by the Llwynegrin Singers and expressed his surprise and disappointment that it had been announced that the concert would be the last show by the Llwynegrin Singers as they were disbanding due to reducing numbers. He commented that they had raised over £38,500 for charities and had been well respected.

Councillor Peter Curtis, the Vice-Chairman, suggested that a letter should be sent from the Council to express sadness at the decision to disband and to give congratulations for their work.

RESOLVED:

That a letter be sent from the Council to express sadness at the decision to disband the Llwynegrin Singers and to give congratulations for their work.

86. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that no public questions had been received.

88. QUESTIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that no questions had been received.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer referred to the minutes of the previous meeting where it was indicated that a question had been received after the deadline for the 26 January 2016 meeting. The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that this meeting was to consider budget items and that the question would be submitted to the Council's next meeting on 1 March 2016.

89. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that none had been received.

90. COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

The Chief Executive introduced a report to provide Members with the recommendations of the Cabinet for the Council Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17.

The presentation to be provided to Members at this meeting would focus on the process of closing the budget gap and Cabinet had agreed a two part recommendation to this meeting and copies of this had been circulated to Members. The Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Finance Manager would briefly comment on the risk assessment of the proposals and provide Members with his statutory opinion as Section 151 Officer, which would override any other opinions, and the Chief Executive asked that the opinion be respected.

The Corporate Finance Manager and the Finance Manager – Corporate Accounting and Systems provided a detailed presentation, and commented on the following areas:-

- Content
- Cabinet Recommendations
- Budget Stages
- Budget Stage 1
- Summary of Revised Gap: Stage One Phase 1
- Summary of Revised: Stage One Phase 1
- Budget Stage 2
- Final Work to Balance the Budget
- Additional Service Issues
- Review of New and Emergent Pressures
- Workforce Efficiencies
- Council Tax
- Use of Reserves
- Other adjustments
- Summary of Final Balanced Position
- Risk Summary for In-year management
- Professional Opinions
- Looking Ahead
- Final settlement
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

At the close of the presentation the Chief Executive referred to the unquantifiable risk of the level of support that would need to be given to commissioned care providers as a consequence of their inflationary costs. This was recognised in the second recommendation from Cabinet to secure extra funding from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) from the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) for this purpose. He confirmed that the Final Settlement had not yet been received and that the budget assumptions and the advice given by the Corporate Finance Manager and Finance Manager – Corporate Accounting and Systems was based on the settlement not changing materially from the Provisional Settlement. The final details would not be received until early March 2016 but a macro Welsh budget had been recommended by Welsh Government and an updated draft had been provided which reflected only a slight change to the settlement for Flintshire and therefore the recommended budget from Cabinet should be unaffected. The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would end in 2017/18

and any budget pressures which were being financed from the Council Reserves would need to be settled within the base from 2017/18. Figures for 2017/18 were based on a notional reduction in Revenue Support Grant of 1.5% and an increase in Council Tax of 3% along with the reserves being repaid from 2016/17 prior to new pressures and efficiencies. Based on these figures the Council was still facing a gap of around £11m for 2017/18. In referring to the Local Government Bill which had been discussed at the previous meeting of Council the Chief Executive explained that the next MTFS would cover to the period 2018/19. If the Bill was enacted, then 2019 would be the year of Shadow Authorities; therefore planning up to that point was a prudent approach to take.

Councillor Aaron Shotton, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, commented on the long journey that had been taken to reach this position and he paid tribute to all officers, staff and Members for the significant work that had been undertaken during the difficult time due to unprecedented cuts. He referred to the significant concerns and a crisis of confidence in 2015 when comparing the values of this Council with the emerging strategy in other Councils and the proposals that they were putting forward such as closure of care homes and leisure centres and reducing terms and conditions for employees. He commented on the importance and value of the lobbying case and of the public engagement events undertaken to gain public support which enabled a strong message to be conveyed to Welsh Government (WG). Councillor Shotton referred to the MTFS and confirmed that work on this would continue.

The recommendation from Cabinet included an element to pursue additional funds with the Health Board, funds that Councillor Shotton believed the lobbying case had contributed to securing. These funds should be used to protect the current level of services that were provided particularly in residential and domiciliary care. To prevent any further service cuts it was recommended that £1.429m from the Council's reserves be used for those services that WG support had been sought for. It was therefore important that the lobbying campaign continued once the new WG was formed in May 2016. He added that, as long as he was Leader, he would continue to put forward the case for a fairer funding formula for Flintshire. The proposals being put forward would mean the protection for another year of services such as day care and leisure facilities and would allow an increase in school budgets of £1.4m through a combination of Council funds and the additional pupil deprivation grant. There would be an increased investment in critical social services by over £2m and Councillor Shotton welcomed the continued commitment to retaining the three Council run residential care homes. In conclusion, he said that this budget prioritised the future of young people and the most vulnerable residents and the Housing Revenue Account which would be considered later on the agenda would secure decent housing for people most in need. In the face of severe austerity, he was proud to be able to make the case for Flintshire residents.

In supporting the Leader's comments and in seconding the proposals, Councillor Bernie Attridge spoke of the balanced budget which saw an

investment in education and social care and a budget that protected the three care homes, leisure centres and swimming pools. He gave thanks to the Chief Executive, Chief Officers, the Finance Team and Cabinet colleagues for their work to achieve a balanced budget. He also thanked the role of Scrutiny in this process and hoped that all Members would support the budget.

Councillor David Healey asked whether any alternative budget proposals had been received by the Chief Executive or Section 151 Officer detailing the impact of each of the service departments and whether an alternative precept had been put forward. The Chief Executive responded that Members were not obliged to advise of any alternative proposals in advance of this meeting but it had been requested that any complex suggestions be shared in advance for advice to be given; the Chief Executive confirmed that no alternatives had been shared but a number of relevant and appropriate questions had been asked. Councillor Healey also asked if any of the proposals submitted to Scrutiny had been put forward at any stage in the process. In response, the Chief Executive explained that provisional dates had been suggested for all six Overview & Scrutiny Committees to re-meet in January but that it had only be necessary to convene the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny because of options open on the funding formula. The Committee had endorsed the 1% uplift for schools of £0.869m which was included in the proposals to Council.. Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee had also met at the end of January 2016 to introduce Stage one Phase two to Members and because of the 'mop-up' role of the Committee. At the closure of that meeting, there were no specific observations to be brought to the attention of the Council and no objections to the proposals had been received. Therefore, the views of the overview and scrutiny committees were represented in the final budget proposals.

Councillor Mike Peers referred to the numerous workshops and engagement events that had taken place and he agreed that it had not been an easy journey. He thanked the Corporate Finance Manager and officers for their responses to his enquiries. Stage One of the budget proposals had been supported by all six Overview & Scrutiny Committees and no new options had been sought. Cabinet had directed officers to work on proposals to close the budget gap at Stage Two from four work-streams but Councillor Peers said that it was reported that the budget came down to striking a balance between the level of Council Tax to be set and drawing upon reserves and balances. A Council Tax increase of 4.5% was proposed and in referring to the budget presentation slides, he said that it was reported that this would be a contribution to an unprecedented budget gap. Councillor Peers felt that previous increases of 3% had been a major contribution to the budget and added that it was also reported that the budget had been set within the context of the MTFs and stated that it had also been as the result of a significant reduction in funding (1.5%) from WG. He queried whether the increase in Council Tax would make up the difference in the reduction from WG and suggested that the Council was asking residents for an extra £0.862m. He felt that this was inappropriate as car parking charges had been introduced across the County, libraries had been closed and public transport was under threat so services were being reduced but residents were expected

to pay more. He disagreed with the increase of 4.5% and agreed that a balanced budget should be provided but he disagreed with the way this had been achieved in Stage Two. In referring to paragraph 1.06 where it was reported that the educational contribution to schools of 1% would be funded through the setting of Council Tax at 4.5%, Councillor Peers also referred to the MTFS document where it was reported that the Council was planning to meet the budget pressure for 2016/17 only. It was therefore a one off pressure and the Council was assuming a Council Tax rise of 3% for 2016/17. He therefore proposed an amendment that the Council introduce a 3% rise in Council Tax instead of 4.5% in line with the forecast and assumptions in the MTFS document for 2016/17 along with a contribution from the Contingency Reserves of £0.862m to provide a balanced budget for 2016/17. This was seconded by Councillor Clive Carver.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the amendment had been proposed and seconded and that the debate now should concentrate on the amendment rather than the substantive motion.

Councillor Aaron Shotton reminded Members that the £0.869m (1%) for the education budget to protect the existing budget and a real terms cash increase was not a one-off pressure. The substantive motion for the £0.869m would give schools protection against austerity for future years but the amendment put forward by Councillor Peers would only provide one-off one year security which was not sustainable.

The Chief Executive advised that the amendment was legitimate for debate. He explained that it was intended that the 1% to the schools budget would remain in the base for 2017/18 onwards and that if the amendment was approved, then the figure of £0.869m would need to be found from elsewhere for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and would become a budget pressure in itself. He commented on the varied rates of Council Tax raised over recent years. For the purposes of planning within the MTFS a notional increase of 3% had been included. He provided details of the predicted rates of Council Tax for the other North Wales authorities as comparators. He commented on Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) and said that Flintshire was still several million pounds short of the threshold even if Council Tax were to be increased by 4.5%. He further advised that it would be difficult to continue the argument with WG about being a low funded Council if SSA was not achieved over time and according to a plan.

The Corporate Finance Manager confirmed that the Council Tax funding was recurring in the overall budget and the school investment of £0.869m was built in on an ongoing basis. He did not support the additional use of reserves and reminded Members that the Contingency Reserve was in place to meet any in-year variation and would increase the budget gap for 2017/18 by £0.862m.

Councillor Tony Sharps supported the rise of 4.5% in Council Tax and welcomed the increase for education, social services and leisure centres. However, he raised significant concern about the service delivery and

unreliability within Streetscene. He did not know the reasons for the problems which he felt were in the provision of the refuse collection service and litter picking particularly within rural areas. Councillor Attridge made an offer to Councillor Sharps to meet with him to share the issues that he had raised and that were causing him concern.

Councillor Carol Ellis also supported the recommendation from Cabinet and requested, as Chair of Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee, that a special meeting of the Committee be convened to consider the issue facing the Council about residential care, specialist nursing and domiciliary care. On the amendment put forward by Councillor Peers, she said that other authorities either did not any longer run residential homes or were closing the facilities that they provided, and said that she could not support a lower Council Tax rise if this meant that the Council's residential homes and day care services would be closed. The Chief Executive said that the suggestion for a special Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting was important and was relevant to the budget because there was an unquantified budget pressure that residential care, nursing and other specialist care providers were facing with gross inflationary risks of up to 4.5% in year, mainly because of the living wage. This pressure was not funded nationally and was a material budget issue in-year, and the Chief Executive added that the residential and nursing care market was approaching full capacity and that the provider market was a fragile one. The meeting would specifically consider how to fund social care in the longer term and suggested that a meeting could be arranged within four to six weeks.

Councillor Gareth Roberts indicated that he could not support the amendment and expressed his surprise that an increase of 5% had not been proposed. He said that current spending was about 3% below SSA and commented on the amounts that could have been achieved if the increase had been 5% for 2015/16 and for 2016/17. He spoke of the risks referred to by the Corporate Finance Manager and commented on unexpected one-off pressures such as protecting against a harsh winter and increases in oil prices. He felt that an increase to 5% would result in a very small rise per week for Band D properties which was acceptable. He concurred that the Council could not afford to diminish reserves and balances and that it was better to be cautious on their use.

In seeking clarification from Councillor Ellis about the Council Tax rise level she had referred to, Councillor Clive Carver said that he did not recall Councillor Peers referring to a 1% reduction in Council Tax and only to reduce the increase in Council Tax to 3% and to utilise reserves for the remaining gap. He agreed with the comments of Councillor Sharps about service provision. Councillor David Healey opposed the amendment and felt that it would be inappropriate to take from reserves. He felt that the process of setting a balanced budget had been difficult and he was aware of the anger felt in some parts of Flintshire. The budget did support education, helped social care, kept residential homes open for another year and was to be commended as being the best that could be achieved in the circumstances. He suggested that it would be a mistake to take anything further from

reserves as the Council did not know the challenges it would face in the coming years. Councillor Healey commended those in the community who had been willing to volunteer to take some services over by way of Community Asset Transfer to protect services in times of austerity.

Councillor Robin Guest thanked and congratulated the officers and staff for their hard work on the budget proposals over the past 12 months. He accepted the words of the Leader on the budget which he felt Members had to accept would happen but had not recognised the Council Tax level reduction Councillor Ellis was speaking against. He referred to the MTFS document where it was reported that the Council would meet the one-off pressure for school funding formula only for 2016/17 and said that he was willing to support the amendment on the basis that the pressure was a one-off. However, if this was not the case then he was not able to support the proposal by Councillor Peers. Councillor Guest felt that the Contingency Reserve of £4.379m above the base level of reserves was more than sufficient to fund the one-off pressure and he did not think that it would have put the authority at risk. However, if the Contingency Reserves were earmarked for supporting other areas, he felt that this should have been made clear in the budget proposals.

The Chief Executive clarified that the second part of the MTFS on solutions and the schools funding formula referred to was where it was reported that the Council would meet only 1% of the schools pressure for 2016/17. However, the preceding sentences explained that schools were facing total pressures of up to 4% and therefore the Council was able to afford to fund only 1% of the 4% for 2016/17 in year and, as it was a recurring pressure, it could not be met from reserves. He said that it had been made clear at the Schools Budget Forum and the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee that this was a recurring commitment. The Chief Executive went on to explain that the Contingency Reserves had not been earmarked and were intended to be used for unforeseen pressures not recurring commitments. Councillor Guest welcomed the clarification but felt that the wording in the MTFS document could be misinterpreted. Councillor Peers felt that it was regrettable that there had been a misunderstanding but he asked that it be recorded that he fully supported education provision in the County and based on the advice provided, he formally withdrew his amendment which was also agreed by Councillor Carver as seconder of the proposal.

The Chief Officer (Governance) reminded Members that the substantive motion for consideration was the recommendation from Cabinet at its meeting earlier today.

Councillor Arnold Woolley expressed significant concern about the effect of a 4.5% rise in Council Tax on residents at a time of austerity and shortages in disposable income. He also queried how the Council Tax collection rate would be affected if the increase was imposed and what impact this would have on future gaps. He raised concern about the reliability and robustness of the figures that the officers had been working with and referred

in particular to a discussion at a recent Audit Committee meeting when the issue of consultancy costs, which differed from £2.5m to £0.480m, were discussed. Another area of concern was whether the savings from any Alternative Delivery Model Solutions (ADMS) had been included in the budget proposal calculations and what savings could be achieved from their implementation. Councillor Woolley also commented on a document entitled 'Ageing well in Wales' and how impacts of budget cuts on areas such as public transport could leave some residents being isolated which would have a significant impact on communities. Finally, he referred to the timing of budget setting after most Town & Community Councils had set their precepts and hoped that consideration would be given to any Town & Community Councils that were impacted by the proposals in the budget.

In response, the Chief Executive said that savings from ADMs and Community Asset Transfers (CAT) had been factored into the budget proposals; the three biggest ADMs had been considered at a meeting of Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee the previous day. A number of Town and Community Councils had also taken account of extra funding required for CATs where the Council was already undertaking a formal agreement. On the issue of debt, the Chief Executive reminded members that Flintshire's collection rate for Council Tax was one of the highest in Wales and an advantage of maintaining the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which was not fully funded by Welsh Government, was that those least able to pay for any rise in Council Tax would be protected through the benefits system.

Councillor Richard Jones thanked Sara Dulson, Gary Ferguson, Dave Ledsham and the Chief Executive for the information that had been provided following his requests for detailed information. He also acknowledged the £0.471m difference on page 31 had been a financial error in the way that it had been reported. He referred to the lobbying case for 2016/17 which he had not supported and which he felt had failed because WG would not listen. Councillor Jones suggested that there were four or six parts of the lobbying case which had not been achieved including no change in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). He said that the last revision of the MTFs had been late and had been carried out in September 2013 and felt that the gap of £52.8m over 3 years might have had a better outcome if it had been acted upon sooner. He concentrated on a few areas in relation to savings and efficiencies and welcomed the reinstatement of the £0.070m for the rewards scheme but raised concern that the proposal had been through the Scrutiny process without being challenged. Councillor Jones felt that it was not always obvious from the wording of the proposals what the outcome would be if agreement was given. He spoke of the introduction of the Integrated Transport Unit which would see an efficiency of £0.200m but the comments in the risk indicated that the ADM was still to be confirmed. It was also not clear which rural areas could be at risk of losing their bus services; Councillor Jones felt that it was important that Members were made aware of this information. A reduction in the Household Recycling Sites from seven to three was also proposed but again it was not clear which would be retained particularly when the Missed Waste Collection Service was being removed.

He referred to the £0.160m of efficiencies which named Town & Community Councils as the recipient of those costs for areas such as subsidy of bus routes, bus shelters and liability and maintenance of cemeteries. He felt that it would be better if the details were in the budget and set before Town & Community Councils set their precepts. He sought clarification on whether the figures for car park charges efficiency which was showing as £0.200m for this year and £0.400m for last year were correct.

In response to the comments relating to Streetscene and Transportation, the Chief Executive explained that there was a plan in place but further work was needed. He provided a factual precis on the lobbying case on four issues and explained that the Council had overachieved on one area, partly achieved on one and not achieved on two areas. The Council had been told to predict forecasts based on a minimum reduction of 3.5% reduction in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and had helped achieve a much lower reduction. Social Services had been mentioned exclusively and lobbying had helped make the case for extra investment but it was not yet clear how this additional funding could be accessed. The Council was in advanced discussions with BCUHB and therefore this had been partially achieved. The areas of no achievement were in the CTRS and charging in Social Care but discussions were ongoing nationally over raising the charging capping threshold substantially. A fifth area where collective lobbying had been successful was on specific grants such as the Supporting People funding and the new Single Environment Grant.

On the issue of the Integrated Transport Unit, Councillor Attridge explained that the report and the identified routes was considered by a recent meeting of Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report had been considered by Cabinet earlier today and had been approved.

The Corporate Finance Manager explained that the £0.200m for car parking charges was the full year effect of the car parking strategy that was agreed for 2015/16 budget proposals.

In supporting the budget, Councillor Alex Aldridge said that when Councillor Woolley was Leader of the Council, he began to create the gap between SSA and spending and Councillor Roberts was correct in his assumption that if spend had been to SSA, then the Council would not find itself in the situation that it was facing today. He welcomed the proposals which would see the retention of services for residents of the County such as the Pavillion in Flint. It was important that vulnerable people were taken care of and that those who had made a contribution over many years were not discarded. The Council was facing difficult and challenging times but he felt proud that a good and balanced budget was being proposed. He was delighted at the way the Leader had made representation at the highest level in Cardiff and said that it was not an easy job to convince other authorities to give away some of their bounty.

Councillor Paul Shotton spoke in support of the budget and said that numerous workshops and public consultations had been undertaken and it

had been scrutinised fully in an open and transparent manner. He indicated that the lobbying undertaken had worked in reducing the loss to the RSG which allowed a balanced budget to be presented to Members which included support for education and social care.

In referring to the Supporting People Commissioning Plan, Councillor Helen Brown said that it had been fully supported by Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee when it had been considered the previous week and was considered by Cabinet earlier today. The supporting people grant had seen a reduction of £18.4m over the past three years and a further £1m reduction was being proposed but as a result of lobbying £1m of services had been protected.

Councillor Chris Dolphin proposed that the vote be taken and this was duly seconded. The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that as a closure motion had been put forward and that it was for the Chair to decide if the matter had been sufficiently debated or if the remaining speakers could address Members. The Chairman agreed to hear the two remaining speakers.

Councillor Christine Jones said that lobbying would continue. She referred to the success of securing extra funding for the Intermediate Care Fund and discussions were still ongoing to lift the domiciliary care cap and the Minister had been helpful and supportive. She expressed concern that Councillor Richard Jones had already received information on the incentive payments and indicated that the cut had not been implemented following consultation.

Councillor Gareth Roberts said that to not increase Council Tax would result in a reduction in services and suggested that the public expected a realistic level of services. On Household Recycling Centres, if the numbers were reduced, he felt that this would result in increases in fly-tipping and therefore costs to clearing rubbish would rise. He raised concern about whether CATs taken over by Town & Community Councils or volunteers would be sustainable in the longer term. He referred to a possible further 2% reduction in WG funding for next year and spoke of savings by reducing staff numbers but reminded Members that redundancies required initial high costs and that savings would only be achieved in the longer term. He also commented on the use of consultants and agency workers and of employees who had been made redundant in the past but had been re-employed by the Council. Councillor Roberts commented on the proposed waste incinerator in Deeside which the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member had voted against the proposal. Various suggestions of costs had been put forward and figures of £20 to £30m had been identified and he expressed concern of what could have occurred if it had been refused with Flintshire needing to find the costs for compensating the other Councils involved.

As a point of clarity, Councillor Aaron Shotton said that neither he nor the Deputy Leader were members of the Planning Committee and asked Councillor Roberts to accept that fact and withdraw his comments. Councillor

Roberts said that Councillor Attridge had been imploring Members to vote against the proposal along with another Cabinet Member. Councillor Attridge asked Councillor Roberts to withdraw his comments and reiterated that he was not on the Planning Committee. Councillor Kevin Jones said that he had supported the waste incinerator and would continue to do so and as a Cabinet Member, and he suggested that Councillor Roberts' comments were out of order.

On the issue of redundancies, the Chief Executive said that redundancies were made through a detailed business case and costs were paid upfront from a special reserve set aside for this purpose which ensured that the efficiencies occurred immediately. He confirmed that the Council did not re-employ people who had been made redundant. There was a clear policy in place where no-one could be reemployed by the Council for a period of 2 years following their redundancy. Members of Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee had accepted that the Council was excelling the Wales Audit Office recommendations on how to undertake redundancies.

On being put to the vote, the recommendations from Cabinet were carried. Councillor Clive Carver asked that his vote against the recommendation be recorded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council approves a balanced budget for 2016/17 based on a combination of the previously adopted Stage One proposals, and the new Stage Two proposals of £3.517M as set out within Table 1 of the Cabinet report; and
- (b) That Council calls on Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to allocate a proportion of the additional Intermediate Care Fund monies granted by Welsh Government to assist the Council, in its capacity as a commissioner of care, in meeting the increasing provider costs within the local residential, nursing and specialist provider independent care sector to both sustain the provider market and protect the secondary and acute health sector from increased demand.

91. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 AND INDICATIVE PROGRAMME TO 2019/20

The Chief Officer (Organisational Change) introduced a report to propose the 2016/17 Council Fund Capital Programme and Indicative Programme for 2017/18 – 2019/20.

Councillor Mike Peers asked when the details referred to in paragraph 1.08 would be available. In response the Chief Officer (Organisational Change) explained that 2016/17 would be a transitional year in terms of the business cases and specific programmes of work. He indicated that business cases would be presented throughout the year and therefore the information in table 3 would expand as further information became available.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations within the report and this was duly seconded by Councillor Helen Brown.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council approves the allocations in paragraph 1.07 of the Cabinet report at its 16 February 2016 meeting for Statutory/Regulatory and Retained Assets sections of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2016/17 – 2019/20;
- (b) That the Council approves the schemes included in paragraph 1.11 of the Cabinet report at its 16 February 2016 meeting for the investment section of the Council Fund Programme 2016/17 – 2019/20; and
- (c) That the Council continues to support the existing process of allocating capital receipts to fund capital schemes generally only when the receipts have been actually received (paragraphs 1.03 and 1.04 of the Cabinet report at its 16 February 2016 meeting).

92. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2016/17 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) introduced a report to provide Members with the final proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital budget for the 2016/17 financial year including proposed rent increases.

The Chief Officer and Senior Manager - Council Housing Services provided a joint presentation and commented on the following areas:-

- Content
- Self-Financing
- 30 year business plan
- Housing Revenue Account
- Other Income
- Service Charges 2016/17
- Future phasing of service charges
- Principles Underpinning Efficiencies
- HRA Efficiency Proposals
- HRA Pressures
- HRA Capital Programme 2016/17
- Funding for HRA Capital Programme 2016/17
- Council house building programme

Councillor Helen Brown proposed the recommendation from Cabinet to approve the HRA budget for 2016/17. She said that the HRA had gone from strength to strength and services had improved particularly routine repairs and the time taken to let empty properties. She welcomed the self-financing initiative introduced in April 2015 and indicated that the increase of 1.4% (plus up to or minus £2) in rent was the lowest for a number of years. The report had been submitted to a recent meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet earlier today. The increase in garage rent was also recommended to be 1.4%. Councillor Brown was proud to be proposing a £21m budget for the investment in the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and commented that the annual budget had been less than £10m five years ago and that each Council house could achieve WHQS by 2020. The SHARP project would provide at least 200 new council homes and work would commence on site to build 12 properties in the coming weeks and a further 40 will be built later in the year. The work would provide opportunities for apprenticeships and work for local people and Councillor Brown referred to the Training Academy which had been the subject of a report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee recently and Cabinet earlier today. The Council would continue to work in partnership with tenants to receive feedback on the quality of the service. The proposal was duly seconded by Councillor Tony Sharps.

Councillor Neville Phillips sought clarification on the proposal to build bungalows as part of the Council house building programme and queried whether these would be one or two bedroom dwellings. Councillor Brown confirmed that a local market assessment would be undertaken to establish whether there was need for one or two bedroom bungalows in line with the needs of the area. In welcoming the investment in Council housing, Councillor Ron Hampson commented on the significant progress made and praised the decision to retain the housing stock in-house. He congratulated the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) and her team for their hard work. Councillor Aaron Shotton, said that the budget would enable the Council to build council housing and said that this was an example that lobbying worked. It had enabled the Council to bring in the self-financing initiative to enable 200 new council properties to be built. He also welcomed the achievements for the WHQS in the investment for the Council's housing stock and reiterated that the proposed rent increase was the lowest ever.

In referring to the debt charging information reported in the business plan, Councillor Mike Peers asked if this was as detailed in paragraph 1.02. He queried whether the interest rate was variable or fixed and whether the figures for later years were assumptions or actuals. The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) advised that a consolidated rate of interest across all of the Council's borrowing was charged to the HRA for its proportion of Council debt. The Finance Manager explained that the self-financing element was based on a rate specific for prudential borrowing for this purpose and a number of loans had been taken out based on what was most affordable for the Council with the loan terms varying from 19 years to 30 years. The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) confirmed that the Council had been able to secure good rates for its borrowing.

Councillor Kevin Jones welcomed the exceptional package before Members and the work that had been undertaken to reach this position. On the issue of service charges for future years, he asked whether it would be beneficial to include an amount to cover pest control on Council estates.

In referring to the WHQS, Councillor Richard Jones asked for details of the total figures for 2014 to 2017. The Finance Manager advised that details for 2015 to 2020 were included in the business plan and totalled £79m projected spend. The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) added that she would provide the requested information to Councillor Jones following the meeting. The Senior Manager - Council Housing Services advised that the whole WHQS investment for the six year period was £111m

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the recommendations of Cabinet from its meeting held on 16 February 2016 as set out in the report attached to the Council report.

93. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2016-19, TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES 2016-19, TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW 2015/16

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to present the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 for approval, along with the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2016-2019, Treasury Management Practices and schedules 2016-2019 and the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2015/16.

The various policy statements and practice and schedules were refreshed for approval every three years and Audit Committee reviewed the report in detail at its meeting on 27 January 2016. Some minor adjustments were recommended and adopted into the final version before submission to Cabinet earlier today where there were no changes or verbal updates to report to Council.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations as outlined within the report. This was duly seconded by Councillor Chris Bithell.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the following documents be approved:-

- Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17
- Treasury Management Policy Statement 2016-2019
- Treasury Management Practices and Schedules 2016-2019
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2015/16

94. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2016/17 TO 2018/19

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to present to Council the recommendations of the Cabinet in relation to the setting of a range of Prudential Indicators. He confirmed that Cabinet had not made any comments for consideration by Council.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations as outlined within the report. This was duly seconded by Councillor Kevin Jones.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council approve the Prudential Indicators for 2016/17 – 2018/19 as detailed in Section 1 of the report to Cabinet on 16 February 2016; and
- (b) That Delegated Authority be given to the Corporate Finance Manager to effect movements between the separately agreed limits within the authorised limit for external debt and the operational boundary for external debt (paragraphs 1.07.1 and 1.07.2 of the report to the 16 February 2016 meeting of Cabinet).

95. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION – 2016/17 POLICY

The Corporate Finance Manager introduced a report to seek Council approval in setting the annual policy for prudent Minimum Revenue Provision for the repayment of debt, which Local Authorities were required to do each year.

Councillor Bernie Attridge proposed the acceptance of the recommendations as outlined within the report. This was duly seconded by Councillor Kevin Jones.

On being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members approve for the Council Fund:

- Option 1 (Regulatory Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP for all capital expenditure funded from supported borrowing; this represents a continuation of the approved and adopted policy for 2015/16
- Option 3 (Asset Life Method) be used for the calculation of the MRP in 2016/17 for all capital expenditure funded from unsupported (prudential) borrowing or credit arrangements; this represents a continuation of the approved and adopted policy for 2015/216

(b) That Members approve for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA):-

- Option 2 (Capital Financing Requirement Method) be used for the calculation of the HRA's MRP in 2016/17 for all capital expenditure funded by debt; this represents a continuation of the approved and adopted policy for 2015/16.

96. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was one member of the press and no members of the public present.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 4.30pm)

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Chairman

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1 MARCH 2016

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 1 March 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chairman)

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Brian Dunn, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Tim Newhouse, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, Owen Thomas, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Chris Dolphin, Andy Dunbobbin, Hilary Isherwood, Ann Minshull, David Williams and Matt Wright

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Chief Officer (Planning & Environment), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Corporate Finance Manager, Interim Human Resources & Organisational Development Manager, Revenues Manager, Member Engagement Manager, Team Manager - Committee Services and Committee Officers

97. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sara Parker, the newly elected Member for New Brighton, to her first Council meeting. He also welcomed the Council apprentices who were present to observe the meeting.

The Chief Executive advised that the webcast of the previous meeting - the first to be made available on the website - had been accessed by almost 300 viewers.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bernie Attridge declared a personal interest on Agenda Item 11 'Proposed Alterations to the Local Resolution Procedure'.

Councillor Sharon Williams declared a personal and prejudicial interest on Agenda Item 7 'Notice of Motion' relating to attendance at meetings and advised that she would leave the room for the debate.

99. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman referred to his communications which had been circulated to all Members before the meeting, adding that he had also attended the official opening of Ysgol Tŷ Ffynnon in Shotton.

100. PETITIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that none had been received.

101. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr. John Yorke was invited to read out his question which had been included on the agenda.

“Planning Applications refused by this Council’s Planning and Development Committee against the recommendations of officers, often result in appeals by the applicant to the Welsh Planning Inspectorate. If the applicant chooses the written representation appeal process, this Council’s officers make no submission in support of members’ refusal, and simply submit as evidence their original committee report of recommendation.

For appeals via the informal hearing or public inquiry process, the Council’s officers submit a formal report of objection, sometimes prepared by external consultants. Are the Cabinet, Executive and the Council’s elected members aware of this seemingly unfair disparity when the written process is utilised by an applicant. Are they knowledgeable of, and in agreement with the officers’ actions when dealing with a written representation appeal, or do they agree there is a need to resolve that uniform professional protection is afforded to their electorate, regardless of appeal route chosen by the applicant.”

As the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Bernie Attridge provided a response which clarified the appeal process.

When asked if he wished to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Yorke questioned why the response was contradictory to the content of an email from the Chief Officer dated 13 November 2015. Councillor Attridge agreed to respond in writing to Mr. Yorke once he had had the opportunity to read the email.

RESOLVED:

That a written response be provided to Mr. Yorke on his supplementary question.

102. QUESTIONS

Councillor Tony Sharps was invited to read out his question which had been circulated to Members before the meeting, together with the response from the Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Could the Deputy Leader give a detailed explanation to council following his investigation as to why treatment works were not carried out on the evening of Monday, 11th January, 2016 - the morning of Tuesday, 12th January, 2016.

According to local press reports, over 60 vehicles were involved in accidents including a coach of Flintshire students taking them to college. Weather forecasters informed all North Wales that poor weather was on the way with wind, rain and frost.

For reasons only known to management, the gritters of Flintshire County Council failed to turn out. I should like to point out there was no shortage of grit or salt.”

Councillor Bernie Attridge drew attention to his detailed written response, which would also be made available alongside the agenda papers on the Council’s website. Councillor Sharps indicated that he had no supplementary questions.

103. NOTICE OF MOTION

(i) The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Aaron Shotton

“Flintshire County Council notes:

- The UK Government has set out plans in its Trade Union Bill that specifically impact on Local Authorities and our relationships with our employees and trade unions.
- The UK Government intends to grant ministers the power to cut so - called "facilities time" in the public sector. This is paid time-off, mutually agreed between employers and unions, for union reps to represent their members and negotiate with their employer.
- The UK Government also proposes to prohibit public sector employers assisting unions to collect their membership subscriptions through payroll (check-off) - even though this is used for a variety of other staff benefits such as cycle-to-work schemes and childcare vouchers, and even though unions often meet the costs of this.

Flintshire County Council believes:

- All workers should have the right to belong to, and be active in, an effective trade union.
- Trade unions play an essential role in ensuring good industrial relations.
- The facilitation of trade union representatives to carry out their roles and duties, and the collection of union dues by “check-off” are useful tools in ensuring good industrial relations.

Flintshire County Council resolves: Immediately to support the Union’s efforts to move members onto direct debit subscriptions, through:

- Allowing union officials access to workers.
- Allowing additional facility time to Union representatives to visit their members to achieve this aim.
- Allows the distribution of union material through our email, intranet, payslips, internal mail and other communication systems.”

Councillor Shotton spoke about increasing opposition to the UK Government’s proposed Trade Union Bill and described this as a threat to democracy across the country, paying tribute to the campaigning efforts of Unite, Unison Cymru and Welsh TUC amongst others. He explained that his Motion sought to address this by allowing Trade Union colleagues to continue to operate in a free and fair manner in organising and recruiting Trade Union members. He cited the significant work undertaken with Trade Unions on implementing the Single Status Agreement, adding that that it was in the interests of the employer to recognise the benefits of allowing Trade Unions to recruit and access members, and to enable employees to express their views. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

In support of the Motion, Councillors David Healey, Ian Dunbar and Paul Shotton highlighted the importance of having a mechanism for negotiation on industrial relations as recognised in the local steel industry, the negative impact of the Trade Union bill on local authorities and the need to protect good working conditions and relationships with Trade Unions for the benefit of local government workers.

Whilst Councillor Alison Halford praised the work of Trade Unions, she felt unable to make a decision until information was shared on facilities time allocated to Trade Union representatives to fulfil their roles, including that on Single Status, as this was not currently made available. She also felt it was important to seek the views of Group Leaders and therefore asked for the item to be deferred. Councillor Mike Peers voiced his support for Trade Unions but also welcomed a deferment of the item pending further information to assist the debate.

Councillor Arnold Woolley agreed with Councillor Halford’s view that details of the associated costs should be shared. In response to a comment on wording in the final paragraph of the Notice of Motion, the Chief Executive explained that this was intended to apply to all recognised Trade Unions.

In supporting the Motion, Councillors Peter Curtis and Dennis Hutchinson highlighted the involvement of Trade Unions in helping to resolve problems at an early stage and stressed that the Motion did not seek anything new but to continue with the current arrangements. Councillors Chris Bithell and Kevin Jones both referred to the potential negative impacts from the proposed Bill and welcomed continued appropriate levels of support for Trade Union colleagues to enable them to support the employer and employees.

Councillor Clive Carver agreed with Councillor Halford’s comments for clarity on the costs involved in facilities time and seconded the proposal to defer the item.

The Chief Officer (Governance) provided guidance on procedural rules, stating that the item could be adjourned rather than deferred, however the

Chairman would need to decide whether or not the item had been sufficiently debated without the information requested. The Chairman agreed to the Chief Executive's suggestion to allow other Members the opportunity to speak whilst officers considered the request for information.

Councillor Attridge requested a recorded vote on the substantive issue.

Councillors Carol Ellis and Alex Aldridge spoke in support of the Motion, commenting on the involvement by Trade Unions in empowering and supporting employees and the need to continue with the current arrangements.

Although Councillor Robin Guest agreed with the principle of the Motion, he felt that more detail should have been shared on the financial implications for the Council.

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the Council's legal obligations as the employer and gave a brief overview of the recognised Trade Unions currently working with the Council, adding that arrangements in Flintshire were consistent with other councils. In response to the comments made, he advised that the distribution of Trade Union materials incurred no cost to the Council and that Trade Unions paid for their own separate communications. The long-standing arrangement for the collection of monthly subscriptions from Trade Union members through the Council's payroll was facilitated by a charge recovered from Trade Unions. In respect of facilities time, it was noted that Unison (the largest Trade Union working with the Council) had 2.8 FTE (full-time equivalent) employees paid to carry out their duties, at no significant cost to the Council; information on the other Trade Unions could be provided if requested. The facilities agreement included the core capacity required by Trade Unions, however this was proportionate to the activity being undertaken. It was difficult to quantify the full cost of recognised work by the Trade Unions due to the range of activities over and above the core agreement, for example from assisting a Union member put at risk through to a greater level of input above the core capacity level, on the Single Status Agreement. In moving forward, there was a need to agree on an appropriate facilities agreement which should incur less costs through major activities. The Chief Executive referred to the stance taken by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) in supporting a continuation of the current arrangements and the implications for the Council if the Bill were to be implemented.

The Chairman stated that the matter had been thoroughly debated and gave Councillor Aaron Shotton the right of reply before moving to the vote. In responding, Councillor Shotton stated his respect for the positions taken.

Councillor Halford repeated her request for a deferral based on the outstanding information she had requested.

Following his earlier comments, Councillor Peers stated that Notices of Motion submitted to the Council should include all the necessary supporting information. Having previously supported an adjournment, he indicated his support for the substantive Motion in light of the information provided by the Chief Executive.

In conclusion, Councillor Aaron Shotton urged Members to support the Motion to protect the value of good Trade Union relationships, pointing out the implications of the Bill in restricting engagement between Unions and their respective members.

The Chairman indicated to proceed to the recorded vote based on the adequacy of the debate and information given by the Chief Executive. The requisite number of Members indicated their support for the recorded vote. On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was carried.

For the proposal:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Brian Dunn, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Rita Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Billy Mullin, Tim Newhouse, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

Abstentions:

Councillors: Clive Carver, Adele Davies-Cooke, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Owen Thomas

Prior to the start of the next item, Councillor Sharon Williams left the room and returned following the debate.

(ii) The following Notice of Motion was received from Councillor Tim Newhouse

“Council notes the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 section 85 and resolves that attendance by a member at a meeting of any committee or sub-committee of the Council as defined in section 85 (2) of the Act requires the attendance to be as a member of the committee, sub-committee or as appropriate or a substitute for a member. The fact of being a County Councillor and in attendance at such a meeting as an observer is not interpreted as attending as a member for this purpose, and that this is established as a convention in place of that approved by the Constitution Committee on 27 January.”

In support of his Motion, Councillor Newhouse asked Members to consider whether they felt it appropriate for Flintshire to be the only council in the UK where Members were entitled to their allowance if they attended two meetings per year, for a matter of minutes.

Prior to the debate, the Chairman asked that Members refrain from making comments that were personal to other Members, as this was a sensitive,

constitutional issue that would set a convention for all Members and not any one individual.

In opposing the Motion, Councillor Aaron Shotton clarified that there had been no changes to the Council's Constitution or the Local Government Act 1972 Act. He expressed concern that the Motion sought to overturn the democratic decision taken by the Constitution Committee some weeks earlier, pointing out that Section B of the Act referred to Members attending meetings of external bodies to represent their local authority. He referred to the detailed debate on this matter by the Constitution Committee resulting in agreement to support the Monitoring Officer's recommendation to interpret wording in the Act as including meetings where Members attended as observers, noting the common practice for Chairs to allow those individuals to participate if they wished.

Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the pilot of remote attendance which had been undertaken in recognition of Members' various commitments and felt that the Act had not been updated to take account of such commitments in changing times. He pointed out that a high proportion of Members' work took place outside committees including attending informal meetings on a regular basis which, although not recorded, were important elements of the role. Councillor Peter Curtis also spoke against the Motion, pointing out that the role of an elected Member involved more than attending meetings.

As Chairman of the Constitution Committee, Councillor Robin Guest pointed out that recommendations to the Committee could be overturned at Council by Members exercising their right to vote. He explained that there was no issue on timing as this was the first available Council meeting following the decision by the Constitution Committee where a number of strong views had been heard. In response to comments made, he agreed that there was an issue with interpretation of the legislation but pointed out that there had been previous opportunity to make changes to the legislation, which applied to all councils. He felt it was not a challenge to attend a meeting within six months to avoid disqualification.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Peers referred to Section 85 (2a) of the Act on the requirement for Executive Members' attendance which demonstrated that the legislation had been updated. He spoke about the expectation for Members to participate at meetings, as opposed to just observing, adding that there was a statutory provision for the Council to consider the reasons for a Member's non-attendance before the expiry of six months.

Councillor Clive Carver concurred, saying that the minimum attendance should be achieved and involve the respective Member signing in and taking part in the debate. He pointed out that the second resolution of the Constitution Committee was that the Council confirm the authority of the Monitoring Officer to decide whether a Member had complied with the six month rule and proposed the following amendment to be added to the Notice of Motion: "For the avoidance of any doubt, this new convention shall be used to determine the recent case which was referred to at the Constitution Committee on 27 January 2016." This amendment was seconded by Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that Councillor Newhouse could alter his Motion accordingly or put the amendment to the vote before the substantive Motion. Councillor Newhouse declined to adopt the amendment as part of his Motion. Following comments, the Chief Executive clarified that the outcome of the vote would apply to all Members including the case originally referred to.

Following procedural guidance from the Chief Officer (Governance), Councillor Carver indicated his willingness to withdraw the amendment as the original Motion would have the same effect. The Chief Officer confirmed that this was the case.

Speaking in support of the substantive Motion, Councillor Rosetta Dolphin alluded to the work of Town and Community Councillors and said there was an expectation for Council Members to attend the requisite number of meetings. Her request for a recorded vote was duly supported by the necessary number of Members.

Councillor Alison Halford spoke about the integrity of Members in representing their constituents. Councillors Richard Jones and Neville Phillips felt that this was a moral issue as Members were unable to represent their constituents by observing meetings. Councillor Hilary McGuill agreed that there was a moral issue and a need to clarify the meaning of the legislation.

The Chief Officer (Governance) clarified that the six month rule was contained in legislation and not the Council's Constitution. The aim was not to change the Constitution but to give Members the opportunity to comment on this sensitive issue arising from a gap in the caselaw and provide guidance for him to carry out his functions. For reference, he read out extracts from Section 85 of the Act relating to the six month rule and provision for Council to excuse non-attendance by a Member in advance of the end of that period. This also included provision for the six month rule to apply to Members of sub-committees, joint boards, working groups etc or Members representing outside bodies, however the examples given at the Constitution Committee had indicated the need for clarity on a 'voting member'.

Following queries raised by Members, the Chief Officer explained that his recommendation to the Constitution Committee was to seek confirmation on the proposed stance. The Chief Executive clarified that the matter had been referred to the Constitution Committee due to the lack of case law on applying the six month rule.

The Chairman allowed other Members the opportunity to speak before moving to the vote.

Councillor Arnold Woolley urged Members to consider the legal and moral aspects of the issue, along with the public perception on the decision made. Councillor Steele-Mortimer felt that interpretation of the six month rule had always been clear.

In concluding, Councillor Tim Newhouse repeated his opening statement and urged Members to support his Motion.

On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was lost.

For the proposal:

Councillors: Clive Carver, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Dennis Hutchinson, Ray Hughes, Rita Johnson, Richard Jones, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGuill, Tim Newhouse, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Neville Phillips, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Owen Thomas and Arnold Woolley

Against the proposal:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Ian Dunbar, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Billy Mullin, Vicky Perfect, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Carolyn Thomas and David Wisinger

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Notice of Motion on Trade Unions be supported; and
- (b) That the Notice of Motion on Member attendance at meetings be rejected.

Following the item, the Chairman announced a short adjournment in the meeting.

104. COUNCIL TAX SETTING FOR 2016-17

The Revenues Manager presented the report to formally set the Council Tax for 2016/17 by the statutory deadline. The Council Tax resolution included precepts relating to the County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales and all Town/Community Councils. The Council Tax charges/levels detailed in the report had been approved as part of the final budget proposals on 16 February 2016 with the proposed 4.5% increase in County Council precept equating to £1,071.41 per year on Band 'D' properties. The report also sought agreement to offer no discount in the level of Council Tax charges for second homes and long term empty homes (linked to the next agenda item) and to allow designated officers, including the Revenues Manager and his team, to institute legal proceedings and appear in Court on the Council's behalf in respect of unpaid taxes.

Councillor Mike Peers sought information on the £15,069,691 precept paid by the Council to the P&CC along with any impact on staff in collecting the amount. The Revenues Manager explained that this figure was the total premium levied for 2016/17 and equated to a £240.12 charge for each Band 'D' property. This was an increase of £4.68 or 1.99% from the previous year.

The Chief Executive referred to debate at the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee where it was clarified that the costs of the Police & Crime Commissioner and his office were funded by the Home Office and that

the Council's contribution was for the North Wales Police force. Whilst the Council had no direct role in challenging the precept amount beyond the Police & Crime Panel, concerns had been raised on the previously predicted increase in the precept. The final precept was lower than predicted. It was also clarified that the Council was unable to recover administrative costs for the collection of the precept.

As Chair of the Police & Crime Panel, Councillor Glenys Diskin gave an assurance that whilst the panel undertook careful scrutiny, it had no powers to make changes to the precept.

Councillor Carver requested that his vote against the motion be recorded.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2016-17 Council Tax be set as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) That no discount in the level of Council Tax charges for second homes and long term empty homes be offered; and
- (c) That designated officers issue legal proceedings and appear on behalf of the Council in the Magistrates' Court for unpaid taxes.

105. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM FOR LONG TERM EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) introduced a report seeking approval to introduce a premium on long-term empty homes and second homes from April 2017, as set out in the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In presenting the report, she explained that it was a key strategic priority for the Council to encourage individuals to utilise the range of support available, to minimise the number of empty homes and bring them back into use. There were currently over 800 empty properties which could benefit local people on the housing waiting list and help to meet the anticipated demand for social and affordable homes. Approval by full Council was required at this stage to allow the requisite 12 months' notice to be given to owners to charge the premium and to remind them of the support routes available to help bring their empty homes back into use.

The Revenues Manager explained that under the legislation, Welsh councils had the option to charge up to 100% additional Council Tax for long-term empty properties and second homes to meet local housing needs. The proposal to introduce a 50% premium for the first year starting in 2017/18 had been recommended by the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by Cabinet. Consultation with residents had resulted in two responses: one opposing the premium for second homes and the other raising concerns about empty properties for sale. However, the Welsh Government (WG) had introduced a range of safeguards to lessen the impact on residents, including granting a further 12 month exemption from April 2017 for owners of long-term empty properties for sale.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the aim to reduce the housing waiting list and tackle the problem of uninhabited empty properties which impacted on neighbourhoods, acknowledging the safeguards in place for specific cases. In response to a question, the Revenues Manager confirmed that the legislation allowed unoccupied properties with no probate granted to be exempt indefinitely from Council Tax until such time as probate was granted. Councillor Aaron Shotton seconded the proposal and thanked the officers for the detailed report.

Councillor Mike Peers raised points about the need to understand the implications of the new regulations and the effects of reducing government grants. He felt that examples could have been provided to support the rationale of introducing a 50% premium and its impact, and suggested an amendment for a variable 25% premium to be applied in the first year depending on the condition of the building. This was seconded by Councillor Owen Thomas.

The Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise) explained that although details of the new regulations had only recently been received, discussions had been ongoing for some time in preparation for the new legislation. Despite the Council's stance in charging full Council Tax on empty homes in the county and actively promoting the range of support available to minimise empty homes, over 800 homes were currently empty. It was for this reason that a premium of 100% had been considered, however 50% was proposed to be consistent with the other councils across the region.

In response to comments from Councillor Alex Aldridge on the proposed amendment, the Chief Executive confirmed that this was a Council matter and was therefore subject to legitimate challenge. He explained that the 50% benchmark had been set in view that this was new legislation.

The Revenues Manager stressed the importance of a determination by Council 12 months' ahead of implementation. In response to the amendment, he stated that WG guidance gave councils the option to vary their determination within the 12 month period, however he felt it was important to state clearly and show consistency on the determination.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

In response to a query from Councillor Clive Carver, the Chief Executive said that monies raised by the Council contributed to local services and that charges for second homes were legitimate. Councillor Gareth Roberts welcomed the recommendations in addressing long-term uninhabited houses which were a blight to local communities. In supporting the recommendations, Councillor Kevin Jones commented on the 12 month exemption for long-term properties put up for sale and the need for the Council to benefit from the value of sold properties which had been brought up to standard.

The Revenues Manager advised that the Council decision would take effect on long-term empty properties and second homes from 1 April 2016, giving 12 months' notice before the premium was applied or extending for a further 12 months for properties for sale, giving opportunity to encourage owners to bring their properties back into use.

Councillor Richard Jones referred to the figures in the report and asked about the expected number of exceptions. Officers explained that exemptions had not been taken into account as this was difficult to predict at this time, however 'real time' information would be shared with Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny over the next 12 months. It was acknowledged that the figures quoted would include some genuine cases where there would be a deferral of the charge.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the council tax premium scheme be introduced from 2017-18;
- (b) That a 50% premium be adopted for the first year of implementation in 2017-18 for properties classed as second homes and long term empty homes; and
- (c) That the premium level during the first year of implementation be reviewed with a view to increasing the rate from 2018-19 after taking into consideration the effectiveness of the new policy in incentivising owners to bring long term empty property and second homes back into full use.

106. PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2016/17

The Chief Executive presented the report to seek approval of the Council's Pay Policy Statement in line with the legal requirement to publish this annually before 31 March 2016. He explained that there were no differences from previous agreements of the Council and that the request for delegation related to the nationally agreed pay awards over the summer period.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17, as appended to the report, be approved; and
- (b) That the Interim HR & OD Manager, on behalf of the Chief Officer (People & Resources), be given delegated authority to make amendments as necessary to reflect the nationally agreed pay awards, once finalised, without the requirement to return to full County Council.

107. PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report seeking approval on proposed alterations to the Local Resolution Procedure (LRP), as recommended by the Standards Committee and Constitution Committee. The changes were to impose a 30 day time limit for referral of complaints to the Monitoring Officer from the date that the complainant becomes aware of the incident giving rise to the complaint, and to add a time limit to resolving complaints under the LRP of 12 months. A further recommendation was for these time limits to be extended at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED:

That the amended wording to the Local Resolution Procedure (as highlighted in tracked changes to the current Local Resolution Procedure at Appendix 1 to the report) be approved and adopted.

108. TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

A report was received to seek views on holding Council meetings at 5pm during the next municipal year, following a recommendation by the Democratic Services Committee. This would provide an opportunity to consider and comment on whether a more flexible arrangement would help to accommodate Members with other responsibilities. The results of a survey being undertaken would seek Members' preferences on times for committee meetings.

In view of the number of Members remaining at the meeting, Councillor Aaron Shotton felt that all Members should be given the opportunity to discuss the matter at the Annual General Meeting. Whilst supporting the principle of holding Council meetings at 5pm, he felt it was important to examine a variation of times to encourage wider attendance in the interests of diversity. He proposed an amendment to accept the recommendation by the Constitution Committee to conduct the survey and to bring the outcomes to the AGM. This was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

Whilst Councillor Mike Peers supported the amendment, he felt that the survey should take account of a range of meetings to accommodate all Members.

Councillor Alex Aldridge said the debate at the Democratic Services Committee had recognised the need to accommodate Members with commitments during the day. He supported the principles of the amendment but felt it important that the survey acknowledge Members' commitments to Town and Community Councils.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the Democratic Services Committee had resolved to consider the results of the survey at its meeting on 27 April 2016. The amendment put forward by Councillor Shotton would seek a decision at the AGM, informed by the discussion of the Committee.

The Chief Executive said that the survey should include wider consideration of the impact on meetings of school governing bodies and other external bodies.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of considering the timing of other important meetings such as Town and Community Councils and school governors. Councillor Richard Jones asked that the survey also seek views on whether Members wished to continue with the August recess. Councillor Chris Bithell referred to the proposed 5pm meeting start before the survey had taken place and stressed the importance of ensuring all Members had the opportunity to air their views.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation by the Constitution Committee to conduct the survey on Members' preferences be accepted, with the outcome to be discussed at the Council's AGM, following consideration by the Democratic Services Committee on 27 April 2016.

109. CONTRACTS REQUIRING SEALING

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report seeking approval to amend Section 12.10 of the Constitution in relation to certain categories of contracts to be 'under seal' (to have the Council's official seal attached rather than being signed by a manager). The removal of the suggested wording would clarify the requirement for contracts exceeding £250,000 to be executed under seal, as set out in the categories within the Contract Procedure Rules.

In response to a query from Councillor Mike Peers, the Chief Officer provided clarification on the consultation process for the Contract Procedure Rules.

RESOLVED:

That Section 12.10 of the Constitution be amended by deleting the words struck out as follows:

"Authentication of Documents

~~Where any document is necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Chief Officer, Governance or other person authorised by him/her, unless any enactment otherwise authorises or requires, or the Council has given requisite Authority to some other person. Notwithstanding any arrangements set out within the Contract Procedure Rules which may require particular forms of contract for contracts of a lesser value, the Council expressly resolves that any contract with a value exceeding £50,000 entered into on behalf of the local Authority in the course of the discharge of a Executive Function shall be made in writing. Such contracts must either be signed by at least two officers of the Authority or made under the common seal of the Council attested by at least one officer."~~

110. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and 13 members of the public present.

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 5.35 pm)

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Chairman

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
10 MAY 2016

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 10 May 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Ray Hughes (Chair)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Veronica Gay, Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Colin Legg, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Ann Minshull, Tim Newhouse, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Neville Phillips, Gareth Roberts, Ian Roberts, David Roney, Tony Sharps, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Rosetta Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Jim Falshaw, Alison Halford, Hilary Isherwood, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Nancy Matthews, Billy Mullin, Mike Reece, Owen Thomas and David Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Organisational Change), Chief Officer (Planning and Environment), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Member Engagement Manager and Team Manager – Committee Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that for agenda Item 11 - Schedule of Member Remuneration, a personal interest would automatically be recorded for all Council Members present.

2. CHAIR'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2015/16

The Chair said it had been a great honour to be appointed Chair of the Council which had provided him with the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life, many of whom he now considered friends of himself and his consort, Gwenda.

He commented on the range of opportunities he had been able to be a part of which included meeting many leaders of industry, being part of Flintshire Business Week, the North Wales Armed Forces Day, the Pride of Flintshire Awards and the Japanese Youth Exchange. He also commented on the number of schools and youth groups that had visited County Hall along with visits to schools by himself. He and his consort had also attended a number of

neighbouring Authorities charity dinners and Civic Services from Powys to Anglesey.

He paid particular thanks to Reverend Pat Christopher who had been his Chaplain for the year and expressed his gratitude to the Vice-Chair, Councillor Peter Curtis and his Consort for their support, together with that from the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. He also relayed her thanks to the Civic & Member Services team for their excellent support throughout the year. In closing, he announced that he had raised over £19,000 for his chosen charities. He had given £5,000 each to Leeswood branch of the Nightingale House Hospice, Clwyd Special Riding Centre and the Guide Dogs for the Blind, Mold with the remainder of the money shared between his numerous local organisations.

On behalf of their respective groups, Councillors Aaron Shotton, Mike Peers, Tony Sharps, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and Chris Dolphin paid tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Chair during the year which he had carried out with great dignity and was a true ambassador for Flintshire. As Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor Derek Butler also paid tribute to the Chair who had been an excellent advocate for Flintshire businesses during his term of office.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/17, INVESTITURE OF CHAIN OF OFFICE AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

It was proposed by Councillor Kevin Jones and seconded by Councillor Aaron Shotton that Councillor Peter Curtis be elected Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2016/17 and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Peter Curtis be elected Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2016/17.

Councillor Curtis was invested with the Chain of Office by the retiring Chair and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Chief Executive.

(From this point, Councillor Peter Curtis chaired the remainder of the meeting.)

The Chair then presented Councillor Hughes with his retiring Chair's Badge of Office and presented Mrs Gwenda Hughes with her retiring Consort's Badge of Office.

The Chair thanked Members for electing him as Chair for the year ahead and paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, Councillor Ray Hughes for the manner in which he and his consort had acted as ambassadors for the Council.

On behalf of the officers, the Chief Executive congratulated the Chair and thanked the out-going Chair, Vice-Chair and their Consorts.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/17, INVESTITURE OF CHAIN OF OFFICE AND SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

It was proposed by Councillor Hughes and seconded by Councillor Aaron Shotton that Councillor Brian Lloyd be appointed Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2016/17 and on being put to the vote, was carried. Unfortunately Councillor Lloyd was unable to be at the meeting as he was attending the Queen's Garden Party.

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that Councillor Lloyd would sign his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Chief Executive the following day which would be repeated formally at the next County Council meeting on 14 June 2016.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Brian Lloyd be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Council for the municipal year 2016/17.

5. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Roberts and seconded by Councillor Tony Sharps that Councillor Aaron Shotton be appointed Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2016/17 and on being put to the vote, it was carried.

In support of his proposal, Councillor Roberts praised Councillor Shotton for his work over the previous year in the current difficult economic climate, including the difficult challenges ahead. He commented on the required skills of leader, all of which Councillor Shotton had.

In seconding the proposal, Councillor Sharps commented on the excellent work undertaken by Councillor Shotton in the previous year as a Leader who was widely respected in Welsh government.

In response, Councillor Shotton thanked all Members for their renewed trust and confidence in him as Leader of the Council. He said that the Council continued to face enormous budget challenges and he was pleased to lead the Council during this time. In closing he added that he would continue the lobbying campaign to Welsh Government, following the election, with the aim of protecting local services.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Aaron Shotton be appointed Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2016/17.

6. APPOINTMENT OF THE CABINET BY THE LEADER

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Aaron Shotton, reported on his choice of Councillors to serve on the Cabinet which was to remain unchanged from the previous year.

RESOLVED:

That the choice of Councillors to serve on the Cabinet and their portfolios detailed below, be noted.

<u>Cabinet</u>	<u>Portfolio</u>
Aaron Shotton	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Finance
Bernie Attridge	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Environment
Chris Bithell	Cabinet Member for Education
Helen Brown	Cabinet Member for Housing
Derek Butler	Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Christine Jones	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Kevin Jones	Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection & Leisure
Billy Mullin	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management

7. CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS: COMMITTEES

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report which dealt with matters requiring decisions at the Annual Meeting of the County Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 1.1 (vii) – (xiv). Those matters were set out in separate sections of the report.

(A) Appointment of Committees

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained the requirement within Council Procedure Rules for certain committees to be appointed at the Annual Meeting, which were:

- Audit Committee
- Clwyd Pension Fund Committee
- Constitution Committee
- Democratic Services Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Planning and Development Control Committee
- Standards Committee

In addition, there were six Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Community and Enterprise
- Corporate Resources
- Education and Youth
- Environment
- Organisational Change
- Social and Health Care

Councillor Attridge moved approval that the County Council confirm the appointment of the Committees as outlined in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jones and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council confirm the appointment of the Committees as outlined in section 1 of the report and above.

(B) Determination of the size of Committees

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that the Annual Meeting must decide upon the size of each of the Committees it had appointed. The Constitution made provision for the size of the Committees which were:

Audit Committee	7
Constitution Committee	21
Democratic Services Committee	21
Licensing Committee	12
Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee	15
Pensions Committee * (in addition to the places listed there are 4 places for co-optees)	5
Planning & Development Control Committee	21

Councillor Attridge moved approval that the County Council confirm the size of the Committees as detailed in the report and above which was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jones and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council confirm the size of the Committees as outlined in the report and above.

(C) Terms of Reference of Committees and Pension Delegations

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that the Annual Meeting was required to decide the Terms of Reference of the Committees that it had appointed and that these were set out in Part 2 of the Constitution.

Councillor Attridge moved approval that the County Council confirm the current Terms of Reference of the Committees which was seconded by Councillor Kevin Jones and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the terms of reference for each Committee in Part 2 of the Constitution be approved.

(D) Political Balance

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that at, or as soon as practicable after the Annual Meeting, Members were required to decide the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the Political Balance Rules contained in the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended.

It was a statutory requirement that Committee seats should be allocated to political groups in so far as practicable in the same proportion as those groups had to the total membership of the County Council. Appended to the report was an option that met the Rules contained in the Act.

Councillor Attridge proposed that the County Council confirm the allocation of seats and political balance as outlined in Appendix 1. This was seconded by Councillor Christine Jones.

Councillor Mike Peers moved an amendment and proposed an alternative option that was handed out to Members, Option 2. Councillor Peers said his proposal did not make any significant changes but would result in the Independent Alliance Group having three Members on both Constitution Committee and Democratic Services Committee, which was one less on Constitution Committee as shown on Option 1, and one more place on Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was his proposal that the New Independents lose one place on Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and gain one place on Constitution Committee. This had been suggested with the support of the New Independents Group Leader. On being put to the vote this was lost.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion which was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the allocation of seats and political balance for each Committee be agreed as Appendix 1 (Option 1).

(E) Appointment of Chairs of Standing Committees

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that Committee Chairs were appointed by different bodies with some being subject to restrictions. A table in the report provided details of which body was to appoint which Chair.

For the Committees that the County Council was responsible for appointing the Chair, Councillor Aaron Shotton moved the following, which was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge and on being put to the vote, was carried:

- Clwyd Pension Fund Committee - Councillor Alan Diskin
- Constitution Committee - Councillor Robin Guest
- Democratic Services Committee - Councillor Robin Guest
- Licensing Committee - Councillor Tony Sharps
- Planning & Development Control Committee - Councillor David Wisinger

It was reported that the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny committees were chosen by the political groups and were dependent on the strength of the various groups and which groups had seats on the Cabinet. The two groups with seats on the Cabinet comprised 57.14% of the total number of Councillors and were entitled to three of the six seats. The remaining three seats must be allocated between the other four groups. The larger sizes of the Independent Alliance and Conservative groups meant they were entitled to one seat. The Liberal Democrat group and New Independent group were the same size and had the same entitlement. Therefore Council must decide which group was to be allocated the remaining chair.

Councillor Aaron Shotton moved the following, which was seconded by Councillor Attridge:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Group to Choose Chair
Community and Enterprise	Labour
Education and Youth	Labour
Social and Health	Independent
Organisational Change	Independent Alliance
Environment	New Independents
Corporate Resources	Conservative

Councillor Aaron Shotton then provided names of the following Labour Members to be appointed as Chairs which was seconded by Councillor Attridge:

Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Ron Hampson

Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Ian Roberts

Councillor Sharps provided the name of the Independent group member for the following:

Social & Healthcare Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Ellis

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following Members be appointed Chair of the Standing Committees as indicated below:-

Constitution Committee - Councillor Robin Guest

Clwyd Pension Fund Committee - Councillor Alan Diskin
Democratic Services Committee - Councillor Robin Guest
Licensing Committee - Councillor Tony Sharps
Planning & Development Control Committee - Councillor David Wisinger

- (b) That the Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees be allocated to the following groups:

Community and Enterprise	Labour
Education and Youth	Labour
Social and Health	Independent
Organisational Change	Independent Alliance
Environment	New Independents
Corporate Resources	Conservative

(F) Local Choice Functions

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that the Council was required to agree such parts of the Scheme of Delegation relating to those local choice functions which could be decided either by the Council or the Cabinet and/ or delegated to officers.

On being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the existing Local Choice Issues be confirmed.

(G) Nominations to Internal Bodies

The Chief Officer (Governance) reported that the existing Scheme of Delegation provided for an Appointments Committee for first and second tier officers comprising of seven Members. This was not a Standing Committee and was convened when required by seeking nominations from Group Leaders. Previously it had been usual for Committee Members to be politically balanced including the relevant Cabinet Member. The Council had previously agreed that the Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee be one of the Members of the Committee. It was recommended that the Council continue the previous practice.

On being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of an Appointments Committee, as detailed in section 8.01 of the report, be agreed.

(H) Standards Committee

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that the Standards Committee included five independent members, a Community Council member and three County Councillors (not to be the Leader or a Cabinet Member). The three County Council Members were appointed at the last Annual Meeting for a period of four years.

RESOLVED:

That the three County Councillors on the Standards Committee be noted.

8. CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report which provided details of the changes to the National Model Code of Conduct for Councillors. The changes were set out in the appendix to the report and had been reported to both Standards Committee and Constitution Committee.

Any changes to the Code of Conduct must be advertised as soon as reasonably practical with the advert being in a local newspaper stating where a copy of the Code could be inspected.

To save Town and Community Councils the cost of advertising, they had been invited to share the County Council's advert. To do so they had to notify officers no later than 31 May 2016 that they had adopted the national model or revised their Code, and provide a copy of it for inspection.

On the amendment "permitting a Councillor with a prejudicial interest to make written representations to a Committee on a matter provided the public have a right to speak at that Committee", Councillor Clive Carver asked if those written representations would be read out. The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that the Code did not state that and this was something that could be considered at Planning Strategy Group. Councillor Carver then moved an amendment to include the following along with the recommendations as printed "That if a Councillor exercises the right to make written representations then those should be read out by an officer at the Committee". On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

Councillor Attridge moved the substantive motion which was seconded by Councillor Aaron Shotton and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to the national model Code of Conduct for Councillors as part of the Flintshire County Council Code of Conduct with effect from the Annual Meeting on 10 May 2016 be adopted; and

- (b) That it be noted that the County Council will place a joint advert announcing changes to the code on behalf of Town and Community Councils (subject to certain conditions).

9. OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report on outside bodies which detailed those that the Council made appointments to, together with the nominees and the term of office.

The Council was recommended to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Leaders, the ability to make any changes to those nominations. The terms of office for all outside bodies was until May 2017.

Councillor Aaron Shotton moved approval of the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Attridge.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the current Outside Bodies list be noted; and
- (b) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with Group Leaders, be authorised to make any changes to the Council's nominations which may become necessary.

10. SCHEDULE OF MEMBER REMUNERATION

The Member Engagement Manager presented on the Schedule of Member Remuneration for 2016/17.

Consultation had been carried out on the proposals with the final report being published in February 2016 which provided for the levels of payment to Members to remain as they were for 2015/16, with the basic allowance payable to all elected Members remaining at £13,300 p.a., The levels of payment to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair of the Council, Vice Chair and leader of the largest opposition group were also to remain the same as they were for 2015/16. The maximum number of senior salaries payable by local authorities had also not been changed with the maximum number for Flintshire remaining at 18.

In the draft proposals there were two tiers of Cabinet Member and Committee Chair payments which the Council was opposed to at the meeting on 20 October 2015. Following the consultation and meetings between Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) representatives and Heads of Democratic Services across Wales, the two tier approach had not been made mandatory but was now available as a 'flexible approach'. Level 1 for Executive (Cabinet) Members was £29,000 and level 2 was £26,100. For Committee Chairs, level 1 was £22,000 and level 2 was £20,000 but given that the Council was opposed to that the previous autumn, it was considered unlikely that there would be any support for that now so it was not recommended for implementation.

On payments to the Civic Head and Deputy the IRPW gave local choice to Councils as to which of the three bands outlined in the report it wished to apply. For the last two years the Council had determined that the middle band 'b' was the appropriate one for Flintshire with the remuneration for the civic head at £21,500 and the deputy civic head at £16,000.

Councillor Attridge moved the recommendations of the report which was seconded by Councillor Dunbar and on being put to the vote, was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That level 1 be paid to all Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs;
- (b) That band b be approved as the level of payment for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council; and
- (c) That the Schedule of Member Remuneration shown in Appendix 1 be approved for 2016/17.

10. COUNTY COUNCIL DIARY OF MEETINGS 2016/17

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the draft Diary of Meetings for 2016/17.

A survey had recently been undertaken amongst Members to ascertain their preferences for when formal meetings should be held. The Democratic Services Committee recommended, following consideration of the survey, that the status quo be maintained for the life of this Council. The new Council elected in May 2017 would be invited to review its meeting arrangements.

Councillor Attridge moved approval of the draft Diary of Meetings 2015/16 which was seconded by Councillor Aaron Shotton.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Diary of Meetings for 2016/17 be approved.

11. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the press and 10 members of the public present.

(The meeting started at 11.00am and ended at 12.32pm)

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Chair

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
10 MAY 2016

Minutes of the Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 10 May 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Curtis (Chairman)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, Clive Carver, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Ron Hampson, George Hardcastle, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Hilary isherwood, Joe Johnson, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Sharon Williams, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Alex Aldridge, Marion Bateman, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Brian Dunn, Robin Guest, Alison Halford, Rita Johnson, Brian Lloyd, Nancy Matthews, Ann Minshull, Billy Mullin, Tim Newhouse, Neville Phillips, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Owen Thomas and David Williams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Governance), Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision and Committee Officer

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared a personal interest as they were School Governors:-

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Haydn Bateman, Helen Brown, Derek Butler, David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, Ron Hampson, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Hilary isherwood, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Gareth Roberts, David Roney, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, David Wisinger, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

14. REFERRAL OF A CALL IN DECISION FROM THE EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report and explained that this was the first time the Council had been asked to consider a decision following a call-in. He explained that it was proposed that the instigators of

the call-in be permitted to speak first, with the decision makers then being able to respond, followed by a debate by all Members.

Councillor David Healey expressed concern about whether discussion at Council was in accordance with the Constitution and whether it set a precedent. He said that option 4 had been chosen by the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the Call-in meeting on 28th April 2016, but at previous call-ins, Members had been given clear guidance that option 4 was not a viable option as any decision made by Council would need to be referred back to Cabinet as the decision makers. He felt that the decision to refer it to Council had raised the hopes of pupils, parents and staff at the school. Councillor Healey suggested that the report not be considered by Council at this meeting, but be referred back to Cabinet as soon as possible.

In response, the Chief Officer (Governance) confirmed that it was an 'Executive decision' and that Council could only consider the issue and make a recommendation to Cabinet. The Chief Executive confirmed that this was a properly convened meeting and provided details for Members of the paperwork that had been despatched with the agenda.

Councillor Clive Carver felt that option 4 allowed all Members of the Council to debate the issue, not just those on Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer said that he had proposed that option 4 be agreed as he felt that a matter of such importance, which was the future of rural schools, should be discussed by all Councillors. He said that Ysgol Maes Edwin had been earmarked for closure and suggested that it should be recommended to Cabinet that the school not be closed and that further discussions on its future be allowed to take place. He said that in June 2015 there were 73 pupils in the school which was only two below the figure specified when considering the sustainability of a school. On the issue of local usage of the school, Councillor Steele-Mortimer said that it did not matter whether the children being educated at Ysgol Maes Edwin were from Flint Mountain or not. He said that the school may have been chosen by parents because they had close relatives living in the village. He commented on educational status and said that a number of children had come from bigger schools where they did not get on so well and added that parents and teachers had commented on the improvement in the children because of their attendance at Ysgol Maes Edwin. In referring to a federation, he said that time had been given to enter into a federation but a proposal had not been submitted. He felt that Flintshire County Council had a duty to force a federation and could have taken a more proactive approach. He asked Members to vote in favour of keeping the school open and requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Paul Cunningham asked whether the resources were in place to open a new school if one was required in the future and what would happen to the community if Ysgol Maes Edwin closed. He queried whether the data that had been put forward was reliable and where the children that

would live on the housing developments that were being delivered in the local area would be educated if the school was to close. He asked officers to examine the data and carry out additional modelling work on developments in Flint Mountain so that the demand for school places in the area could be identified. Councillor Cunningham asked if the option of a federation could be re-examined, the robustness of the data be reconsidered and the requirement from future developments be examined and that until all of this work was carried out, that the threat of closure be lifted. He spoke of the dynamic Headteacher at the school and the good reports that were received from Estyn. He felt that to close Ysgol Maes Edwin would remove the parental choice and he expressed concern that sending the pupils to bigger schools would have a negative impact on their education. He supported the recommendation made by Councillor Steele-Mortimer.

Councillor Vicky Perfect referred to the proposal to close the school that had been made at the time when the pupil numbers were only two below statutory requirements. She referred to the upheaval a decision to close the school would have on the pupils, their families and the staff at the school and said that 40 children now attended the school and additional families were awaiting confirmation of places. She felt that the £90,000 that had been spent on the school buildings at a time of threatened closure was a misuse of monies. She also commented on the six pupils in attendance at the school who were from Flint Mountain and the issue of parental choice that would be taken away if the school was closed. Councillor Perfect suggested that the threat of closure be lifted for one year to allow a federation to be pursued. She also added that the school had made £40,000 of revenue savings for this year.

Councillor Dave Mackie said that he had requested more recent data on school places but none had been forthcoming. He felt that what had been provided was misleading and in agreeing that there were sufficient vacant places in the area if the school closed, he raised concern that the number of vacant places was too low for future demand. The vacancy rate at primary schools in Flint was 8% and this figure would reduce to 2% if Ysgol Maes Edwin closed; information on the Welsh Government website suggested that this figure should not be higher than 10%. Flint had been placed in a group with Bagillt and this area had an 8% vacancy rate which dropped to 4% if Ysgol Maes Edwin closed and schools in Northop Hall and Ysgol Owen Jones had rates of 10% which would reduce to 6% if Ysgol Maes Edwin closed. The information suggested that an additional 500 to 600 new school places would be needed by 2026 because of new developments in the area. Councillor Mackie felt that this should be taken in to account by Cabinet when considering the future of the school.

Councillor Chris Bithell, the Cabinet Member for Education, spoke of the difficult decision that had been made on the closure of the school. He commented on the much reduced funding because of austerity cuts and said that other services had been cut to enable education and social services to be protected. Money could not be taken from other schools as had happened in the past and he commented on the significantly higher amounts of funding per

pupil at Flint Mountain compared to other schools and suggested that was no longer sustainable. Councillor Bithell commented on pupil/teacher ratios and expressed significant concern about the comments made about the decision to close the school and said that all Members were aware that it was because of the substantial cuts to local government funding. All of the issues raised had already been considered and addressed and the Council could no longer afford to subsidise schools which were receiving large amount of funding per pupil compared to other schools. Estyn had indicated that the standard of education would be of a similar level or better at other local schools and the level 4 Welsh Government categorisation had been confirmed in January 2016; on a scale of 1 – 4, level 4 was the lowest for educational standards. It had also been raised that children should be able to walk to school, but 83% of the children who attended Ysgol Maes Edwin were not from Flint Mountain and walked or drove past their nearest school to attend this school.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) commented on the sensitive and challenging issue faced by the decision makers on the provision of education and spoke of the statutory responsibility of the local authority to manage the supply of school places. There was clear evidence that other schools in the area could accommodate all of the pupils from Ysgol Maes Edwin and there were more than sufficient places available; this evidence had been shared repeatedly. On 6th January 2016, the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the evidence before them and had made a recommendation to Cabinet to suspend the process to close the school for two months to allow a federation to be considered, even though no options for a federation had been submitted during the consultation period. The comments were shared with Cabinet on 19th January 2016 and it was decided to proceed to a formal statutory consultation on the closure and to issue a statutory notice. However, Cabinet confirmed that if a detailed business case for a federation was put forward within 2 months, then it would be considered. On the 19th April 2016, in accordance with the school organisation code, Cabinet was required to decide whether to approve or reject the statutory proposal and no modifications could be made at that point. Cabinet focussed on the impact of the quality of the education of the pupils, the need for places and the resources of education and discussions on all areas were considered before determination was made. The Chief Officer reminded members that the view of Estyn was that the standards would be maintained or better at alternative schools.

A range of accurate data had been provided and assurance had been provided that every step would be taken to ease the transition arrangements that would be put in place once the determination was made. The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) also clarified that there were at least two schools in Flint and three rural schools that could accommodate all of the cohort currently at Ysgol Maes Edwin. On the issue of future pupil numbers from potential housing developments, he explained that this had been calculated using a housing yield formula and had been applied to all current housing development planning applications approved by the planning authority. The data showed that there were sufficient alternative places to allow parental choice and the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) added that school transport

would be available for those who were eligible and any additional transport costs would be made out of net savings. Lengthy discussions by both Cabinet and the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee had taken place on the issue of federation. The Council's policy was very supportive where schools were willing but any schools involved in a federation needed to be viable. After a lengthy period, no federation proposals had come forward despite efforts.

The length of time that the process had taken had already caused a significant amount of anxiety and uncertainty. The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) reminded Members that Cabinet needed to issue the determination in a timely manner to allow sufficient time to implement the decision and put transition arrangements in place.

Councillor Aaron Shotton welcomed the debate and felt that it was entirely appropriate that the sensitive issue could be debated by Full Council. He expressed significant concern about some of the comments particularly because of the difficult decisions that needed to be made due to the austerity cuts. He said that in actual terms, there were 61 primary schools in Flintshire that had a smaller spend per pupil than Ysgol Maes Edwin. He commented on the funding formula which did not give all schools an equal share but he added that the budget had included a 1% increase for education for 2016/17. He spoke of some Members who had chosen not to support the lobbying case proposed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy but reminded Members that difficult decisions about closing schools were made not to save money but to allow redistribution of funds to protect the quality of education in Flintshire. He asked Members to think carefully when voting and of what they would say to their residents who asked whether they could have done something to protect the quality of education against cuts.

Councillor Gareth Roberts referred to the 2/3 of children who were from Flint and in commenting on the Croes Atti development of 700 houses, he said that the expectation was that this would generate the requirement for 300 extra primary school places that could not be accommodated in Flint schools alone. He sought clarification on where children from other developments would be educated if Ysgol Maes Edwin was to close.

Councillor Matt Wright spoke of the huge challenge that was being faced and said that it was unfortunate that the discussions had raised issues of austerity. He commented on the time when he first joined the Council and discussions that had taken place around the policy to deal with small schools at a time that preceded austerity. He felt that it was unfortunate that other schools had not decided to federate but said that it was important to go through the process of federation if it was suitable to do so.

Councillor Derek Butler spoke of the very sensitive issue and expressed his disappointment at some of the comments of other members. He said that discussions had previously taken place about smaller schools but had not been acted on and it was important to remember that subsidising schools could not continue because of austerity cuts. He said that this administration had made brave and difficult decisions and that a forced

federation would not be helpful to any school. He reminded Members that no proposals to federate had been submitted.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) repeated the assurance that there were sufficient places at alternative schools and at least five schools could take all of the cohort. There were 182 unfilled places in Flint and 159 in neighbouring rural schools totalling 341 places available. On the issue of future housing developments he commented on the housing yield formula that had produced a maximum figure which did not take account of parental choice or pupils moving into the new homes but who were already in the local education system. The Croes Atti development had three phases with development progressing slower than expected and as at September 2015, 96 units had been developed. Officers had made it clear that there was more than sufficient capacity to meet the yield from known developments but he reminded members of Local Planning Guidance 23 which provided clarification of the requirement for developments to make contributions towards educational contributions. There was also an existing agreement with the Croes Atti developer for land for the construction of a primary school. There were now more than sufficient school places (more than 10%) and was sufficient for the foreseeable future up to 2026.

The Chief Executive spoke of the suggestion for a federation and advised Members that it was not appropriate to enforce a federation. There had been ample time for a federation proposal to be submitted, but none had come forward. He added that if there was to be a federation, then both schools had to be viable as individual entities to meet the tests. There were expectations amongst the schools community that funding would over time be distributed more equally under the local funding formula. He reminded Members that it was important to ensure value for money in all services, whether mandatory or non-mandatory, and that to continue to subsidise Ysgol Maes Edwin was unsustainable.

Councillor Paul Shotton spoke about the voting at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting and said that to retain Ysgol Maes Edwin was not sustainable. He also referred to the significant austerity cuts and the disparity in pupil funding. Councillor Richard Jones sought clarification on Section 106 agreements and felt that the requirement to only allow five payments per project, with a classroom costing £350k, would mean that the funding to allow extra classrooms to be built would never be achieved. He also sought clarification on the earlier comment about an option to build another school and whether this could be built, even if Ysgol Maes Edwin was closed. Councillor Carol Ellis said that the figures had taken account of known development but raised concern about unknown developments on sites in Flint Mountain, Northop and Flint area. She also spoke of the candidate sites under the Local Development Plan and commented on section 106 monies.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) reiterated his earlier comments that there were sufficient spaces in five schools for all of the cohort at Ysgol Maes Edwin and a mini admissions round would be carried out. The housing yield figures had identified that there was sufficient capacity in schools for pupils from known developments but added that if a new school was required as a result of the Croes Atti development, it would need to be funded through

the 21st century schools programme. The Chief Executive explained that land had been set aside by the developer for a school.

The Senior Manager – School Planning & Provision said that the school organisation programme was complex and had been in place since the Statutory Act had been established. Candidate sites had not been included in the calculations but discussions were undertaken with planning colleagues to ensure such future provision for educational placements was considered in planning applications. Plans could not be made for unknown sites.

In summing up, Councillor Steele-Mortimer said that the school did not deserve the treatment it was getting and that if the threat of closure was lifted then numbers would increase. He felt that federation should be considered and that the local authority and governors should be more proactive about a federation and hold seminars to highlight the options. He asked for a recorded vote and proposed a recommendation that Cabinet be asked to keep the school open; the requisite number of Members stood in support of the request for a recorded vote.

On being put to the vote, there was an equality of voting as follows:-

FOR - KEEPING YSGOL MAES EDWIN OPEN

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Helen Brown, Clive Carver, Paul Cunningham, Adele Davies-Cooke, Carol Ellis, Jim Falshaw, Veronica Gay, George Hardcastle, Hilary Isherwood, Joe Johnson, Richard Jones, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Dave Mackie, Hilary McGuill, Sara Parker, Mike Peers, Vicky Perfect, Gareth Roberts, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Sharon Williams, Arnold Woolley and Matt Wright

AGAINST – KEEPING YSGOL MAES EDWIN OPEN

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Haydn Bateman, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, David Cox, Alan Diskin, Glenys Diskin, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Andy Dunbobbin, Ron Hampson, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Christine Jones, Kevin Jones, Richard Lloyd, Mike Lowe, David Roney, Aaron Shotton, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, David Wisinger and Peter Curtis

The Chairman used his casting vote against the proposal to ask Cabinet to keep Ysgol Maes Edwin open.

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that as Council had resolved not to raise an objection then the decision to close Ysgol Maes Edwin as of 31 August 2016 with pupils transferring to other schools in accordance with parental preference be implemented.

RESOLVED:

That Council raise no objection to the decision to close Ysgol Maes Edwin as of 31 August 2016 with pupils transferring to other schools in accordance with parental preference and that it could therefore be implemented.

15. ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were six members of the public and one member of the press present.

(The meeting started at 2.30pm and ended at 3.57pm)

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Chairman



COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	14 th June 2016
Report Subject	Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in Wales
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016 the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) appointed an independent commission to examine the sustainability of the local government finance system in Wales and to recommend improvements for the future.

The Commission has concluded its work and made recommendations. The Executive Summary of the Commission's report is appended.

The Commission called for evidence as part of its work. Flintshire made a written submission following a debate held by full Council held on 20th October 2015.

The Commission follows a similar Independent Commission on Local Government Finance for England which published its findings and recommendations early in 2015.

The Council in adopting its Medium Term Financial Strategy set out a number of proposals where national reform and relief is needed.

Cabinet has received this report and referred it to full Council for a submission to be made to Welsh Government in support of the recommendations of the Commission. A presentation will be made at the meeting with an outline of a response to encourage debate and collective agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	At the invitation of Cabinet to welcome the report and recommendations of the Independent Commission.
2	To agree a response to the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local

	Government Association in support of the recommendations of the Commission.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	THE PURPOSE AND FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION
1.01	<p>In 2015 the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) appointed an Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in Wales. The terms of reference of the Commission were to explore:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the strengths and weaknesses of the current local government finance system in Wales; • options for changing the system of financing local government in Wales, including both revenue and capital expenditure, with a view to increased self-sufficiency; • reforms to encourage greater economic growth in Wales; and • reforms which secure the delivery of better public services and outcomes envisaged in the Welsh Government’s White Paper.
1.02	<p>The membership of the Commission is:-</p> <p>Professor Tony Travers (Chair) - <i>Director of the London School of Economics;</i> Chris Hurst - <i>Qualified Accountant;</i> Professor George Boyne – <i>Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Public Sector Management, Cardiff University;</i> Gill Lewis – <i>Qualified chartered accountant (CIPFA);</i> Harry Thomas – <i>former Chief Executive of Gwynedd County Council;</i> Lynn Pamment – <i>PWC partner for Public Sector clients in the West and Wales;</i> and Simon Parker – <i>Director, New Local Government Network.</i></p>
1.03	<p>The Commission has published its report and recommendations. The Executive summary is attached (Appendix A) and a hyperlink is provided to access the full report.</p>
1.04	<p>The earlier Independent Commission on Local Government Finance in England published its findings and recommendations in 2015. There are strong similarities in evidence and outcome between the two reports.</p>
1.05	<p>The following is a list of recommendations made by the Commission.</p> <p><i>“Full localisation of business rates, with 100% of business rates and business rate growth being retained by local government. In the year of implementation measures would need to be put in place – such as adjustments to grants receipts or pooling arrangements - to ensure that no authority is better or worse off financially than in the previous financial</i></p>

year.

The Commission commends the fact that Wales is the only nation in the UK to have undergone a council tax revaluation exercise, and recommends that since even in Wales, properties are taxed based on a 2005 valuation base, a further revaluation needs to be undertaken, with commitment to this being done on a five yearly basis in the future.

The Commission recommends that the Welsh Government introduce legislation to make it possible for city regions, or other sub-national groupings of authorities, to reform bandings and the ratio of council tax payable from band to band.

The Commission recommends that the incoming government should devolve to local authorities the setting of council tax discount and the power to determine who receives council tax support.

The Commission recommends authorities be given a suite of permissive powers that can be introduced locally, depending on local circumstances. Examples of powers to be conferred would be the introduction of a tourism tax. There should be a logic in choosing to levy these taxes, with money raised to be utilised according to related priorities, so tourism tax to assist with local development/ regeneration which would aid the tourism industry.

From April 2017, the Welsh Government will also assume responsibility for the replacements for Stamp Duty Land Tax and Landfill Tax with the proposal for partial Income Tax devolution by 2020. As the Welsh Government achieves greater fiscal devolution from the UK Government the Commission recommends that this should flow through to further devolution to the local level.

The Commission recommends a substantial reduction in the number, scope and scale of specific grants. It is the Commission's belief that specific grants force councils to use resources on services that may not be a local priority and are a challenge to local autonomy, service users and good government, whilst adding additional administrative burdens with each grant. The Commission's view is that specific grants should only be used for a national priority, or for a national function for which the local authority is an agent. Innovation grants should be limited to a maximum of three years. All existing specific grants should be folded into the RSG unless there is special justification. The Commission also recommends that any further specific grants should be reviewed on a two yearly basis to ascertain if the case for hypothecation remains valid or to decide if the grant is to cease or be incorporated within the RSG.

The Commission recommends that the incoming government commits to full and clear multi-year settlements to enable effective long-term planning for local authorities and other public services. The Commission would urge rolling three yearly settlements to allow effective planning and appropriate consultations for required service changes.

The Commission supports councils having the freedom to determine fees and charges locally.

The Commission recommend that councils are given greater freedom on capital expenditure by de-hypothecating capital grants.

The Commission recommends the establishment of a Welsh equivalent of the UK Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR): an advisory, Assembly sponsored public body to provide independent economic forecasts and analysis of the public finances in Wales. It would produce fiscal and economic forecasts and report on the Welsh Government's taxation and expenditure assumptions. It would work alongside the UK OBR. Other duties could include scrutiny of the Government's policy costing and assessing the long term sustainability of the public finances in Wales. The finances of Welsh local government would be reviewed as part of this process.

The Commission has received a great deal of evidence about the formula for the RSG being based on outdated data, complex and lacking in transparency. The Commission therefore recommends the existing grant regime is frozen and, for the immediate future, used as the basis for the rolling three year settlements proposed above. This change would provide temporary stability and predictability, allowing councils to plan effectively and assist planning with partner organisations. To improve the system in the longer term, an Independent Grants Commission should be set up to commence work on a more effective and fairer formula for the future. The Commission also believe the Grants Commission should be asked to comment on the use of local authority grants by the Welsh Government and to undertake a periodic review of specific grants. As the Grants Commission would be independent, it would be possible to separate the legitimate role of the Welsh Government in setting the quantum of grant from decisions about grant distribution.

The Commission recommends that the City Regions are given the power to add a supplementary business rate, whose sole purpose would be to assist in paying for large capital projects (similar to the way the Crossrail scheme in London has been funded). These powers should be available to other regions as they evolve.

	<p><i>In the longer-term, the Commission see merit in the idea of a locally-retained share of Welsh Government income tax, or a purer form of local income tax. But in the short term, we are mindful of the fact that any such recommendations would be complicated by the fact that the Welsh Government itself is in the early stages of seeing the devolution of income tax to Wales. Consequently, we recommend considering this issue again in the next five years.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission query whether Wales currently has a suite of outcome performance measures that can effectively judge good performance for councils. The Commission therefore recommends that robust outcome measures are devised to provide a way of ensuring that increased devolution of tax powers can be seen to improve performance.”</i></p>
1.06	Cabinet has received this report and referred it to full Council for a submission to be made to Welsh Government in support of the recommendations of the Commission. A presentation will be made at the meeting with an outline of a response to encourage debate and collective agreement.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of the Council involves planning the use of the financial resources of the Council for a three year period.
2.02	The recommendations of the Commission advocate the reform of the Local Government Funding System which, if adopted, would support the Council's Strategy.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The full Council was consulted and made a written response during the Commission's evidence gathering phase.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The national reductions in funding for Local Government pose the greatest risk to the governance, performance and sustainability of the Council since the previous reorganisation in the mid-1990s.
4.02	Reform of the Local Government Funding System is critical to mitigating the risk of reducing public funding levels.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Executive Summary of the Commission Report. Appendix 2: the Council's written response to the Commission's call for

evidence.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Flintshire Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Part 1 and 2 :</p> <p>http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Medium-Term-Financial-Strategy/Medium-Term-Financial-Strategy-Part-1.pdf</p> <p>http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Medium-Term-Financial-Strategy/Medium-Term-Financial-Strategy-Part-2-September-2015.pdf</p>
6.02	<p>The full report of the Independent Commission:</p> <p>file:///C:/Users/cedilsp/Downloads/160324-Ambition-for-Change---Aiming-Higher%20(2).pdf</p>
6.03	<p>The full report of the earlier English Commission:</p> <p>http://www.localfinancecommission.org/documents/iclgf-final-report</p>
6.04	<p>Contact Officer: Colin Everett Telephone: 01352 702101 Email: chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS): a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.</p>
7.02	<p>WLGA: The Welsh Local Government Association represents the interests of local government and promotes local democracy in Wales. It represents the 22 local authorities in Wales and the 3 fire and rescue authorities and 3 national park authorities are associate members.</p>

Executive Summary

The rationale for change

In two months' time, a couple of weeks after the elections in Wales, it will be the 40th anniversary of the publication of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Local Government Finance —the Layfield Committee. This 1976 report set a benchmark on issues of local government finance that have surfaced intermittently since then but by and large have remained unresolved. Layfield spoke of the lack of buoyancy in local property taxes and the need for regular revaluations, the need to find other forms of local funding, the rigidity of central government grants and the need to balance equity across the whole of local government with accountability at the local level. Numerous reports and inquiries ever since have revisited the same themes.

Whilst there has been broad consistency in the solutions that these reviews have put forward, wholesale reforms have never been implemented. The financial challenges faced by councils across the UK pose a profound threat to some local services. In Wales the prospects of structural reform offer an opportunity to address weaknesses in the system of local government finance that have remained intractable to others. We are mindful that the pace of reform has been slow and the changes to the local government finance system in Britain have been piecemeal. This is the background to our review.

The Welsh financial settlement has to some extent protected local authorities in Wales from the levels of cuts seen in English local authorities. However, funding reductions have nevertheless been unprecedented and have drawn into sharp relief a financial regime that is hindering the ambition of Welsh local authorities, constraining the innovative instincts of the local government workforce and holding back innovation which could make a substantial contribution to economic growth. On average, local government in Wales is dependent on the Welsh Government for 83% of its income¹ (45% from the Revenue Support Grant, 26% Specific grants and 12% redistributed business rates), with only 15% being raised locally through council tax (the remaining 2% being made up through appropriations and adjustments), leading to a deficit in democracy. Local Leaders are faced with decisions that have implications that are almost universally unpopular whilst having little flexibility over the quantum of finance available to allow for other scenarios or options.

There is a unique opportunity within Wales to grasp and embrace changes to the financial system. As plans are made for local government reorganisation, so too plans should be made for strengthening the finance of local government, whatever the shape of local authorities in the future, allowing for greater freedoms and flexibilities for local decision making, enabling local authorities to grow their tax base and reinvest in their areas to boost both the local and national economies.

¹ These figures exclude local authority fees and charges, which in 2014-15 amounted to £616m

As additional taxes such as stamp duty, landfill and income tax are devolved to Wales, there is an opportunity to improve the relationship between local and central government from one that argues about allocation, hypothecation and dependency to one where local government has the freedoms to make local decisions, boost the local economy and in so doing raise the total tax base in Wales so that the Welsh Government itself has greater flexibility to pursue other priorities.

The introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG) is another driver for change in the financial system. It is intended to provide a framework for all public service activity and to encourage longer term, more collaborative planning. There is a need to find ways that the public sector can move together in harmony rather than efficiencies in one part of the sector off-loading costs onto another part. A more flexible financial system with multi-year settlements is virtually a prerequisite if this is to be undertaken in a meaningful way

The Commission's vision

A finance system which provides choice and opportunity to be creative, enabling local authorities to meet the ambitions of their citizens is fundamental to securing good quality, sustainable public services.

The Commission's vision is for a finance system that:

- Promotes greater self-reliance and self-sufficiency
- Encourages entrepreneurialism and innovation
- Is more stable, thus allowing for better and easier planning and forecasting
- Promotes local decision-making on service delivery leading to enhanced accountability
- Incentivises growth of the tax base and thus economic growth for the whole of Wales
- Reduces and manages the level of dependency at all levels – Welsh Government (WG) dependency on the UK Treasury, local government's dependency on the WG and the individual's dependency on public services
- Facilitates the pursuit of the seven goals of the WFG Act in an integrated way

Approach to reform

This report provides recommendations for how the finance system for local government in Wales should be altered to better enable local authorities to meet the needs of their local populations. It is often the case that one size does not fit all and that centrally determined policies and programmes will not work effectively at the local level. Local authorities operate in different places under different contexts; they have different priorities and will fund different services depending on their communities' needs. They will collaborate in different ways and with different partners. The principle of variability has been accepted already; the Cardiff Capital Region Deal, negotiated by authorities working in collaboration, has begun to change their responsibilities and funding regimes to suit local circumstances. When local leaders met with the Commission, they confirmed that if business rates were to be localised they would want this done regionally so as to work together for the wider region; rather than risk authorities wasting time and resources competing with each other for local gain, which causes local loss elsewhere.

The Commission has a vision that councils as a whole can achieve greater self-sufficiency. This does not mean the absence of government grants, but rather stability in grant allocations and control over directly raised revenues (and possibly in the future assigned resources) such that councils can shape the destiny of their area without over-dependency on central government. We believe that not only is this better for local accountability, but is essential to underpin the new methods of working needed to protect service outcomes to residents at a time of public funding austerity. As councils drive growth in their local areas, this in turn will drive growth in the central government tax base as income tax is devolved to Wales.

Aims of the reforms

The Commission is mindful of the ongoing process of local government reorganisation in Wales and has satisfied itself that the recommendations made would work for the existing model of 22 authorities, whilst being transferable to any new map of local government created by the Welsh Government.

The Commission concluded that the existing system has not failed, but believes that by making a series of alterations it would work far better for both citizens and for the organisations themselves. We are clear that by adopting our pragmatic recommendations, there are reasons for cautious optimism whatever the future number of local authorities in Wales. Once these recommendations are implemented, they should lead to a system that:

- **Strengthens local accountability** – if a greater proportion of a council's funding comes directly from its local tax base, it is more directly accountable to its citizens and businesses for the impact of decisions it makes

- **Supports and encourages innovation** – local councils in Wales should be free to respond to local issues flexibly and creatively. Greater freedom and acceptance that there is often not a “one size fits all” solution to problems that appear similar but often have differing factors at play due to demography and geography
- **Allows greater local discretion** to respond differently in different areas – with fewer constraints via grants there is an opportunity for expenditure decisions to become more localised, prioritising needs to be met in the most appropriate way according to local knowledge
- **Reduces local government’s dependency** on the Welsh Government
- **Incentivises growth** in the local economy – with a direct link between economic development and their own financial well-being through retention of business rates
- **Allows the Welsh Government to hold local government to account** for performance and outcomes in a more rigorous and effective way
- **Enables and encourages** the pursuit of a more prosperous Wales to be tackled simultaneously with pursuit of the other six goals in the WFG Act.

The Commission feel that the recommended package of reforms that follow will significantly enhance the ability of local government to better respond to the needs of its citizens whilst being low risk, logical, achievable and, above all, practical. They will also be applicable regardless of the shape of local government in the future.

Reforms

Taxation

- Non-domestic rates be retained in full by local authorities
- In the year of implementation for non-domestic rates retention, measures be put in place – such as adjustments to grants receipts or pooling arrangements – to ensure that no authority is better or worse off financially than in the previous financial year
- City Regions are given the power to add a supplementary business rate whose sole purpose would be to assist in paying for large capital projects. These powers should be available to other regions as they evolve
- A revaluation of council tax be undertaken as soon as possible and at least every five years thereafter
- The Welsh Government introduce legislation to make it possible for city regions, or other sub-national groupings of authorities, to reform bandings and the ratio of council tax payable from band to band

- Existing council tax discounts be reviewed with the objective of giving individual local authorities discretion over their use
- The Welsh Government legislates to introduce a permissive list of small local revenues for local authorities to use
- As Welsh Government achieves greater fiscal devolution this should flow through to the local level
- The merit of a locally-retained share of Welsh Government income tax should be considered again in the next five years

Fees and charges

- Local authorities be given greater discretion over the range and level of fees and charges

Grants

- Existing specific grants be incorporated within the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) unless there is a compelling case for a time-limited use of a particular grant
- Every specific grant be reviewed on a two yearly basis to ascertain if the case for hypothecation remains valid or to decide if the grant is to cease or be incorporated within the RSG

Multi-Year funding

- Indicative rolling three yearly grant settlements are introduced

Capital expenditure

- De-hypothecation of capital funding streams

New independent bodies

- A Welsh Office of Budget Responsibility be created to independently examine the Government's revenue and expenditure forecasts, including the assumptions made about local government finance and expenditure
- The existing RSG formula be frozen and an Independent Grants Commission be established to oversee the development and future operation of a new grant distribution formula

Performance management

- The Welsh Government review its arrangements for the performance management of local authorities, so authorities are able to properly evidence how well they are using their increased revenue raising powers and how well services are performing

Benefits for the Welsh Government

These proposals, if progressively rolled out, would increase the tax base from devolved income tax due to the increased growth in local areas. The system for distributing dwindling resources would be de-politicised as the new Grants Commission would work on a new formula to replace the existing one which has been added to over a number of years and which few, if any, can now claim to fully understand, let alone explain to members of the public. The removal and reduction of ring-fenced grants would enable councils to better respond to the drivers of local needs, whilst also reducing the significant administrative costs involved from all sides. The freedom would also encourage a greater spirit of public sector entrepreneurship that is fettered by existing constraints, but is vital if the approaches required by the WFG Act are to become a reality.

Recommendations

The Commission recommends full localisation of business rates, with 100% of business rates and business rate growth being retained by local government. In the year of implementation measures would need to be put in place – such as adjustments to grants receipts or pooling arrangements - to ensure that no authority is better or worse off financially than in the previous financial year.

The Commission commends the fact that Wales is the only nation in the UK to have undergone a council tax revaluation exercise, and recommends that since even in Wales, properties are taxed based on a 2005 valuation base, a further revaluation needs to be undertaken, with commitment to this being done on a five yearly basis in the future.

The Commission recommends that the Welsh Government introduce legislation to make it possible for city regions, or other sub-national groupings of authorities, to reform bandings and the ratio of council tax payable from band to band.

The Commission recommends that the incoming government should devolve to local authorities the setting of council tax discount and the power to determine who receives council tax support.

The Commission recommends authorities be given a suite of permissive powers that can be introduced locally, depending on local circumstances. Examples of powers to be conferred would be the introduction of a tourism tax. There should be a logic in choosing to levy these taxes, with money raised to be utilised according to related priorities, so tourism tax to assist with local development/regeneration which would aid the tourism industry.

From April 2017, the Welsh Government will also assume responsibility for the replacements for Stamp Duty Land Tax and Landfill Tax with the proposal for partial Income Tax devolution by 2020. As the Welsh Government achieves greater fiscal devolution from the UK Government the Commission recommends that this should flow through to further devolution to the local level.

The Commission recommends a substantial reduction in the number, scope and scale of specific grants. It is the Commission's belief that specific grants force councils to use resources on services that may not be a local priority and are a challenge to local autonomy, service users and good government, whilst adding additional administrative burdens with each grant. The Commission's view is that specific grants should only be used for a national priority, or for a national function for which the local authority is an agent. Innovation grants should be limited to a maximum of three years. All existing specific grants should be folded into the RSG unless there is special justification. The Commission also recommends that any further specific grants should be reviewed on a two yearly basis to ascertain if the case for hypothecation remains valid or to decide if the grant is to cease or be incorporated within the RSG.

The Commission recommends that the incoming government commits to full and clear multi-year settlements to enable effective long-term planning for local authorities and other public services. The Commission would urge rolling three yearly settlements to allow effective planning and appropriate consultations for required service changes.

The Commission supports councils having the freedom to determine fees and charges locally.

The Commission recommend that councils are given greater freedom on capital expenditure by de-hypothecating capital grants.

The Commission recommends the establishment of a Welsh equivalent of the UK Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR): an advisory, Assembly sponsored public body to provide independent economic forecasts and analysis of the public finances in Wales. It would produce fiscal and economic forecasts and report on the Welsh Government's taxation and expenditure assumptions. It would work alongside the UK OBR. Other duties could include scrutiny of the Government's policy costing and assessing the long term sustainability of the public finances in Wales. The finances of Welsh local government would be reviewed as part of this process.

The Commission has received a great deal of evidence about the formula for the RSG being based on outdated data, complex and lacking in transparency. The Commission therefore recommends the existing grant regime is frozen and, for the immediate future, used as the basis for the rolling three year settlements proposed above. This change would provide temporary stability and predictability, allowing councils to plan effectively and assist planning with partner organisations. To improve the system in the longer term, an Independent Grants Commission should be set up to commence work on a more effective and fairer formula for the future. The Commission also believe the Grants Commission should be asked to comment on the use of local authority grants by the Welsh Government and to undertake a periodic review of specific grants. As the Grants Commission would be independent, it would be possible to separate the legitimate role of the Welsh Government in setting the quantum of grant from decisions about grant distribution.

The Commission recommends that the City Regions are given the power to add a supplementary business rate, whose sole purpose would be to assist in paying for large capital projects (similar to the

way the Crossrail scheme in London has been funded). These powers should be available to other regions as they evolve.

In the longer-term, the Commission see merit in the idea of a locally-retained share of Welsh Government income tax, or a purer form of local income tax. But in the short term, we are mindful of the fact that any such recommendations would be complicated by the fact that the Welsh Government itself is in the early stages of seeing the devolution of income tax to Wales. Consequently, we recommend considering this issue again in the next five years.

The Commission query whether Wales currently has a suite of outcome performance measures that can effectively judge good performance for councils. The Commission therefore recommends that robust outcome measures are devised to provide a way of ensuring that increased devolution of tax powers can be seen to improve performance.

About the Commission

The Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales was set up because the local government funding system in Wales is in urgent need of reform.

The Welsh Local Government Association and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy asked the Commission to make recommendations for the reform of local government finance and finding better ways to fund local services and promote economic growth in Wales. These priorities form the context for the Commission's recommendations on the local government finance system.

The Commission's aim is to provide recommendations that will be valuable regardless of the quantum of funding in the system.

Professor Tony Travers - Chair

Tony Travers is Director of British Government @ LSE at the London School of Economics. He is also a professor in the LSE's Government Department. His key research interests include local and regional government and public service reform. From 1992 to 1997, he was a member of the Audit Commission and was a member of the Urban Task Force Working Group on Finance.

He is currently an advisor to the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee, having previously advised a number of other Parliamentary committees. He chaired the London Finance Commission (2012-13) and was a member of the City Growth Commission (2013-14), and also a member of the CIPFA/LGA Independent Commission on Local Government Finance (2014-15).

He has published a number of books on cities and government.

Chris Hurst

Chris is a chartered accountant with 25 years' board experience. He started his career in the banking sector and then worked in local government for 15 years, in both Wales and England, before returning to the private sector. Chris re-entered the public sector in 1992, as Finance Director for an NHS Trust and 4 years later was appointed Deputy Regional Finance Director at the NHS Executive. In 2000 he took up the role of Deputy Chief Executive at the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust, a post he held until 2009 when he appointed Finance Director for Health, Social Care & Children at the Welsh Government.

Chris left the Welsh Government in 2012 to set up Dorian3d, a management consultancy and executive coaching practice. He is a Board Trustee of UK Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), a non-executive director of a small digital development company in the Midlands; and an independent advisor to Philips new healthcare technologies division. Until 2010 he was a long-term member of the Secretary of State for Health's Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA), in England.

Professor George Boyne

Professor George Boyne is Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Professor of Public Sector Management at Cardiff University. As Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Boyne is also a member of the University Executive Board. He has published eight books and over 150 articles in academic journals.

Professor Boyne's main research interest is the explanation and evaluation of organizational performance in the public sector. Professor Boyne founded the Public Management Research

Group at Cardiff Business School in 1995. In 2014, the quality of research in Public Management at Cardiff University was ranked third in the world.

He served as President of the US Public Management Research Association from 2009-11 and was Chair of the Public and Non-Profit Division of the Academy of Management from 2011-14.

He has acted as advisor to organisations including the National Audit Office, UK Central Government Departments, the Welsh Government and the United Nations.

Gill Lewis

Gill Lewis has worked in the public sector for nearly four decades as a qualified chartered accountant (CIPFA). Her early career was in the NHS and she joined the Audit Commission in 1988, and was appointed a District Auditor in 1996. She has held a number of senior positions in the Audit Commission in Wales, and Wales Audit Office, Head of Audit in Wales and Senior Partner respectively.

Since 2010, she has undertaken a wide variety of important roles across the public sector in Wales. These include, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Resources and statutory Section 151 officer in two Local Authorities and Director of Change Management in another Local Authority. She was also the Director of a Health and Social Care programme. She undertakes high level corporate governance work, change management and organisational turnaround for organisations.

Gill is currently a board member on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants in the UK, Chair of the Board for the Regions and Past President of CIPFA in Wales. In July 2015, whilst working as a Commissioner, Gill was appointed by Leighton Andrews AM, Minister for Public Services as the Chair of the Public Services Staff Commission.

Harry Thomas

Harry graduated from Manchester University with a degree in Economics and subsequently qualified as an accountant with the National Audit Office in South Wales before moving on to join Cheshire County Council. He has worked with the former Welsh Water Authority and Gwynedd County Council. After the 1996 Local Government reorganisation he was appointed Treasurer with Gwynedd Council and in 2003 was appointed Chief Executive, where he remained until his retirement in 2014. He is a former finance spokesperson for SOLACE Wales.

Lynn Pamment

Lynn Pamment is a prize winning Chartered Accountant and a member of CIPFA. She has over 25 years of experience of working with private and public sector bodies across the UK both in an assurance and advisory capacity. During her career, Lynn has undertaken a number of secondments into the public sector in Wales to manage large projects.

Lynn is PwC's Cardiff Office Senior Partner and is also the regional leader of PwC's Government and Public Sector practice in Wales and the South West. Her client base includes organisations in the central government, local government, health, education, housing and charities sectors.

Lynn is the Chair of the CIPFA / LASAAC Board responsible for the accounting code for local authorities in the UK.

She is a board member of RCT Homes and of Tirion Group. Lynn is also a member of the Cardiff Capital Region Transition Board.

Simon Parker

Simon Parker (Director) has led the New Local Government Network since 2010. He is a respected voice in the localism debate and is frequently called upon to advise senior leaders in local and central government. As well as frequently authoring publications and articles, he has led strategic consultancy work for authorities that include Warwickshire, Essex and Suffolk.

Before joining NLGN, Simon worked as a fellow at the Institute for Government, where his work was described by The Economist as helping to develop a 'science of government'. His work was covered in most national newspapers and presented to very senior central government audiences, including the Cabinet Secretary. His career also includes time as an organisational development fellow at the Office of Public Management, head of public services for the think tank Demos and as a senior policy advisor for the CBI, where he led negotiations on the public service workforce and promoted the use of public private partnerships in local government. Before joining the policy world, Simon had a successful career as a journalist at the Guardian and LGC. His latest book, Taking Power Back, was launched in October 2015.

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Local Government Commission on Finance for Wales

Introduction

Flintshire County Council welcomes the appointment of the Commission. The evidence we submit to the Commission is based on:-

- previous oral evidence given to the Commission at its meeting with the North Wales Regional Leadership Board;
- the Council's recently adopted Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
- a full Council debate held on 20th October.

Our evidence is also consistent with the policy positions of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) as our representative body.

Impact of the Commission

The impact the work of the Commission might make through the later adoption and implementation of its recommendations for financial reform by Welsh Government, will be longer-term. The more immediate impact of the Commission's work should be to influence the developing manifesto positions of the political parties contesting the 2016 National Assembly for Wales elections, and the commitments the new Government might make to financial reform in the next term of office post-election.

It must be recognised that in the meantime some councils such as Flintshire are appealing for some shorter-term relief from the pressures of public expenditure reductions through a combination of Government investment choices and the more immediate relaxation of national funding policies which curtail cost recovery in charging.

Principles which frame our response

The following principles have been used to frame the Council response:-

- the principle of localism with the reinforcement of the roles of local governance, self-determination and local accountability to local people;
- the subsidiarity principle of government being most effective at the locality level where it is closest to communities and their needs;
- Government having a duty to set out longer-term and sustainable funding settlements;
- Government fully funding its own policy and legislation;
- the conferment of freedoms and flexibilities for local government for the use of core funding, the raising of local taxation at levels which are justifiable and

- supportable, and in local charging policies to recover the costs of service provision; and
- the principles for central-local relations as set out in the Council's adopted Medium Term Financial Plan.

Answering the questions of the Commission in its call for evidence

Financial overview questions

Q: What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of local government finance in Wales?

A: The funding formula provides some predictive certainty if the quantum of funding to be passported through it is known, in advance, to a sufficient extent. The funding formula is though now dated (refer to Part II of the Medium Term Financial Strategy *Meeting the Financial Challenge* (Chapter 3) and the system of annualised settlements, in the absence of longer-term national funding settlements, is a major weakness inhibiting forward planning.

Q: What should the objectives of central funding be? What kind of grant system should support those objectives?

A: The objective of central funding should be to provide a resilient funding base for councils to meet their minimum statutory duties and to meet costed Government social, economic and environmental policy objectives and new legislation.

Q: Are grant distribution mechanisms fit for purpose and what changes would be desirable?

A: Refer to Part II of the Medium Term Financial Strategy *Meeting the Financial Challenge* (Chapter 3).

Q: Will the potential structural reorganisation affect the operation of the system? Would it provide an opportunity for a parallel financial reform?

A: A local government reorganisation would provide the opportunity for longer-term reforms of the funding system and Council Tax equalisation.

Q: What additional pressures do rurality and deprivation introduce?

A: These pressures are arguably too heavily weighted in the current Local Government Funding Formula. Refer to Part II of the Medium Term Financial Strategy *Meeting the Financial Challenge* (Chapter 3).

Q: Are any reforms required to the system of capital expenditure determination and funding?

A: Yes.

Too large a proportion of capital investment funds is being retained by Welsh Government, for example for selective transport and infrastructure projects, with insufficient funds devolved to regions and to councils for more local determination. The system for national-regional planning needs to be developed further for effective targeting of capital borrowing and grants to jointly agreed priority projects. The Wales-UK inter-governmental planning on infrastructure projects of national importance e.g. rail electrification is not sufficiently developed for forward co-investment planning.

Council Tax, Business Rates and other forms of income

*Q: Is Council Tax fit for purpose? What reforms might be made, if any?
- Is the non-domestic rate working well? What reforms might be made if any?*

A: Comparatively to England, Wales charges low levels of Council Tax. With such high dependency on Revenue Support Grant and Specific Grants in Wales the Council Tax system no longer generates sufficient local income to counter-balance such significant annualised reductions in central grant contributions. Solutions should include periodic revaluations for changing property values to be properly reflected in the Council Taxation yielding system; the introduction of more higher-end valuation bandings to capture greater taxation contributions from high value properties; more flexibility for progressive local taxation policies without capping limits; the option for local Council Tax supplements to be applied for locally agreed priorities e.g. prudential borrowing in invest in local infrastructure; a fully funded and sustainable Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).

Q: Would you favour local government in Wales taking control of additional taxes? If so, which ones?

A: Yes.

Full retention of National Non-Domestic Business Rates (NNDR) both base and growth, for local taxation to be invested in local infrastructure and local services to businesses, and as a direct incentive to promote economic growth. A compensatory scheme would be required from the Revenue Support Grant system for those councils with low industrial/commercial taxation generating businesses. The option for local taxation supplements to be applied for locally agreed priorities with the business community e.g. prudential borrowing in invest in local infrastructure should be allowed.

Retention of a small proportion of Value Added Tax Treasury income generated in the local area through consumer spend.

Freedom to charge local taxes up to acceptable levels e.g. tourism taxes on local hoteliers and fee paying attractions.

A review of the legislation for developer contributions such as S106 agreements to ensure fairer and more assured contributions by developers to local community infrastructure.

Q: Should incentives for growth play a greater role in the funding system?

Yes.

As above through, for example, devolution of NNDR.

Q: Could fees and charges be used to a greater extent than at present?

Yes.

See Chapter 4 *Working with Welsh Government* of Part II the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Services

Q: How do reductions in council expenditure affect the sustainability and quality of services? Might different financing arrangements (not additional resources) improve the outlook?

A: Refer to Part II of the Medium Term Financial Strategy *Meeting the Financial Challenge* (Chapters 3-5).

Q: Are there issues relating to the finance of housing which adversely affect local government? If so, do you have suggestions for change?

A: Flintshire is one of the eleven retained local authority landlords in Wales. Following the Welsh exit from the national HRA system the Council relies upon a consistent and sustainable long-term policy for social housing rents for the stability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Recent application of the rent convergence policy with the set of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) has not been universally supported and does pose affordability challenges for tenants. The ongoing consideration by Welsh Government of whether to apply the English model of reductions in social housing rents is causing concern that HRAs might be de-stabilised. Councils should have the freedom to set service charging policies which meet local need and are locally supported, without having to follow uniform policies as part of the Welsh Government policy aim of all landlords achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by a deadline year. A sustainable system of Major Repairs Allowance is needed for continued capital investment to achieve and maintain WHQS. The recently agreed capital borrowing allowances for new social house-building by councils is welcomed. Repeat borrowing approvals in later years should be a shared central-local social policy priority.



COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 14 th June 2016
Report Subject	Improvement Plan 2016-17
Cabinet Member	Corporate Management
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Improvement Plan for 2016-17 has been refreshed and updated to reflect the key priorities of the Council for next year.

The structure of the plan is retained with the eight priorities and the sub priorities. Five of the eight priorities continue with a refresh of longer term projects or ambitions, whereas the remaining three have been reviewed to reflect local circumstances and priorities.

There is also a new section within each sub priority which references national issues which have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.

This final draft of the Improvement Plan is the result of considerations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees within their respective terms of reference. A positive endorsement of the Plan has been received from these committees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To adopt the Improvement Plan 2016-17 prior to final publication by the end of June.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-17
1.01	It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan. It is a statutory requirement for the County Council to adopt the Improvement Plan.
1.02	The name 'Improvement' Plan could be taken as a misnomer in a climate of reducing financial resources where 'improvement' itself could be as much as maintaining or even reducing performance in order to continue to provide priority public services. Therefore the next iteration plan for 2017-18 onwards may be more appropriately named.
1.03	Improvement Objectives and an accompanying Improvement Plan were first set and adopted by the Council in 2011. For 2013/14 the Council thoroughly reviewed the priorities to streamline them and reset them with clearer outcome based aims. A revised set of eight priorities supported by a structure of sub-priorities was adopted.
1.04	<p>The Plan presentation remains unchanged, as it has been well received and commented upon favourably. The only main change has been an additional section of 'National Policy' issues listed within each relevant sub-priority. These are issues over which we have little control and which may restrict successful and or timely delivery of our priorities.</p> <p>They are issues of national interest and have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.</p>
1.05	<p>For 2016-17 a review of the current priorities and sub-priorities has been undertaken to set: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • priorities that continue into 2016-17 for sustained attention; • priorities that can now be removed as completion of a time-limited piece of work and are now embedded e.g. Universal Credit preparation, use of the National Procurement Service • priorities which could be broadened into more strategic issues e.g. 'Creating jobs and growing the local economy', the care home market; • priorities which could be merged e.g. Maximising Income and Fuel Poverty; • emerging priorities for 2016-17 e.g. Improving chances for Looked after Children, mental health. <p>Sub-priorities have also been set to take into account Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny priorities, priorities of partners, public views and service demands and national policy and legislation.</p>

1.06	<p>For each sub-priority which continues to be high profile for 2016-17 there has been a review based on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reasoning for the priority status; • what we will do and how we will measure achievement; and • the risks that will need to be managed.
1.07	<p>The Improvement Plan in totality is presented as 2 documents that are inter-related; firstly the 'public' version of our statements of intent around the 8 priorities (Appendix 1) and secondly the document that describes the targets and milestones on which achievement will be measured (Appendix 2). This is the document that is used by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees to monitor progress during the year.</p> <p>There are a number of measures and milestones which have yet to be confirmed; these will be finalised in the published documents.</p>
1.08	<p>The final Improvement Plan will be available as a web-based document published on the website before the end of June.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Resource implications have been considered during preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and will continue to be monitored during the regular budget monitoring and financial planning arrangements.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>All Overview and Scrutiny Committees have had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Plan priorities including the opportunity to scrutinise targets set for 2016/17.</p> <p>Comments and actioned responses are outlined in Appendix 3.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Delivery of the plan objectives is risk managed within each of the sub priorities of the Improvement Plan and is monitored and reported against quarterly by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The risks to the statutory requirements of the Plan include: not publishing the plan within statutory timescales (30 June) and not adhering to the prerequisite content.</p> <p>Both these risks are managed through adherence to well established procedures for i) publishing the Plan and ii) ensuring that the content of the plan reflects the requirements of the Measure.</p> <p>An additional risk is that the Plan is not endorsed by Members; consultation with Members both individually and as part of the Scrutiny process allows for full engagement.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1: Improvement Plan 2016-17.</p> <p>Appendix 2: 'How we Measure' document</p> <p>Appendix 3: Overview and Scrutiny consultation</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Karen Armstrong, Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer Telephone: 01352 702740 E-mail: Karen.armstrong@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

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.
7.02	Medium Term Financial Strategy: a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.

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Welcome to Flintshire County Council's Improvement Plan for 2016/17

The latest version of our Improvement Plan sets out our priorities for the 2015/16 Council year and what we aim to achieve. Flintshire prides itself on being a council which performs highly for its local communities and one which is motivated by a set of strong social values.

Flintshire is a well-governed and progressive council. We are performing well as a direct provider and commissioner of public services, and as a partner to others. Our recent track record in key services such as education, social care, housing, anti-poverty and environment show that we do deliver on what we say we will do.

Everything we do is important to someone, so selecting a set of priorities for the year is never an easy task. We have set three shared priorities with our partners at a County level, and eight priorities for the Council itself. The Council's framework of eight priorities has been in place for several years and will be familiar. Through our priorities we aim to make a real and noticeable impact.

We are under huge financial pressure during this period of unprecedented austerity. Despite this we still aim high on our priorities. If we fall short against our priorities it will be because of under-funding and not because we are not committed or are not capable.

The plan sets out the Council's eight priorities and all the detailed sub-priorities for action, where we will make a bigger impact this year, page by page. An explanation for the choice of each one is given.

For 2016/17 a review of the current priorities and sub-priorities has been undertaken to set:-

- priorities that continue into 2016/17 for sustained attention;
- activities that can now be removed as completion of a time-limited piece of work which are now embedded e.g. Universal Credit preparation, use of the National Procurement Service;
- priorities which could be broadened to include more strategic issues e.g. 'Creating jobs and growing the local economy', the care home market;
- sub-priorities which could be merged e.g. Fuel Poverty and Maximising Income;
- emerging priority activities for 2016/17 e.g. Improving chances for Looked after Children, mental health.

Over the five year life of the Council, 2016/17 being the final year, the full set of priorities has adapted, and the annual set of priorities selected for special attention have changed according to need and circumstance.

We hope that you find the Plan both informative and uplifting. Your feedback on the Plan itself, and on what we aim to achieve, would be very welcome.




Colin Everett
Chief Executive



Aaron Shotton
Leader of the Council

Setting Our Priorities and Judging our Performance

The priorities for Flintshire as a County are set by the Council and its local public sector partners. We work together as a Public Service Board (PSB) combining our resources for the benefit of Flintshire.

The sub-priorities shown with a  symbol (see diagram on page 6) denote those we share with our partners. These have been selected for special attention where we believe that concentrated effort by the partners working together will make a big difference to the communities of Flintshire. The sub-priorities are:

- Supporting Independent Living
- Vulnerability, Intervention and Prevention
- Inspiring Community Resilience

Partners include: Coleg Cambria, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Wales Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Welsh Government.

The Council has also set a number of priorities for itself as an individual partner organisation. Setting priorities helps us focus our attention and resources on the things that matter most; these priorities are echoed in the Council's business plans. We are legally required to set priorities known as Improvement Objectives (under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009). We call these our 6 Improvement Priorities.

In setting our Priorities we have to take a number of things into account from Welsh Government policy¹, to the expectations of our key partners, to our legal responsibilities, to the views of local people.

We then set our targets, and judge our performance against them by using a wide range of information both quantitative (performance judged by numbers) and qualitative (performance judged by feedback, the results of consultation etc.).

To ensure that we know how well we are doing in meeting the expectations for our priorities we have a series of 'measures' which we keep under regular review. These performance measures are set out for each of our priorities page by page. They are detailed more fully in the supporting document '*How We Measure Achievement*'.

¹ Our priorities reflect the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to include the improvement aspects of: strategic effectiveness; service quality; service availability; fairness; sustainability; efficiency and innovation.

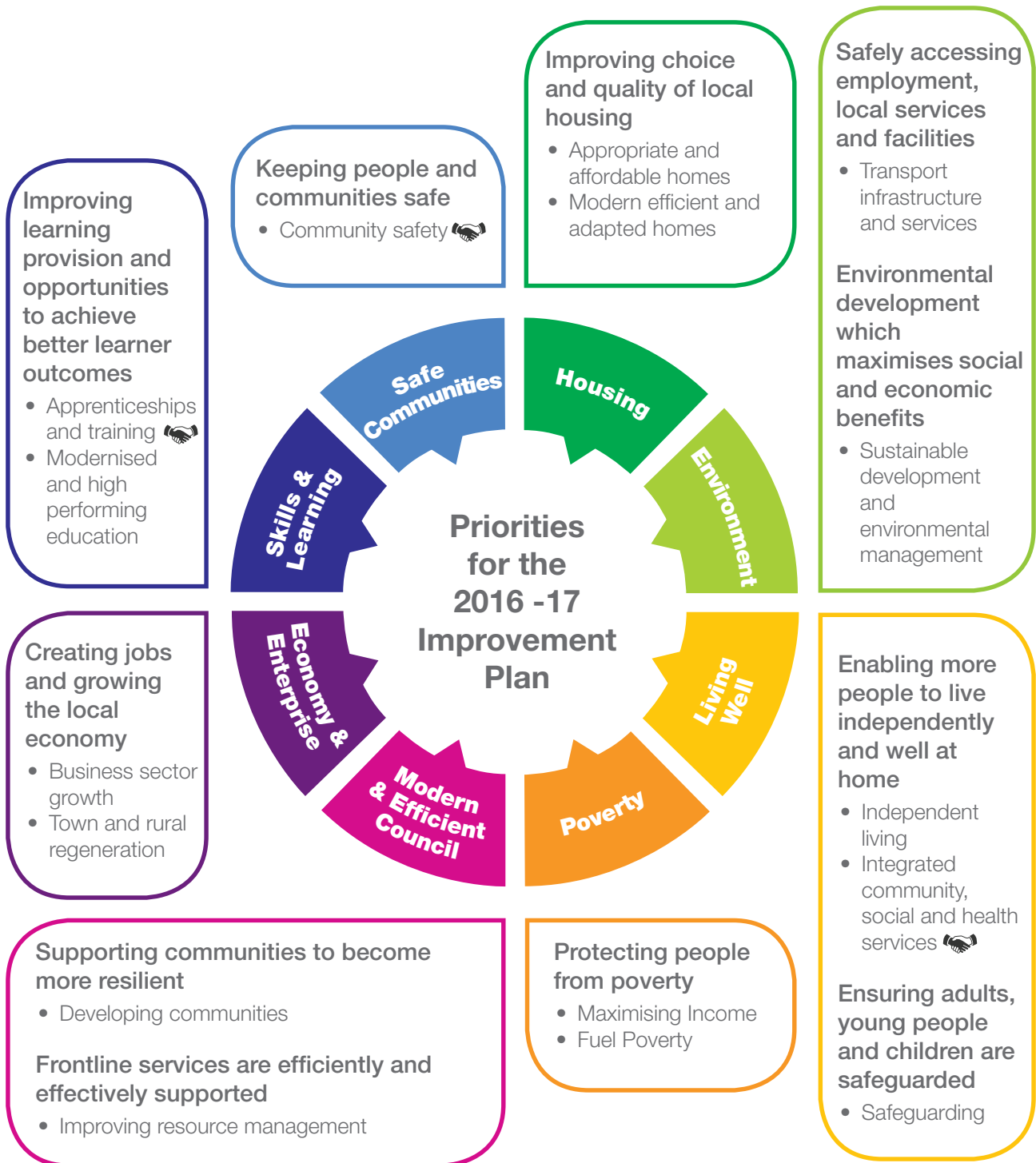
Each of our sub-priorities is described individually on the following pages. We provide information about:

- The impact - what difference will be made
- Why the priority is important in 2016/17
- The national policy issues which impact on delivery of the sub-priority
- What we will do
- How we will measure achievement
- What risks we need to manage
- What some of our language means

We will let you know how well we have performed against our outcomes in two ways:

- 1) regular reports to the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny committees, and
- 2) next years published Annual Performance Report for 2016/17.

Priorities for the 2016/17 Improvement Plan



Following the Plan - An Easy Guide

The previous page sets out the Council's eight standing priorities and the sub-priorities which support them, where we aim to make a big impact in 2016/17.

Each standing priority is illustrated with a different colour. For example, **Poverty** is **orange** and **Modern and Efficient Council** is **dark pink**. This colour coding should make the priorities easier to follow as the reader works through the document and also the supporting document 'How we measure achievement'.

On the graphic illustration we have set out against each priority the impacts we aim to make. Under each impact we list the sub-priorities where action and achievement will help achieve the impact. A sub-priority is simply a specific programme of work on a given theme. Taken together, success in achieving the aims of a set of sub-priorities will deliver the ambition for the bigger, standing priority of the same theme.

Every organisation has to prioritise its attention and its resources to make an impact. The Council has selected a number of the sub-priorities for special attention in the 2016/17 Council year. Each of these selected sub-priorities then has a dedicated page to itself later in the document..

For example on page 23, you will see the priority for **Skills and Learning**.

This has a single impact:-

- **Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes**

This impact has two sub-priorities selected for attention in 2016/17. The reason for selection is explained on their dedicated pages (pages 22 and 23):-

- Apprenticeships and Training
- Modernised and High Performing Education

What's changed for 2016/17?

There is a new section within each sub-priority which references national issues which have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.

Which Sub-Priorities have changed for 2016/17?

We recognise that when reading the Plan from one year to the next it can be difficult to see why some sub-priorities have not been carried forward. For this reason we have included a table below to summarise why sub-priorities have not been carried forward.

2015/16 Sub-Priorities	Why has this sub-priority not been carried forward into the 2016/17 Plan
<p>Town and Rural Regeneration</p>	<p>The 2 sub-priorities in the 2015/16 Improvement Plan (Business Sector Growth and Town & Rural Regeneration) have been merged to create the sub-priority Business Sector Growth & Regeneration. This is now a more strategic sub-priority, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic / regional positioning in readiness for future accelerated growth • Maximising the economic value of transformation projects • Facilitating the creation of jobs • Strengthening the economic benefits of town centres and the visitor economy
<p>Fuel Poverty</p>	<p>Fuel Poverty has been merged within the sub-priority Maximising Income to create an overall sub-priority of 'Poverty'. This sub-priority focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice and support services to help people protect their income • Helping people to get closer to work and / or be work ready • Delivery of energy efficiency measures to homes in Flintshire

Regulation, Audit and Inspection

As a public organisation the Council is regularly inspected to examine and challenge its performance and effectiveness. This work is mainly undertaken by a number of appointed bodies including Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW).

The Council received a favourable Corporate Assessment as part of its Annual Improvement Report last year. The Corporate Assessment is undertaken every 4 years by the Auditor General for Wales. Flintshire's report contained seven Proposals for Improvement, most of which have either been completed or made good progress.

Other reports by Estyn and CSSIW have also been satisfactory with CSSIW finding in October 2015 that the majority of improvement areas previously identified by CSSIW have made good progress, but some areas of weaker performance remaining. During early 2015, CSSIW also inspected the Council's fostering services and found that many things were being done very well.

Other Audit / Regulatory Activity

The council prepares an annual summary of all external audit and regulatory activity. The last one was produced in January 2015 and considered by the Council's Audit Committee.

How Consultation Informs our Plan

The priorities set for this Improvement Plan were, from the outset, based on a wide range of previous consultations in service areas with both partners and representative groups (e.g. community safety, anti-poverty, education, economic development) and, in some cases, service users directly (e.g. housing).

There has been no single intensive consultation exercise on the Plan itself, by local choice, given this background. Elected members, on behalf of the communities they represent, have contributed to setting the priorities of the Council and used their representative role to test the relevance of the Plan against local public opinion. This has been facilitated through the sharing of the draft plan with all elected members and through its presentation at a workshop to which all elected members were invited. Feedback has been used to develop this final version of the Plan. In addition, elected members have been consulted on the targets and milestones to be used to measure achievement of the Plan and ensure there is sufficient pace and ambition.

Consultation on all parts of the Plan is continuous with stakeholders and Welsh Government. The Council remains open to feedback on the plan and amending it at any time following receipt of feedback as well as through new service based consultations.

Improvement Plan and ‘How we measure achievement’

These 2 documents are linked with the ‘measuring achievement’ supporting document providing greater detail about the target performance and milestones we have set ourselves. The documents are hyperlinked at the relevant pages, or this table can be used as a guide.

Improvement Plan Page Numbers	Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact	Corresponding page numbers in ‘How we measure achievement’
12 13	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate and Affordable Homes • Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes 	Improving the choice and quality of local housing	2 - 3 4 - 5
14 15 16	Living Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living • Integrated Community Social and Health Services • Safeguarding 	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded	6 - 7 8 - 9 10 - 11
17	Economy & Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Sector Growth & Regeneration 	Growing the economy and creating jobs	11 - 12 12 - 14
18 19	Skills and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships and Training • Modernised and High Performing Education 	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes	15 - 17 18 - 21
20	Safe Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety 	Keeping people and communities safe	22 - 23
21	Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising Income 	Protecting people from poverty	24 - 27
22 23	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Infrastructure and Services • Sustainable Development and Environmental Management 	Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities Protecting our local environment	28 - 30 31 - 33
25	Modern and Efficient Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Communities • Improving Resource Management 	Supporting communities to become resilient Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported	34 - 36 37 - 39

Priority: Housing



Sub Priority

Appropriate & Affordable Homes

Impact

Improving the choice and quality of local housing

What we will do in 2016/17:

- 1) Deliver a proactive Housing Solutions service to prevent homelessness for as many households as possible.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Number of housing enquiries resolved at first point of contact
- o Maintaining the percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months

2. Stimulate the growth of affordable housing.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Increasing the numbers of new Council and affordable homes through the SHARP programme
- o Maximising the number of new affordable homes provided through the planning system
- o Increase the numbers of affordable homes provided through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme (includes Extra Care provision)



This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Meet the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population.
- Develop more opportunities for people to access affordable rent and low cost home ownership.

National Policy Issues:

- Capping of social rents to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels.
- Local Authorities to be able to access grant funding to support new build affordable and social housing.
- Sufficiency of resourcing to fulfil the new duties of the Wales Housing Act.

Risks to manage

- Homelessness will remain a growing area of demand due to the current economic climate.
- The supply of affordable housing will continue to be insufficient to meet community need.

What we mean by:

SHARP - Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme - programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years.

Social Housing Grant (SHG) - funds housing schemes that meet local needs and priorities as identified by local authorities including providing housing for rent or low cost home ownership through new build or the use of existing buildings.

Priority: Housing



Sub Priority

Modern, Efficient & Adapted Homes

Impact

Improving the choice and quality of local housing

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Deliver financial support to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Repairing / improving 40 private sector dwellings through the Council's capital programme and Welsh Government's national Home Improvement Loan
- o Maintaining the timeliness of adaptations, particularly those delivered through Disabled Facilities Grants

2. Reduce the number of long term vacant homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Bringing empty homes back into use for residential living through the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme

3. Deliver the six year asset management strategy to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for all Flintshire Council homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Completing WHQS work schemes to a value of £21M, in line with the Housing Asset Management Strategy

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Provide good quality housing for residents and maximise funding to improve homes.
- Reduce the number of empty properties in the County.
- Meet the Welsh Government target for all social housing to be brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

National Policy Issues:

- Maintain the funding of Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) so that the Council can meet the WHQS standard by 2020
- Maintain current rent policy so that the Council can achieve WHQS by 2020

Risks to manage

- The increased work programme to deliver the WHQS will not be met due to the scale of the programme.
- Council funding for adaptations and home loans will not be sufficient to meet demand.
- Financial assistance available to repair homes is not taken up by residents.
- Customer expectations for the timeliness of adaptations undertaken through disabled facilities grants will not be met due to competing demands on resources.

What we mean by:

Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) - A grant paid to the 11 Local Housing Authorities who still manage and maintain their council housing which must be used to meet the WHQS.

WHQS - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing.

Adaptations - changes to a person's home to enable her/him to live as independently as possible.

Disabled Facility Grant - a grant available for larger adaptations to a person's home

Houses into Homes Scheme - A Welsh Government scheme to provide loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent.

Priority: Living Well



Sub Priority
Independent Living

Impact

Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure Care Home Provision within Flintshire enables people to live well and have a good quality of life.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Delivering the dementia awareness training programme to the care homes workforce
- o Working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to develop an action plan around supporting the quality and breadth of nursing provision
- o Addressing pressures in domiciliary care and the care home market and improve recruitment and retention.

2. Support greater independence for individuals with a frailty and/or disability, including those at risk of isolation.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Establishing a baseline for the people offered advice and support through the single point of access
- o Ensuring that the workforce are equipped to provide person centred care in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act

3. Improve outcomes for looked after children.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Developing a unified Corporate Parenting Strategy
- o Supporting children in stable, local placements
- o Improving the stability of school placements and the transfer process where moves are needed
- o Strengthen partnership working with Health to ensure timely access to health assessments..

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Help people to live independently as they get older.
- Support people with dementia.
- Develop a model of support for persons with a disability which enables independent living.
- Support whole families to live independently.

National Policy Issues:

- Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Living Wage Issues for care providers, Care Market fragility.
- Aging population locally and nationally.

Risks to manage

- Fragility and sustainability of the care home sector.
- The quality of care home services will not meet required standards.
- Children and vulnerable families are not fully supported where multi-agency services and partners do not move toward an early intervention and prevention approach together.
- Demand and aspirations for independent living will not be met.

What we mean by:

Looked After Children - Children who are being looked after by their local authority, including with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes or in other residential settings like schools or secure units.

Priority: Living Well



Sub Priority

Integrated Community Social & Health Services

Impact

Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure that effective services to support carers are in place as part of the integrated social and health services.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Developing and implementing the action plan resulting from the review of the carers' strategy
- 2) Influence the use of Intermediate Care Funds to support effective discharge from hospital and ensure a smoother transition between Health and Social Care services.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Agreeing the priorities and implementation plan for funding for 2016/17
 - o Improving the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons
- 3) Work through the Children's Services Forum and participation group to improve access to CAMHS
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Number and average waiting time for Looked After Children (LAC) to access CAMHS
- 4) Further develop dementia awareness across the county
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Number of events (and take-up) aimed at raising awareness of dementia across the county
 - o Number of dementia friendly towns in Flintshire

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Work with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to develop Health and Social Care models for the future.
- Avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and support early and successful hospital discharges.
- Co-ordinate the provision of support for service users more effectively with BCUHB and other providers.
- Work together with BCUHB to support people with dementia within the local community.

National Policy Issues:

- Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Living Wage Issues for care providers, Care Market fragility.
- Aging population locally and nationally.

Risks to manage

- Funding between Health and the Council does not transfer smoothly e.g. Community Health Council, ICF, Primary Care Funds
- Service provision is not co-ordinated/integrated.



What we mean by:

Intermediate Care Funds - Funding from Welsh Government being used to support older people to maintain their independence and remain in their own home for as long as possible.

Looked After Children - Children who are being looked after by their local authority, including with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes or in other residential settings like schools or secure units.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - NHS-provided mental health services for children, generally until school-leaving age, in the UK.

Priority: Living Well



Sub Priority
Safeguarding

Impact

Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Strengthen arrangements within all council portfolios to have clear responsibilities to address safeguarding.

Achievements will be measured through:

- o Developing a corporate safeguarding policy which operates as a framework for each service within the Council
- o Development of a performance framework and reporting cycle
- o Review corporate and service policies and procedures to identify breadth and depth of safeguarding coverage

2. Ensure that the workforce are trained in line with the new Codes of Practice for Safeguarding.

Achievements will be measured through:

- o Carrying out a training needs analysis across the Council
- o Referral rates from services other than Social Services

3. Working with our partners we will ensure that our response rates to referrals remain within statutory targets.

Achievements will be measured through:

- o Statutory procedural targets for child and adult protection

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Have a Council wide approach to safeguard and protect vulnerable people.
- Develop further awareness and support for the Council's approach to safeguarding including the prevention of human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Comply with the new codes of practice for Safeguarding within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWB).

National Policy Issues:

- Continuity of funding and collaboration with other partners.

Risks to manage

- Safeguarding arrangements do not meet the requirements of the SSWB Act.



What we mean by:

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) - a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online.

Social Services and Well Being (SSWB) Act 2014 - An Act to reform social services law to make provision about improving well-being outcomes.

Priority: Economy and Enterprise



Sub Priority

Business Sector Growth & Regeneration

Impact

Growing the economy and creating jobs

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Strategic / Regional positioning in readiness for future accelerated growth.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Contributing to the development and delivery of a clear cross border economic growth strategy for Flintshire
 - o Success in gaining approval and/or funding for programmes which will support economic growth
2. Maximise the economic value of transformation projects.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the transformation projects
 - o Supporting supply chain development
 - o Converting business enquiries to investment within Flintshire
3. Facilitate the creation of jobs.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Creating jobs within Flintshire
 - o Creating jobs within Flintshire through our large scale capital programmes (WHQS and SHARP)
4. Strengthen the economic benefits of town centres and the visitor economy.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Supporting the development and management of visitor facilities in key urban areas and along the Dee coastline.
 - o Facilitating private sector investment in town centres.
 - o Expanding the North East Wales Ambassadors programme in Flintshire.

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Grow the local and regional economy, with a target to increase Flintshire's Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK average (currently 88%) by 2030.
- Secure the infrastructure investment needed to facilitate growth both regionally and locally.
- Build upon the success of the advanced manufacturing sector in Flintshire and facilitate business innovation, adaptability and supply chain development.
- Protect the economic viability of our town centres and rural areas.
- Work collaboratively to achieve key priorities for major infrastructure projects which will support economic growth objectives.

National Policy Issues:

- Recognition that Flintshire is part of the Northern Powerhouse and a key player in the delivery of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth deal for the Mersey Dee area and for North Wales.
- Devolution of powers to support economic growth in North Wales (opportunity and possible threat if powers are insufficient and do not match those in England).
- Infrastructure investment to create the platform for advancing economic growth.
- Change from national to local control of business rates.

What we mean by:

Gross Value Added (GVA) - Measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector.

Northern Powerhouse - A collaboration concerned with redressing the North-South economic imbalance, aiming to attract investment into northern cities and towns.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing.

Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) - Programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years.

North East Wales Ambassadors programme - a network committed to encouraging visitors to the region, projecting a positive image and generating more business for local suppliers

Local Enterprise Partnership - Voluntary partnerships between local communities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities, growth and job creation.

Risks to manage

- The Northern Powerhouse and LEP could pose risks to the growth of the Flintshire economy if there is not devolution of powers and freedoms to match those being developed in England.
- Infrastructure investment does not keep pace with needs and business is lost to the economy.
- Support for businesses in Flintshire doesn't meet their needs and fails to encourage investment.
- Devolved powers in Wales do not match those in England.

Priority: Skills and Learning



Sub Priority
Apprenticeships and Training

Impact

Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

What we will do in 2016/17

- 1) Work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximize the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities.
- 2) Increase training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes.
- 3) Support the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network (BEN).
- 4) Further develop the Youth Engagement and Progression work programme for learners in danger of disengaging through:
 - Targeting vocational and employability skills
 - Enhancing personal support, including coaching, mentoring and help with transition
 - Realise the benefits of regional European Social Fund (ESF) programmes (Trac, Adtrac, Opus, Communities 4 Work)
 - Increasing the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for young people in the youth justice service; to better engage with post-custody education, training and employment prior to release.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Increasing the numbers of training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Increasing training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes
- The number of entrepreneurs supported through the Flintshire BEN
- Improving the local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects through improved qualifications
- Increasing the numbers of learners achieving the Level 1 Threshold
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above benchmark position
- Reducing the number of 18 - 24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance
- Rolling out ROTL to new institutions/partners
- Meeting ESF programme targets

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Extend and improve the available education, employment and training opportunities
- Improve the employment prospects of local people to meet the needs of local employers
- Help young people take the step from education to employment
- Reduce barriers to engagement, ensure equality of access and participation opportunities for all children and young people

National Policy Issues:

- Delays of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes affecting delivery of local targets.
- Implementation of the Apprenticeship levy

Risks to manage

- Local employers and learning providers do not work closely enough to identify and meet the skills based needs of the future
- Training places will not match current and future employer aspirations and needs
- Timescales of ESF programmes will not meet local targets and requirements.

What we mean by:

European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes - To increase the employability of local people (aged 25 and over) who have complex barriers to employment.

Young Entrepreneur Programme - an opportunity for young people to work with mentors on their business ideas.

Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network (BEN) - employers working together to support Entrepreneurship Programmes.

Level 1 Threshold - 16 year old learners achieve five or more A*-G grades at GCSE or equivalent.

Apprenticeship levy - a government proposal to apply the levy to large employers across all industries.

Priority: Skills and Learning



Sub Priority
Modernised and High
Performing Education

Impact

Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

What we will do in 2016/17

Make a difference through our Education & Youth Improvement and Modernisation Strategy by raising standards through: -

1. Working effectively with the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) to:
 - Develop leadership capacity in schools through school modernisation and regional working;
 - Share best teaching practice and resources across schools most in need;
 - Identify and target support for those schools most in need;
 - Develop the capacity of schools to respond to national initiatives and curriculum reforms; and
 - Improve skills in digital literacy, literacy and numeracy
- 2) Reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage through the national school improvement priority, Families First Programme (2015-17) and Flintshire's Integrated Youth Services Strategy (2014-18), "Delivering Together".
- 3) Improving outcomes for Looked After Children and young people exiting the Youth Justice System.
- 4) Continuing to implement Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- 5) Developing and implementing a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
- 6) Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
- 7) Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
- 8) Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Improving outcomes in Mathematics, English/Welsh 1st Language and Core Subject Indicator at Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 & 3
- Improving outcomes in Key Stage 4 including Level 2 Inclusive Threshold, Capped Points Score and A*-A Threshold
- Raising standards achieved by learners who are entitled to free school meals
- Improving the number of hours in education, training or employment that young people in the youth justice system can access
- Completing key milestones for the 21st Century School and Schools Modernisation programmes
- Develop and implement a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above the Council's benchmark position
- Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
- Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
- Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Utilise resources effectively to achieve the best possible educational outcomes
- Support the national Welsh Government priorities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment
- Improve digital literacy and skills to enable access to modern employment and economic development opportunities
- Work collaboratively to develop national reforms to curriculum, assessment and professional development models
- Work effectively with partners across the region to secure efficiency and improved outcomes from educational improvement programmes
- Make more efficient use of education resources through Schools Modernisation.

National Policy Issues:

- Sustainable multi-year funding strategy for education funding following the National Assembly for Wales elections in May
- Rationalisation of the provision, planning and accountability processes for education related specific grants.
- Affordability of the 21st Century Schools programme new phases
- Simplification of the process for school place planning and provision

Risks to manage

- Schools do not receive and/or make best use of the support they need from the Council and GwE
- Numbers of school places not matching the changing demographics.
- Limited funding to address the backlog of known repair and maintenance works in Education & Youth assets
- Leadership capacity does not match school needs

What we mean by:

Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) - School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales, works alongside and on behalf of the Local Authorities to develop excellent schools across the region.

Youth Justice Service - aims to prevent children and young people under 18 from offending or re-offending.

Core Subject Indicator - learners achieve the expected level in Mathematics, English or Welsh 1st language and Science

Level 2 Inclusive Threshold - 16 year old learners achieve five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including Mathematics and English/Welsh first Language

Capped Points Score - 16 year old learners are awarded points for each grade they achieve. The best eight subjects then make their Capped Points Score.

A*-A Threshold - 16 year old learners who achieve five or more A* or A grades at GCSE

21st Century Schools - a national programme of funding to improve school buildings and environments

Schools Modernisation - the process by which the Local Authority ensures there are a sufficient number of high quality school places, of the right type in the right locations

Priority: Safe Communities



Sub Priority
Community Safety

Impact

Keep people and communities safe

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Develop a plan to deliver the key outcomes of the North Wales Safer Communities Board (NWSCB) Community Safety Plan.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Reviewing the performance of the delivery framework of the NWSCB
- o Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) adopting and following the key priorities of the regional Community Safety Plan

2. Contribute to the delivery of the North Wales Community Safety Plan priorities:

- o Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on high risk repeat victims.
- o Managing the impacts of substance misuse through improved service provision.
- o Managing the impacts of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Addressing high risk repeat instances of domestic abuse
- o Continuing to meet Welsh Government targets for 'completed treatments' and waiting times for substance misuse services.
- o Agreeing a coordinated response to meeting the requirements of the Act

3. Reduce fear of crime by making best use of the latest technologies including closed circuit television (CCTV).

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Agreement of a forward plan for the resilience of the control room (location and technology renewal)
- o Agreement of a new business and funding plan for the future service
- o Maintaining continuity of service during the service review
- o Maintaining continuity of Council and Town and Community Council partnership funding during the service review

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Support victims of domestic abuse.
- Minimise the impact of substance misuse on the individuals, their families and communities in the County.
- Understand the requirements of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

National Policy Issues:

- Sustainability of short-term grant funded schemes.

Risks to manage

- Lack of sustainable funding to deliver nationally determined community safety priorities.
- Retention of experienced and skilled staff due to the short term grant funding regime.

What we mean by:

Substance Misuse - the continued use of drugs or alcohol despite negative consequence to the individual using, their friends, family and the community.

CCTV - to prevent and respond to crime and disorder.

Priority: Poverty



Sub Priority
Maximising Income

Impact

Protecting people from poverty

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income..
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Assisting Flintshire residents to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits to which they are entitled
 - o Assisting people with Welfare Reform changes through the effective application of the Council's Discretionary Housing Policy
 - o Supporting Flintshire residents to better manage their financial commitments
 - o Monitoring the speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims: i) new claims ii) change of circumstances
2. Helping people to get closer to work and / or be work ready through a range of Government and European funded programmes..
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o The numbers of local people getting closer to work or becoming ready to enter work having benefitted from accessing Government or European funded programmes
3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to homes in Flintshire.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Reducing the overall annual fuel bill for residents
 - o The number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures
 - o Creating and launching a national energy efficiency materials and supplier framework



This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Support people to manage the ongoing impact of Welfare Reform.
- Help people claim the benefits they are entitled to.
- Help people manage their financial commitments.
- Reduce the risk of poverty for families, children and young people.
- Reduce the impact of rises in fuel costs.

National Policy Issues:

- UK Government welfare reforms are adversely affecting local people
- Sustainability of funding for fuel poverty measures.
- Delays of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes affecting delivery of local targets.

Risks to manage

- Demand for advice and support services will not be met.
- Debt levels will rise if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent.
- The local economy will suffer if residents have less income to spend.
- Residents do not take up the energy efficiency measures available.
- Available funding for energy efficiency measures falls short of public demand.

What we mean by:

Welfare Reform - a range of measures introduced by Central Government to reform the Welfare Benefits system

Discretionary Housing Policy - Aims to provide a fair and consistent approach to help customers who require further financial assistance with their housing costs.

Priority: Environment



Sub Priority
Transport Infrastructure
and Services

Impact

Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Access and use available grant funding to support Council priorities for accessing employment, health, leisure and education.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Submission of successful funding bids to WG for Local Transport funding.
 - o Successfully delivering schemes funded through the Local Transport Fund - infrastructure
 - o Preparing the existing route map and integrated network map for "Active Travel" setting out our aspirations for improved walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities; having a positive impact on the resilience of wider transport network.
 - o Securing funding via the Rural and Community Development Fund - community transport
2. Prioritise the Council's road infrastructure for repairs and maintenance and implement programmes of work within available funding in order to improve the resilience, efficiency and reliability of the transport network.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the condition of the highway's infrastructure
 - o Undertaking inspections to ensure reinstatements meet the required standards and raise the standard of works undertaken on Flintshire's network
3. Use available funding to support the Council's priorities to improve road safety on the County's highway network.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Delivering Welsh Government (WG) funded Grant Aided Safety Schemes to address collision trends and concentrations on the road network through the Welsh Government's Grant Aid Programme
 - o Delivering WG funded schemes identified as part of Safe Routes in Communities
 - o Delivering WG funded road safety initiatives to reduce the risk of collisions of high risk groups (measures for older drivers, newly qualified young drivers and motorcyclists)
4. Work closely with the communities to develop innovative and sustainable community transport schemes.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Working with interested local communities to develop a Community Transport Strategy
 - o Developing community transport schemes to compliment the core network of bus services
 - o Development of community transport "hubs" within available funding.

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Maintain accessibility to and between employment, homes, leisure, health and social activity.
- Support and enable safe and affordable travel services.
- Minimise congestion and delays on our highway network.

National Policy Issues:

- Sufficiency of national funding and investment for infrastructure improvement projects and transport services.

Risks to manage

- Sufficient funding to ensure our highways infrastructure remains safe and capable of supporting economic growth is not found.
- Sustainable transport options do not remain attractive to users.
- Sufficient funding will not be found to continue to provide subsidised bus services.

What we mean by:

Infrastructure - Facilities, systems sites and networks that are necessary for the County to function.

"Active Travel" - Walking or cycling as an alternative means to motorised transport for the purpose of making every day journeys.

Community Transport - Passenger transport schemes which are owned and operated by local community groups.

Priority: Environment



Sub Priority

Sustainable Development & Environmental Management

Impact

Protecting our local environment

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Establish an Environment working Group to ensure that the Council adopts an integrated approach to service delivery which meets the aims and objectives of the Single Environment Grant (SEG):

Achievement will be measured through:

 - o Gaining approval to the grant submission
 - o Establishing a Single Environment Group
 - o Monitoring progress and claiming the equivalent grant funding

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

Achievement will be measured through:

 - o Undertaking a renewable energy assessment for the LDP in partnership with Wrexham Council which will inform the pre-deposit and later deposit plan
 - o Agree a revised timetable and delivery agreement with Welsh Government leading to the pre-deposit plan
 - o Publicising the pre-deposit plan
 - o Completing the public consultation on the pre-deposit plan

3. Reducing our Carbon footprint.

Achievement will be measured through:

 - o Creating two solar farms on Flintshire County Council land
 - o Install an electricity link between Brook Hill Landfill site and Altami Depot or agree a virtual private network with Scottish Power to fully utilise the energy generated and reduce costs
 - o Creating a waste transfer station in Greenfield
 - o Improving recycling performance
 - o Reducing our carbon emissions

4. Reviewing the Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Achievement will be measured through:

 - o Completing Flintshire's Local Flood Risk Management Plans
 - o Developing a list of priority flood alleviation schemes based on transparent criteria

5. Reducing the occurrence and impact of environmental crime.

Achievement will be measured through:

 - o Identification of environmental crime hotspots from local intelligence and service requests
 - o Targeted enforcement campaigns in hotspot areas

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Address the requirements of the sustainable development principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act and Environment Bill.
- Balance the need for sustainable development with the protection of the natural environment.
- Continue to reduce our carbon emissions to meet Welsh Government targets and play our part in helping to address the consequences of climate change.

National Policy Issues:

- Reduction of the Single Environment Grant whilst delivering the priority area of natural resource management.
- Reliance on external funding for large scale developments.
- Government cap on financial support for solar farms.
- Capacity and funding to address flood risks.

Risks to manage

- Reduction of the Single Environment Grant.
- Recycling programmes are not supported by the public and employees.
- Limitations on suitable Council sites with sufficient area for larger scale renewables schemes and suitable connections to the electric grid.
- Funding will not be secured for priority flood alleviation schemes.
- Customer expectations around the delivery of flood alleviation schemes are not effectively managed.
- Environmental crime programmes are not supported by the public and employees.

What we mean by:

Single Environment Grant - a WG grant to support integrated delivery of natural resource management, waste & resource efficiency and local environmental quality.

Renewable energy schemes - schemes designed to use energy from a source that is naturally replenished e.g. sunlight

Carbon reduction commitment - a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions in large public sector and private organisations.

Energy Generation - generation of heat and electricity.

Waste Transfer Station - facility to bulk and bale waste for onward transportation.

Environmental Crime - e.g. dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.

Priority: Modern & Efficient Council



Sub Priority
Developing Communities

Impact

Supporting communities to become more resilient

What we will do in 2016/17

1. Develop the community and social sectors through developing and growing social enterprises in Flintshire, in turn supporting and creating new forms of local business.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the number of new social enterprises developed
 - o Monitoring the number of social enterprises supported to thrive and prosper
 - o Monitoring community benefits delivered by new social enterprises
2. Encourage volunteers and active citizens.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the impact of the local volunteering policy
3. Ensure community benefit through our commissioning of goods and services.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Establishing a Community Benefits Board with an action plan
 - o Monitoring the percentage of community benefit clauses included in new procurement contracts.
4. Design and implement alternative delivery models (ADMs) to sustain important services to meet future need.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the level of efficiencies ADMs have supported.
 - o Monitoring the number of services sustained through delivery via alternative models.
5. Empower communities to run and manage facilities in their locality through Community Asset Transfers (CATs).
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the number of public assets safely transferred to the community
 - o Monitoring community benefits delivered by Community Asset Transfers
6. Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are not disadvantaged when accessing Council Services
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Build on what has been completed in year one (2015/16) with support for local communities. In year two this will be concentrated on:
 - o Developing the community and social sectors to support local communities to be more self-sufficient.
 - o Creating alternative delivery models within the community and social sector to sustain valued public services.
 - o Developing social enterprises, who are able to act for the benefit of local communities and create both employment and economic opportunities.
 - o Realising social benefits in the community e.g. increasing volunteering and training opportunities for young people; keeping local money in the community.
 - o Ensuring our Armed Forces Community and their families are recognised for their commitment.

Risks to manage

- The capacity and appetite of the community and social sectors.
- The willingness of the workforce and Trade Unions to embrace change.
- Market conditions which the new alternative delivery models face.
- Limitations on public funding to subsidise alternative models.
- Procurement regulations stifling our ability to develop local community and third sector markets
- Newly established Social Enterprises fail in their early stages of development
- Newly established Community Asset Transfers fail in their early stages of development

National Policy Issues:

- Lack of support programmes for the development of alternative delivery models.
- Role of Town and Community Councils in cooperative working and local governance as detailed in the Local Government Bill 2015.
- Strengthening of the social sector to be more commercial and less reliant on grant funding.

What we mean by:

Social Enterprise - businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are mainly reinvested for that purpose in the business or community.

Community Benefit Clauses - benefits to local communities from major procurements e.g. training and employment opportunities, community facilities.

Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) - new approaches to service delivery designed to sustain important services and meet future need.

Community Asset Transfers (CAT) - the leasehold transfer of a Flintshire County Council asset to an organisation with a social purpose who plans to use it for the benefit of the local community.

Priority: Modern & Efficient Council



Sub Priority

Improving Resource Management

Impact

Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported

What we will do in 2016/17

- 1) Develop and implement a renewed three year financial plan that reflects anticipated funding, costs and efficiencies to support strategic decision making.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Revising our plan to meet the £38m funding gap for 2016 - 2019
 - o Matching our priorities with revenue and capital investment
 - o Achieving our efficiency targets
- 2) Implement the People Strategy to ensure the council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Monitoring the impact of people performance management
 - o Monitoring the impact of the new Employee Development and Talent
 - o Management scheme on retention of our capability
 - o Monitoring the impact of the People Strategy in service portfolios
- 3) Rationalise the Council's use of corporate accommodation.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Reducing the floor space and costs of occupied office accommodation
 - o Increasing the number/percentage of employees who work in an agile way
- 4) Optimise purchasing efficiencies through the use of local, regional and national procurement arrangements and through the increased use of electronic solutions.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Creating efficiencies through the use of local, regional and national procurement arrangements
 - o Reducing the cost of procurement through the use of end to end electronic purchasing
- 5) Embrace digital channels as the default in service design where possible to provide access to online services at a time and location convenient to the customer.
Achievement will be measured through:
 - o Increase the number of transactional services online and via the Flintshire App
 - o Increase the take up of online services
 - o Respond to customer feedback ensuring information is accessed at first point of contact online

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Manage with reducing resources.
- Continue to aim high despite reduced financial and people resources.
- Make the best use of our capability and capacity in challenging times.
- Have the right buildings in the right places for the right uses.
- Make our money go further through smarter purchasing.
- Achieve the highest possible standards of customer services.

National Policy Issues:

- Reduction in capital investment and resources

Risks to manage

- The scale of the financial challenge.
- The capacity and capability of the organisation to implement necessary changes.
- The pace of procurement collaborations and our limited control over their development.
- Public attitude to accessing services on-line.

What we mean by:

Employee Development and Talent Management scheme: our scheme that seeks to encourage employee engagement, talent management, behaviour and competencies development, learning and skills development.

Digital Channels: Alternative channels of communication e.g. e-mail, social media, text messaging.

Transactional Services: Council services for which customers pay.

Statement of Responsibility

This publication fulfils in part the statutory requirements to publish an annual Improvement Plan as part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure (2009). This is our 'forward-looking' document for the year. The second part of the statutory requirement is the Annual Performance Report which is our 'backward-looking' document and reviews performance against our objectives set for the previous year. This second report is published in October.

Contacts for Feedback and Review

On-going review about the Council's priorities and this plan is available through our website where feedback forms are available for the public, our partners, our workforce and businesses. We would like to know what you think about our priorities and those for the future. We would value your feedback and hope that you can spend a few minutes to tell us what you think.

In the meantime our contacts for any initial observations are:

Policy and Performance Team:

Tel: 01352 702744

Email: Policy and Performance Team@flintshire.gov.uk

This document is available in alternative formats or your own language on request.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/17

How achievement will be measured - Supporting milestones and measures

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Housing	Appropriate & Affordable Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Deliver a proactive Housing Solutions service to prevent homelessness for as many households as possible.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Number of housing enquiries resolved at first point of contact
- Maintaining the percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	Baseline Data (2015/16)	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of housing enquiries resolved at first point of contact	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	tbc	tbc	tbc
Maintaining the percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months (HHA/013)		89%	87%	92%

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2. Stimulate the growth of affordable housing.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Increasing the numbers of new Council and affordable homes through the SHARP programme
- Maximising the number of new affordable homes provided through the planning system.
- Increase the numbers of affordable homes provided through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Development of the Flint Extra Care provision by Autumn 2017

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	Baseline Data (2015/16)	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The number of new Council and affordable homes through the SHARP programme	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	0	12	12

The number of new affordable homes provided through the planning system.	Enterprise	69	35	35
The number of affordable homes provided through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme		tbc	135	135

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

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Deliver financial support to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Repairing / improving 40 private sector dwellings through the Council’s capital programme and Welsh Government’s national Home Improvement Loan
- Improving the timeliness of adaptations, particularly those delivered through Disabled Facilities Grants

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Repair / improve 40 private sector dwellings through the Council’s capital programme and Welsh Government’s national Home Improvement Loan.	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	23	30	40
PSR/009a - The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for children and young people.		455	316	316
PSR/009b - The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for adults.		310	247	247

2. Reduce the number of long term vacant homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Bringing empty homes back into use for residential living through the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
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The number of empty homes brought back into use the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	4	8	8
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3. Deliver the six year asset management strategy to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) for all Council homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Completing WHQS work schemes to a value of £21M, in line with the Housing Asset Management Strategy

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Capital Works Target – Roofs & Associated Components	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	112	209	658
Capital Works Target – Windows		112	209	287
Capital Works Target – External Doors		112	209	287
Capital Works Target – Kitchen replacements		1393	1030	1048
Capital Works Target – Bathrooms		1688	1398	1488
Capital Works Target – Central Heating		192	190	206
Capital Works Target – Electrical Systems		50	50	50
Capital Works Target – Smoke Detectors		508	500	500

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Independent Living	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure Care Home provision within Flintshire enables people to live well and have a good quality of life.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Delivering the dementia awareness training programme to the care homes workforce
- Working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to develop an action plan around supporting the quality and breadth of nursing provision
- Addressing pressures in domiciliary care and the care home market and improve recruitment and retention.

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Implement joint monitoring tools to support the quality of nursing care by October 2016
- Recruit coordinators for Community Circles April 2016 and evaluate the project September 2016
- Reduce and streamline paperwork to free up staff September 2016
- Agree local, regional and national priorities arising from the review of residential care, and develop action plan by September 2016

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Monitoring numbers of agency staff used	Chief Officer – Social Care	N/A New Measure	Management Information	Management Information
Numbers of homes which are a ‘service of concern’		3	3	3
Numbers of homes in ‘escalating concerns’		0	2	2

2. Support greater independence for individuals with a frailty and / or disability.

Achievements will be measured through

- Establishing a baseline for the people offered advice and support through the single point of access
- Ensuring that the workforce are equipped to provide person centred care in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loneliness and isolation adopted as part of the “what matters” conversation by October 2016 				
Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of adults who received advice or assistance from the information, advice and assistance service during the year and have not contacted the service again (New National Outcomes Framework for Social Services)	Chief Officer – Social Care	N/A	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established
Number of adults who received a service provided through a social enterprise, co-operative, user led service or third sector organisation during the year (New National Outcomes Framework for Social Services)		N/A	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established
Achievement of outcomes for people with a learning disability		N/A new measure	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established
The number of communities committed to becoming ‘Age-Friendly’		N/A new measure	1	2

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3. Improve outcomes for looked after children

Achievements will be measured through:

- Developing a Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Supporting children in stable, local placements
- Improving the stability of school placements and the transfer process where moves are needed
- Strengthen partnership working with Health to ensure timely access to health assessments.

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Developing a unified Corporate Parenting Strategy by October 2016

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
SCC/002 Stability of School placements	Chief Officer – Social	13.4%	10%	tbc%

Timeliness of health assessments (formerly SCC\039 - last measured nationally 2013/14)	Services	68.3%	81%	85%
SCC/037 Educational attainment of looked after children	Chief Officer – Education & Youth	248 points	270 points	tbc

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Integrated Community Social and Health Services	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure that effective services to support carers are in place as part of the integrated social and health services.

Achievements will be measured through

- o Developing and implementing the action plan resulting from the review of the carers’ strategy

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- o Developing the action plan resulting from the review of the carers’ strategy by June 2016
- o Implementing the action plan resulting from the review of the carers’ strategy by October 2016

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The percentage of identified carers of adult service users who were assessed or reassessed in their own right during the year who were provided with a service (formerly SCA/018c – no longer collected nationally)	Chief Officer – Social Services	88.9%	92 – 98%	98%
The percentage of identified carers of adult service users who access the ‘Bridging the Gap’ respite and report it having a positive impact on their caring role		N/A	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established

2. Influence the use of Intermediate Care Funds to support effective discharge from hospital and ensure a smoother transition between Health and Social Care services.

Achievements will be measured through

- o Agreeing the priorities and implementation plan for funding for 2016/17

- Maintaining the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Agreeing the priorities and implementation plan for funding for 2016/17 by October 2016

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
SCA/001 Monitoring the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons (rate per 1000)	Chief Officer – Social Services	3.39	2	1.4

3. Work through the Children’s Services Forum and participation group to improve access to CAMHS

Achievements will be measured through

- Number of Looked After Children (LAC) waiting to access CAMHS
- Average waiting time for Looked After Children (LAC) accessing CAMHS

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of Looked After Children (LAC) waiting to access CAMHS	Chief Officer – Social Services	N/A New Measure	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established
Average waiting time for Looked After Children (LAC) accessing CAMHS		N/A New Measure	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established

4. Further develop dementia awareness across the county

Achievements will be measured through

- Number of events (and take-up) aimed at raising awareness of dementia across the county
- Number of dementia friendly towns in Flintshire

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number events aimed at raising awareness of dementia across the county	Chief Officer – Social Services	3	3	3
Number of dementia friendly towns in Flintshire	Chief Officer – Social Services	2	2	2

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Safeguarding	Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded

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What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Strengthen arrangements within all council portfolios to have clear responsibilities to address safeguarding.

Achievements will be measured through

- Developing a corporate safeguarding policy which operates as a framework for each service within the Council.
- Development of a performance framework and reporting cycle
- Review corporate and service policies and procedures to identify breadth and depth of safeguarding coverage.

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Developing, endorsing and introducing a corporate safeguarding policy by October 2016
- Developing a performance management framework and reporting cycle by September 2016
- Identification of corporate and service policies needing review to include safeguarding by December 2016
- Developing training programme for implementation across the workforce September 2016

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
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Embedding safeguarding awareness and procedures within appropriate policies (policy reviews)	Chief Officer – Social Services	0	25%	100%
Increased referral rates from services other than Social Services (TBC)		Management Information	Management Information	Management Information
SCA/019 – Adult protection referrals where the risk was managed		100%	98-100%	98-100%
SCC/014 – Initial child protection conferences held within 15 days of the strategy discussion		86.3%	95%	98%
SCC/034 – Child protection reviews completed in time		99.2%	99%	100%

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Economy and Enterprise	Business Sector Growth & Regeneration	Growing the economy and creating jobs

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Strategic / Regional positioning in readiness for future accelerated growth

Achievements will be measured through

- Contributing to the development and delivery of a clear cross border economic growth strategy for Flintshire
- Success in gaining approval and/or funding for programmes which will support economic growth

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Contributing to the development and delivery of a clear cross border economic growth strategy for Flintshire
- Success in gaining approval and/or funding for programmes which will support economic growth

2. Maximise the economic value of transformation projects

Achievements will be measured through

- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the transformation projects
- Supporting supply chain development
- Converting business enquiries to investment within Flintshire

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- DEZ project
- SHARP project
- Northern Gateway project
- Warren Hall project
- Vibrant and Viable Places project

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target

Delivery of supply chain development events	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	N/A New Measure	3	3
Number of business enquiries converted to investment within Flintshire		74%	Management Information	Management Information

3. Facilitate the creation of jobs

Achievements will be measured through

- Creating jobs within Flintshire
- Creating jobs within Flintshire through our large scale capital programmes (WHQS and SHARP)

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of new jobs in Flintshire	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	2,139	1,200	1,200
Number of new jobs through large scale capital programmes (WHQS)		43	32	40
Number of new jobs through large scale capital programmes (SHARP)		tbc	tbc	tbc

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4. Strengthen the economic benefits of town centres and the visitor economy

Achievements will be measured through

- Supporting the development and management of visitor facilities in key urban areas and along the Dee coastline
- Facilitating private sector investment in town centres
- Expanding the North East Wales Ambassadors programme in Flintshire

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Implement the Coastal Community Fund programme investments in Flintshire's coastal tourism infrastructure by 31/03/17
- Complete the Town Action Plan improvement project to St Mary's Church Square in Flint by 31/12/16
- Develop a plan to increase the coverage of brown and white visitor signs in Flintshire by 31/03/17
- Implement parking improvements in Talacre by end 30/06/16

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Support the development of community-led visitor facilities

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of town centre private sector investment proposals supported	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	4	3	3
Number of new Ambassadors recruited		20	15 (additional)	15 (additional)

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Skills and Learning	Apprenticeships and Training	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximize the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities.
2. Increase training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes
3. Support the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network
4. Further develop the Youth Engagement and Progression work programme for learners in danger of disengaging through:
 - Targeting vocational and employability skills
 - Enhancing personal support, including coaching, mentoring and help with transition
 - Realise the benefits of regional European Social Fund programmes
 - Increasing the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for young people in the youth justice service; to better engage with post-custody education, training and employment prior to release.

Achievements will be measured through

- Increasing the numbers of training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Increasing training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes
- The number of entrepreneurs supported through the Flintshire BEN
- Improving the local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects through improved qualifications
- Increasing the numbers of learners achieving the Level 1 Threshold
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above benchmark position
- Reducing the number of 18 – 24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance
- Rolling out ROTL to new institutions/partners
- Meeting ESF programme targets

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Participation in ROTL by new institutions/partners 31/03/17

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	Baseline Data (Summer 2015)	2016/17 Target (Summer 2016)	2017/18 Aspirational Target (Summer 2017)
Increased numbers of training and apprenticeship opportunities:		Source: https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Work-Based-Learning/uniquelearnersworkbasedlearning-by-programmetype-domicile		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships 		2,300 (2013/14 Academic Year)	Management Information	Management Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traineeships 		235 (2013/14 Academic Year)	Management Information	Management Information
Increase number of training and apprenticeship opportunities through Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeships Academy and our major capital programmes (WHQS & SHARP):		10 tbc (WHQS only)	7 tbc (WHQS 3 & SHARP 4, SHARP tbc)	4 tbc (WHQS only)
The number of entrepreneurs supported through the Flintshire BEN		100	150	tbc
Improved local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects through improved qualifications:	Chief Officer – Education & Youth	Source: Annual Labour Force Survey: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/Imp/la/1946157387/report.aspx?town=flintshire#tabquals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Flintshire residents qualified to NVQ 2 level 	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	70.2% (Dec 2014)	Management Information	Management Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Flintshire residents qualified to NVQ 3 level 		51% (Dec 2014)	Management Information	Management Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Flintshire residents qualified to NVQ 4 level & above 		28% (Dec 2014)	Management Information	Management Information
Increased numbers of learners achieving the Level 1 Threshold*		94.3%	96.2%	tbc
Securing high levels of 16 years olds in education, employment and training (Source: http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en)		98.7% (Y11 school leavers 2014)	98.9%	tbc
Reducing the percentage of 18 – 24 year olds claiming Jobseekers		tbc	4.9%	tbc

Allowance				
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**Education targets are based on knowledge of cohort abilities and therefore do not show consistent increases year on year.*

Meeting European Social Fund programme targets:

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
European Social Fund (Trac):	Chief Officer – Education & Youth			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		N/A New Measure	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		N/A New Measure	tbc	tbc
European Social Fund (Adtrac):				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 	Chief Officer – Education & Youth	N/A New Measure	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		N/A New Measure	tbc	tbc
European Social Fund (Opus):	Chief Officer - Community & Enterprise			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		N/A New Measure	50	83
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		N/A New Measure	50	86
Communities 4 Work:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		tbc	tbc	tbc

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Skills and Learning	Modernised and High Performing Education	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

What we will do in 2016/17:

Make a difference through our Education & Youth Improvement and Modernisation Strategy by raising standards through: -

1. Working effectively with the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) to:
 - Develop leadership capacity in schools through school modernisation and regional working;
 - Share best teaching practice and resources across schools most in need;
 - Identify and target support for those schools most in need;
 - Develop the capacity of schools to respond to national initiatives and curriculum reforms; and
 - Improve skills in digital literacy, literacy and numeracy
2. Reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage through the national school improvement priority, Families First Programme (2015-17) and Flintshire’s Integrated Youth Services Strategy (2014-18), “Delivering Together”.
3. Improving outcomes for Looked After Children and young people exiting the Youth Justice System.
4. Continuing to implement Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
5. Developing and implementing a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
6. Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
7. Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
8. Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

Achievements will be measured through

- Improving outcomes in Mathematics, English/Welsh 1st Language and Core Subject Indicator at Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 & 3
- Improving outcomes in Key Stage 4 including Level 2 Inclusive Threshold, Capped Points Score and A*-A Threshold
- Raising standards achieved by learners who are entitled to free school meals
- Improving the number of hours in education, training or employment that young people in the youth justice can access
- Completing key milestones for the 21st Century School and School Modernisation programmes
- Develop and implement a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above the Council's benchmark position
- Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
- Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
- Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Completion of 21st Century Schools (Band A) milestones in line with target dates:
 - Holywell Campus Project Phase 1 (buildings) by 31/08/16
 - Holywell Campus Project Phase 2 (external and pitches) by 28/02/17
 - Deeside 6th, Coleg Cambria by 31/08/17
 - Remainder of Band A Programme to be complete by 31/03/19
- Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms in line with the legislative timetable by tbc.

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Develop and implement a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme
- Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings
- Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	Baseline Data (Summer 2015)	2015/16 Target (Summer 2016)	Aspirational Target (Summer 2017)
Outcomes in Mathematics, English/Welsh 1st Language and Core Subject Indicator at all Key Stages				
The percentage of learners achieving the Foundation Phase Indicator	Chief Officer Education and Youth	87%	87.9%	88.5%
* Improved Outcomes in Mathematics at:				
○ Key Stage 4		69.4%	74.4%	75.2%
○ Key Stage 3		92.0%	93.8%	94.2%
○ Key Stage 2		90.9%	87.9%	88.8%
○ Foundation Phase		90.2%	88.4%	86.5%
* Improved Outcomes in English at:				
○ Key Stage 4		72.2%	76.1%	76.5%
○ Key Stage 3		91.4%	93.0%	93.1%
○ Key Stage 2		90.1%	87.3%	87.5%
○ Foundation Phase		89.0%	86.2%	83.5%
* Improved Outcomes in Welsh (first language) at:				

○ Key Stage 4		54.6%	74.7%	78.7%
○ Key Stage 3		80.0%	92.1%	92.9%
○ Key Stage 2		86.4%	85.4%	85.2%
○ Foundation Phase		91.2%	85.6%	93.2%
EDU/003 - The percentage of learners achieving the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2		87.9%	89.1%	89.4%
EDU/004 - The percentage of learners achieving the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3		87.1%	89.3%	90.1%
Percentage of learners achieving 5 or more A* to C passes at GCSE or the vocational equivalent				
Improvement of outcomes in Capped Wider Points score, including an increasing proportion of A* and A grades	Chief Officer Education and Youth	342.1points	362.7 points	375.0 points
EDU/017 - The percentage of learners achieving the Level 2 Threshold inclusive of Mathematics and English and/or Welsh 1 st Language		60.6%	65.1%	69.0%
Raising standards achieved by learners who are entitled to free school meals, "Looked After" or are otherwise identified as vulnerable				
Improve performance of cohort of learners entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in achieving the Level 1 Indicator (Five GCSE passes A* to C or vocational equivalent including Mathematics and English and/or Welsh 1 st Language)	Chief Officer Education and Youth	92.1%	96.6%	97.6%
Improve performance of cohort of learners entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in achieving the Level 2+ Indicator (Five GCSE passes A* to C or vocational equivalent including Mathematics and English and/or Welsh 1 st Language)		35.2%	43.9%	54.4%
Improve performance of cohort of learners entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in The Capped Points Score indicator. (Points achieved in best eight course outcomes)		308.1points	338.7 points	344.6 points
Improve performance of cohort of learners entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) in achievement of the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3		71.3%	76.5%	78.8%
Access to education, training or employment for young people in the Youth Justice System				
The number of hours ETE that are offered to those young people of school age in the youth justice system.	Chief Officer Education and Youth			

• 25 hours		83%	60%	75%
• 16+ hours		90%	65%	80%
Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above the Council's benchmark position				
Securing high levels of 16 years olds in education, employment and training (Source: http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en)		98.7% (Y11 school leavers 2014)	98.9%	tbc

* Key Stage Definitions:

- Key Stage 4 = achieving A*-C at GCSE
- Key Stage 3 = achieving Level 5 or above
- Key Stage 2 = achieving Level 4 or above

Education targets are based on knowledge of cohort abilities and therefore do not show consistent increases year on year.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Safe Communities	Community Safety	Keep people and communities safe

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Develop a plan to deliver the key outcomes of the North Wales Safer Communities Board (NWSCB) Community Safety Plan.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Reviewing the performance of the delivery framework by the NWSCB
- Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) adopting and following the key priorities of the regional Community Safety Plan

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Reviewing of a delivery framework by the NWSCB by 01/10/2016
- Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) adoption of the key priorities of the regional Community Safety Plan by 31/12/2016

2. Contribute to the delivery of the North Wales Community Safety Plan priorities:

- Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on high risk repeat victims
- Manage the impacts of substance misuse through improved service provision
- Managing the impacts of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Addressing high risk repeat instances of domestic abuse
- Continuing to meet Welsh Government targets for ‘Completed treatments’ and waiting times for substance misuse services
- Agreeing a coordinated response to meeting the requirements of the Act.

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Agreeing a coordinated response to meeting the requirements of the Act by 31/03/17

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The percentage of high risk repeat victims of domestic abuse referred to the Flintshire MARAC (target is set in line with the Home Office target)	Chief Officer – Planning and Environment	18.6%	28%	28%

Achieving a waiting time of less than 20 days from referral to treatment (KPI 2)		tbc	80% (WG target)	80% (WG target)
Achieving the Welsh Government target for the percentage of completed substance misuse treatments (80%) (KPI 6)		tbc	80% (WG target)	80% (WG target)

3. Reduce fear of crime by making best use of the latest technologies including closed circuit television (CCTV).

Achievement will be measured through:

- Agreement of a forward plan for the resilience of the control room (location and technology renewal)
- Agreement of a new business and funding plan for the future service
- Maintaining continuity of service during the service review
- Maintaining continuity of Council and Town and Community Council partnership funding during the service review

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Agreement of a forward plan for the resilience of the control room (location and technology renewal) by 31/03/17 tbc
- Agreement of a new business and funding plan for the future service by 31/03/17 tbc

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Maintaining continuity of service during the service review
- Maintaining continuity of Council and Town and Community Council funding during the service review

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Poverty	Maximising Income	Protecting people from poverty

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Assisting Flintshire residents to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits to which they are entitled
- Assisting people with Welfare Reform changes through the effective application of the Council’s DHP Policy
- Supporting Flintshire residents to better manage their financial commitments
- Monitoring the speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims: i) new claims ii) change of circumstances

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by FCC (WEL/001)	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£1,900,000	£2,000,000	£2,300,000
Amount of discretionary housing payment (DHP) paid to support people to adjust to Welfare Reform changes		tbc	Management Information	Management Information
Number of residents supported to better manage their financial commitments		168	Management Information	Management Information
Speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims (days):				
▪ new claims		tbc days	20 days	19 days
▪ change of circumstances		tbc days	8 days	17 days

2. Helping people to get closer to work and / or be work ready through a range of Government and European funded programmes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- The numbers of local people getting closer to work or becoming ready to enter work having benefitted from accessing Government and / or European funded programmes.

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
European Social Fund - Trac:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		tbc	tbc	tbc
European Social Fund - Adtrac:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 	Chief Officer - Community & Enterprise	tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		Chief Officer – Education & Youth	tbc	tbc
European Social Fund - Opus:	Chief Officer – Social Services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 		N/A New Measure	12	31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		N/A New Measure	50	83
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		N/A New Measure	50	86
European Social Fund – Communities 4 Work:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 		tbc	tbc	tbc

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		tbc	tbc	tbc
Families First:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification (baseline data based on Q1-3 of 2015/16) 		133 (108 practitioners, 25 service users)	150	150
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity (baseline data based on Q1-3 of 2015/16) 		15	30	30
Flying Start:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		tbc	tbc	tbc
Achievement Measures		2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Communities First:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people entering employment 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people gaining a qualification or work relevant certification 		tbc	tbc	tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing a work experience placement or volunteering opportunity 		tbc	tbc	tbc
Supporting People:				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people recording a positive outcome under the outcome measure "Engaging in education and learning" 		613	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people recording a positive outcome under the outcome measure "Engaging in employment/volunteering opportunities" 		652	Establish Baseline	TBC once Baseline Established

3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to homes in Flintshire.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Reducing the overall annual fuel bill for residents
- The number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures
- Creating and launching a national energy efficiency materials and supplier framework

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Creating and launching a national energy efficiency materials and supplier framework by tbc

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for setting targets against				
Overall annual fuel bill reduction for residents*	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£296,030	tbc	tbc
The number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures		593	800	tbc

**The figures for fuel bill reductions and carbon emissions do not exactly correlate as might be expected with the number of homes receiving measures as this is dependent on the composition of measures.*

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Environment	Transport Infrastructure and Services	Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Access and use available funding to support Council priorities for accessing employment, health, leisure and education.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Successfully delivering schemes through the Local Transport Fund (infrastructure)
- Preparing the existing route map and integrated network map for “Active Travel”
- Securing funding via the Rural and Community Development Fund (community transport)

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Local Transport Fund – delivery of infrastructure schemes by 31/03/17
- Active Travel – production of the existing route map and integrated network map by 30/09/17
- Rural and Community Development Fund (community transport) – secure funding by tbc

2. Prioritise the Council’s road infrastructure for repairs and maintenance and implement programmes of work within available funding in order to improve the resilience, efficiency and reliability of the transport network.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the condition of the highway’s infrastructure
- Undertaking inspections to ensure reinstatements meet the required standards and raise the standard of works undertaken on Flintshire’s network

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target
THS/012 - The percentage of principal (A) roads, non-principal (B) roads and non principal (C) roads that are in overall poor condition	Chief Officer – Transportation & Streetscene	7%	8% *	8% *
Percentage of inspections undertaken to ensure reinstatements meet required standards so as to improve the standard of works undertaken on Flintshire's network.		40%	50%	50%

**Due to reductions in funding the achievement of these reduced target still represents a very ambitious level of performance*

3. Use available funding to support the Council’s priorities to improve road safety on the County’s highway network.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Delivering WG funded Grant Aided Safety Schemes to address collision trends and concentration on the road network through the Welsh Government’s Grant Aid Programme
- Delivering WG funded schemes identified as part of Safe Routes in Communities
- Delivering WG funded road safety initiatives to reduce the risk of collisions of high risk groups (measures for older drivers, newly qualified young drivers and motorcyclists)

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Delivering WG funded Grant Aided Safety Schemes to address collision trends and concentrations on the road network through Welsh Governments Grant Aid Programme by 31/03/17
- Delivering schemes identified as part of WG funded Safe Routes in Communities by 31/03/17

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Road safety initiatives to reduce the risk of collisions of high risk groups:	Chief Officer – Transportation & Streetscene			
• Older drivers undertaking a driving assessment		27	27	N/A will depend on funding
• Newly qualified young drivers participating in Pass Plus		44	44	N/A will depend on funding
• Motorcyclists attending Bike Safe / FBOS Courses / Scooter Safe		63	63	N/A will depend on funding

4. Work closely with the communities to develop innovative and sustainable community transport schemes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Working with interested local communities to develop a Community Transport Strategy
- Developing community transport schemes to compliment the core network of bus services
- Development of community transport "hubs" within available funding

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with local communities to develop a Community Transport Strategy by 31/03/17 ▪ Developing community transport schemes to compliment the core network of bus services by tbc 				
Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of community transport "hubs" developed within available funding	Chief Officer – Transportation & Streetscene	N/A New Measure	tbc	tbc

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Environment	Sustainable Development & Environmental Management	Protecting our local Environment

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Establish an Environment working Group to ensure that the Council adopts an integrated approach to service delivery which meets the aims and objectives of the Single Environment Grant (SEG).

Achievement will be measured through:

- Gaining approval to the grant submission
- Establishing a Single Environment Group
- Monitoring progress and claiming the equivalent grant funding

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Gaining approval to the grant submission by tbc
- Establishing a Single Environment Group by tbc
- Monitoring progress and claiming the equivalent grant funding by tbc

2. Agree the Local Development Plan’s vision and objectives, and options to accommodate growth.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Undertaking a renewable energy assessment for the LDP in partnership with Wrexham Council which will inform the pre-deposit and later deposit plan
- Agree a revised timetable and delivery agreement with Welsh Government leading to the pre-deposit plan
- Publicising the pre-deposit plan
- Completing the public consultation on the pre-deposit plan

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Undertaking a renewable energy assessment for the LDP in partnership with Wrexham Council which will inform the pre-deposit and later deposit plan by 30.09.2016
- Revisit the timetable and delivery agreement with Welsh Government by 31/03/17
- Publication of the pre-deposit plan by 31/03/17
- Completing the public consultation on the pre-deposit plan by 31/03/17

3. Reducing our Carbon footprint.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Creating two solar farms on Flintshire County Council land
- Install an electricity link between Brook Hill Landfill site and Alltami Depot or agree a virtual private network with Scottish Power to fully utilise the energy generated and reduce costs

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Two solar farms to be operational by 31/11/16
- Install an electricity link between Brook Hill Landfill site and Alltami Depot or agree a virtual private network with Scottish Power to fully utilise the energy generated and reduce costs by 31/03/17

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
EEFLM1 - Carbon Reduction Commitment - Reduce our carbon footprint through delivery of our Carbon Reduction Strategy (non-domestic portfolio)	Chief Officer – Planning & Environment	1.14% (reduction) 19.67% (cumulative reduction weather corrected)	4% reduction	60% cumulative reduction by 2021

4. Reviewing the Flood Risk Management Strategy

Achievement will be measured through:

- Completing Flintshire’s Local Flood Risk Management Plans
- Developing a list of priority flood alleviation schemes based on transparent criteria

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Complete Flintshire’s Local Flood Risk Management Plans by 01/07/16
- Development of a list of priority flood alleviation schemes based on transparent criteria by 01/04/17

5. Reducing the occurrence and impact of environmental crime.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Identification of environmental crime hotspots from local intelligence and service requests
- Targeted enforcement campaigns in hotspot areas

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Identification of environmental crime hotspots from local intelligence and service requests
- Targeted enforcement campaigns in hotspot areas

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Modern & Efficient Council	Developing Communities	Supporting communities to become more resilient

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Develop the community and social sectors through developing and growing social enterprises in Flintshire, in turn supporting and creating new forms of local business.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the number of new social enterprises developed
- Monitoring the number of social enterprises supported to thrive and prosper
- Monitoring community benefits delivered by new social enterprises

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Monitoring community benefits delivered by new social enterprises based on the 8 Community Benefit Agreements drafted in 2015/16

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The number of new social enterprises developed *	Chief Officers – Organisational Change & Community & Enterprise	5	3	3
The number of social enterprises supported to thrive and prosper (support meetings held with Social Enterprises)		12	12	12

2. Encourage volunteers and active citizens

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the impact of the local volunteering policy

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of volunteers directly placed into volunteering placements	Chief Officers –	541	Management	Management

	Organisational Change		Information	Information
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3. Ensure community benefit through our commissioning of goods and services and their impact.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Establishing a Community Benefits Board with an action plan
- o Monitoring the percentage of community benefit clauses included in new procurement contracts

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- o Establishment a Community Benefits Board by September 2016

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Percentage of contracts awarded in the financial year over £1m with community benefit clauses included in contract documents	Chief Officer – Governance	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of contracts awarded in the financial year under £1m with community benefit clauses included in contract documents		N/A New Measure	20%	30%

4. Design and implement alternative delivery models (ADMs) to sustain important services to meet future need.

Achievement will be measured through:

- o Monitoring the level of efficiencies ADMs have supported
- o Monitoring the number of services sustained through delivery via alternative models

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The level of efficiencies ADMs have supported	Chief Officers – Organisational Change	Business Plans completed identifying £2m savings from 2017/18	Establish ADMs by 1st April 2017	£2m
The number of services sustained through delivery via alternative models		5 services in 3 ADMs from 2017/18	Establish ADMs by 1st April 2017	5 services

5. Empower communities to run and manage facilities in their locality through Community Asset Transfers (CATs).

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the number of public assets safely transferred to the community
- Monitoring community benefits delivered by Community Asset Transfers

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Monitoring community benefits delivered by Community Asset Transfers based on the 8 Community Benefit Agreements drafted in 2015/16

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The number of public assets transferred to the community	Chief Officers – Organisational Change	8 transferred or in legal completion	15 transferred or in legal completion	15 transferred or in legal completion

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6. Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are not disadvantaged when accessing Council Services

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Monitoring the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Modern & Efficient Council	Improving Resource Management	Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported

What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Develop and implement a renewed three year financial plan that reflects anticipated funding, costs and efficiencies to support strategic decision making.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Revising our plan to meet the £38m funding gap for 2016-2019
- Matching our priorities with revenue and capital investment
- Achieving our efficiency targets

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Produce a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy by 31/07/16

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Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Amount of efficiency targets achieved.	Chief Officer – People and Resources	83%	85%	90%

2. Implement the People Strategy to ensure the council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Participation in Flintshire Academies Training and Development programmes
- Monitoring the impact of people performance management
- Monitoring the impact of the new Employee Development and Talent Management scheme on retention of our capability
- Monitoring the impact of the People Strategy in service portfolios

Achievement Milestones for strategy and action plans:

- Monitoring the impact of the People Strategy in service portfolios

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Number of participants in Flintshire Academy Training and Development programme	Chief Officer – People and Resources	tbc	tbc	tbc
Increase percentage of staff that receive an annual appraisal		tbc	tbc	tbc
Percentage of employee turnover (excluding early retirement and voluntary redundancy)		10.64%	9%	8%
(CHR/002) The number of working days per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence.		10.38%	9.3%	8.8%

3. Rationalise the Council's use of corporate accommodation.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Reducing the floor space and costs of occupied office accommodation
- Increasing the number/percentage of employees who work in an agile way

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
The reduction in the floor space (m2) of office accommodation occupied	Chief Officer – Organisational Change 2	22%	26%	30%
Reduction in the running costs of corporate accommodation (County Hall, Flint Offices & Library Head Quarters – includes associated staffing costs e.g. caretaking and security)		100% for 2013/14 -20% for 2015/16	-25% tbc	-30%
Agile working – desk provision as a percentage of staff (County Hall)		98%	89% tbc	78%

4. Optimise purchasing efficiencies through the use of regional and national procurement collaborations and through the increased use of electronic solutions.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Creating efficiencies through the use of the regional and national procurement collaborations
- Reducing the cost of procurement through the use of end to end electronic purchasing

Achievement Measures	Lead	2015/16	2016/17 Target	2017/18
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	Officer	Baseline Data		Aspirational Target
Achievement of efficiency savings achieved due to the use of National, Regional and Sectoral procurement frameworks	Chief Officer – Governance	£291,527*	£400,000	£450,000
Efficiencies achieved through the use of end to end electronic purchasing **		£tbc	£300,000 tbc	£tbc

* This is the minimum cashable savings recorded, further analysis of savings is ongoing with individual service areas

** Reporting will commence once training has been undertaken.

5. Embrace digital channels as the default in service design where possible to provide access to online services at a time and location convenient to the customer.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Increase the number of transactional services online and via the Flintshire App
- Increase the take-up of online services
- Respond to customer feedback ensuring information is accessed at first point of contact online

Quarterly summary progress monitoring:

- Respond to customer feedback ensuring information is accessed at first point of contact online

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2015/16 Baseline Data	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Aspirational Target
Increase the number of transactional services online and via the Flintshire app	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	New Measure	N/A Management Information	N/A Management Information
Increase the take-up of online services		New Measure	N/A Management Information	N/A Management Information

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Improvement Plan – Considerations by Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The draft Improvement Plan 2016/17 was considered by the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

Organisational Change	26 April
Education and Youth	28 April
Community and Enterprise	9 May
Environment	11 May
Corporate Resources	12 May
Social and Health Care	19 May

All Committee Members endorsed the contents of the draft plan and targets with the following exceptions.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Comment	Response
Organisational Change	Modern and Efficient priority: 'How we Measure': ensure that for 'Developing Communities' sub-priority that 'Armed Forces' includes "are not disadvantaged".	Included in final draft.
	The targets for national performance indicators – details of how many contracts over £1m are allocated.	Information is available; to be circulated to members.
Social and Health Care	Living Well priority: 'Safeguarding' – add an additional point regarding working with partners as a multi-agency approach.	Included in final draft.
Environment	Environment priority: Remove reference to heat mapping exercise in Flint	Reference removed.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14 th June 2016
Report Subject	Minimum Revenue Provision and Prudential Indicators – Policy Amendments
Report Authors	Corporate Finance Manager (Section 151 Officer) & Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet on 17th May 2016 approved the building of 92 homes on the site of The Walks in Flint as part of the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) of which 30 of the homes will be built for rent at social housing rent levels and financed through the Housing Revenue Account capital programme. The other 62 homes will be built for rent at affordable rent levels by the Council's wholly owned company NEW Homes.

The NEW Homes Business Plan 2015/20 identifies growth through the development of 300 affordable homes between 2016 and 2020. NEW Homes has analysed the available capital funding options to develop the 62 affordable homes on the site of The Walks, Flint and identified that the preferred option would be to borrow the capital finance needed from the Council.

Loans from the Council to NEW Homes for house building purposes, in accounting terms, are classed as capital expenditure and therefore need to be included within the Council's capital programme. The Cabinet at its May meeting approved the loan to NEW Homes, and the associated changes to the Council's 2016/17 and future year's capital programme.

The changes made to the capital programme also require changes to other policies which are required to be approved by full Council. This report explains the changes required to each policy and seeks Council approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Council approves the changes to the policy on Minimum Revenue Provision as detailed in paragraphs 1.16 and 1.17
2	Council approves the changes to the Prudential Indicators 2016/17 to 2018/19 as detailed in paragraphs 1.19 to 1.28.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOMES IN FLINT
1.01	NEW Homes was set up by the Council in April 2014 to improve the housing opportunities for those households which the local housing market has failed. Increasing the range of housing options for the “ <i>squeezed middle</i> ” is a key corporate objective for NEW Homes. The squeezed middle refers to those households whose income levels are too high to qualify for social housing, but do not earn sufficient income to be able to access, or service a mortgage independently.
1.02	The NEW Homes approved business plan sets out key elements of the company’s future growth strategy to increase the number of properties owned by the company for rent at affordable rent levels over the next five years. The Cabinet has approved the NEW Homes business plan.
1.03	This plan includes the development of 300 new build properties, through the Council’s Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP). The first proposed scheme is at The Walks, Flint which will include the provision of 62 new affordable houses and apartments.
1.04	The housing development will deliver a key strategic objective in the Council’s Improvement Plan, and generate additional income in the form of interest receivable from NEW Homes.
1.05	Attached at Appendix 1 for information is the Cabinet report of the 17th May 2016 which fully explains the considerations involved in building the affordable homes in Flint and the agreement to the loan from the Council to NEW Homes, the terms of which have been delegated to the Corporate Finance Manager and Monitoring Officer.
	Council Lending to New Homes
1.06	There are 2 phases to the funding of any new housing development. The first being the construction phase during which the properties are built and the second being the operational phase when the properties are built and in this case let out.

1.07	<p>The lending will be structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will fund the loan to NEW Homes by borrowing itself either from the Public Works Loans Board or the market, dependent on the most competitive rate at the time of borrowing. The transaction would be independent of any on lending to NEW homes. <p>There will be 2 loans made to NEW Homes to reflect the 2 phases of the housing the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first will be a short term loan during construction which is estimated to take approx. 18 months, will fund the build costs and be drawn down as needed over the 18 month period. During this phase the loan will need to be structured so that NEW Homes do not make any repayments of principle and the interest would accrue but not be payable. This is due to the fact there is no income generated from renting the properties to fund interest and capital repayments during this phase. <p>When the properties are built the first loan will be refinanced into a second loan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second loan will be a longer term loan during the operational phase of renting out the properties. The loan will be secured against the properties as is common practice. The principal to be repaid by NEW Homes will be the total build costs plus the interest accrued from the 1st loan. The term will be varied to suit NEW Homes requirements subject to a maximum of 50 years, and maybe refinanced from time to time during the life of the properties to meet NEW Homes' cash flow requirements.
	Capital Programme
1.08	<p>The loans qualify as capital expenditure and therefore have been incorporated into the Council's Capital Programme from 2016/17 to be funded from prudential borrowing.</p> <p>When the loan is refinanced as set out in para 1.07, it will need to be included within the capital programme for a second time, as in accounting terms a second loan is granted and used to settle the first loan, the differences reflected in the terms and conditions associated with both loans. The repayment of the first loan will be classed in accounting terms as a capital receipt which will be used to repay the prudential borrowing associated with the first loan. All of the transactions above happen simultaneously.</p>
1.09	<p>As the loan is classified as capital expenditure it also has implications for policies set by full Council which were set at the budget meeting in February 2016. It is therefore necessary to amend the following policies discussed in more detail in paras 1.11 to 1.28;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's policy of setting aside funding to repay debt called the

	<p>Minimum Revenue Provision - to incorporate the repayments of the first and second loan and the associated accounting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Prudential Code for Capital Finance requires Local Authorities to set a range of Prudential Indicators to demonstrate that their capital investment plans are prudent, sustainable and affordable. These need amending to reflect the inclusion of the loan to NEW Homes. In particular the, authorised limit for debt which is a statutory limit set by the Council which cannot be breached.
1.10	As the loan to NEW Homes is being made to achieve the Council's strategic objectives within the Improvement Plan, it does not meet the definition of an investment within the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. Investments are the use of surplus cash as a result of timing differences between receiving and spending cash to generate a return, with the focus on security, liquidity and finally yield. Therefore there is no need to amend the limits or counterparties in the Investment Strategy within the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 and this has been confirmed by the Council's treasury management advisors.
	Minimum Revenue Provision
1.11	Local Authorities are required each year, under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 ('the 2008 Regulations'), to set aside some of their revenue resources as provision for the repayment of debt.
1.12	Regulation 22 of the 2008 Regulations requires an authority to each year make an amount of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which it considers to be 'prudent', though the regulation itself does not define 'prudent provision'.
1.13	Welsh Government (WG) has provided guidance which makes recommendations to authorities on the interpretation of the term, this guidance was last updated in April 2010.
1.14	Authorities are required to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP.
1.15	The WG guidance provides for a number of options for making 'prudent provision'. It explains that provision for the debt which funded the acquisition of an asset should be made over a period bearing some relation to that over which the asset continues to provide a service.
1.16	As the first loan to NEW Homes is a short term loan of approximately 18 months during the construction phase the recommendation is to make no MRP during this period. This is in line with the Council's current practice for non-current assets that the Council builds funded from prudential borrowing, where MRP is not made during the construction period and begins in the year after the asset has become operational.
1.17	For the second loan to NEW Homes when capital repayments are being made

	the recommended MRP policy is to set the Council's MRP to equal the repayments made by NEW Homes. The repayments made by NEW Homes will be classed in accounting terms as capital receipts, which can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt which is a form of MRP. It is proposed to set aside the capital receipts (the capital repayments) made by NEW Homes to repay debt, being the Council's MRP policy for repaying the loan.																												
1.18	The Council's current MRP policy for capital expenditure funded from debt under the Prudential system for which no Welsh Government support is being given and is therefore self-financed, is to make provision in equal instalments over the estimated life of the asset for which debt is undertaken. The duration of the second loan is likely to be in the region of 40 years, which broadly equates to the life of the houses being built and therefore the recommended MRP policy is consistent with existing principles the Council has already established.																												
	Prudential Indicators																												
1.19	The Prudential Code has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) as a professional code of practice to support local authorities in determining their programmes for capital investment in fixed assets. Local authorities are required by Regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.																												
1.20	The framework established by the Prudential Code is intended to support local strategic planning, local asset management planning and robust option appraisal. The objectives of the Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable.																												
1.21	The loans to NEW Homes impact on the Prudential Indicators set by the Council in February 2016. There is a need to add the loan to various indicators and demonstrate that the loan does not affect the prudence, affordability or sustainability of the Council's plans. Council are asked to approve the amended Prudential Indicators as set out in paragraphs 1.22 to 1.28 below.																												
1.22	The prudential indicator for Council Fund capital expenditure needs amending to include the loan payments to NEW Homes. <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1675 1401 1944"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>2016/17</th> <th>2017/18</th> <th>2018/19</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Estimate</th> <th>Estimate</th> <th>Estimate</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Council Fund (as previously set)</td> <td>21.143</td> <td>12.301</td> <td>12.912</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Estimated loan to NEW Homes</td> <td>4.100</td> <td>3.200</td> <td>0.100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised Council Fund</td> <td>25.243</td> <td>15.501</td> <td>13.012</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note that the HRA estimates have not changed.</p>	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE					2016/17	2017/18	2018/19		Estimate	Estimate	Estimate		£m	£m	£m	Council Fund (as previously set)	21.143	12.301	12.912	Estimated loan to NEW Homes	4.100	3.200	0.100	Revised Council Fund	25.243	15.501	13.012
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1.23	<p>There are 2 prudential indicators for affordability; the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream, and the estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on Band D Council Tax and Housing Rents.</p> <p>Neither of these indicators will be affected by the loans to NEW Homes. The interest costs of the first loan will be accrued as a creditor on the Balance Sheet and no MRP will be made therefore there are no associated revenue costs with the first short term loan. The MRP on the second loan will not affect the Council's revenue position, as it will be made through the capital accounts, as explained above in para 1.17. The interest that the Council will pay through the revenue account on the second loan will be more than offset by the marginally higher rate of interest charged and received from NEW Homes, creating a positive impact on the Council's revenue account.</p>																												
1.24	<p>The prudential indicator estimating the Council Fund's capital financing requirement needs amending to include the loan payments to NEW Homes.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="284 745 1391 1055"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">2016/17</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2017/18</th> <th style="text-align: center;">2018/19</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Estimate</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Estimate</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Estimate</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Council Fund (as previously set)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">183.554</td> <td style="text-align: right;">187.523</td> <td style="text-align: right;">189.065</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Estimated loan to NEW Homes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4.100</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3.200</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised Council Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">187.654</td> <td style="text-align: right;">190.723</td> <td style="text-align: right;">189.165</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note that the HRA estimates have not changed.</p> <p>The capital financing requirement measures the Council's underlying need to finance capital expenditure by borrowing or other long-term liability arrangements.</p>	CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT					2016/17	2017/18	2018/19		Estimate	Estimate	Estimate		£m	£m	£m	Council Fund (as previously set)	183.554	187.523	189.065	Estimated loan to NEW Homes	4.100	3.200	0.100	Revised Council Fund	187.654	190.723	189.165
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1.25	<p>CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities includes the following; gross debt and the capital financing requirement, as a key indicator of prudence.</p> <p><i>'In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional financing requirement for the current and next two financial years'.</i></p>																												
1.26	<p>In the February 2016 Prudential Indicator report The Corporate Finance Manager reported no difficulty in meeting this requirement for the future period to which the prudential indicators apply. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and all budget proposals. The loan to NEW Homes does not change this position as the Capital Financing Requirement increases in line with gross debt.</p>																												
1.27	<p>The prudential indicators for external debt need amending to include the loan payments to NEW Homes.</p>																												

AUTHORISED LIMIT FOR EXTERNAL DEBT			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m
All Borrowing (as previously set)	299.300	323.300	333.300
Estimated loan to NEW Homes	4.100	3.200	0.100
Revised All Borrowing	303.400	326.500	333.400
Other Long Term Liabilities (previously set)	24.100	25.100	26.100
Revised Total	327.500	351.600	359.500

The authorised limits are consistent with the authority's current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the capital programme. They are based on the estimate of most likely, prudent position with, sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for operational management, for example unusual cash movements.

Council is asked to note that the authorised limit determined in 2016/17 above will be the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

- 1.28 Council is also asked to approve the operational boundary for external debt for the same period, below. The proposed operational boundary for external debt is based on the same estimates as the authorised limit but reflects directly the estimate of the most likely, prudent provision, without the additional headroom included in the authorised limit to allow for example for unusual cash movements, and equates to the maximum of external debt projected by this estimate. The operational boundary represents a key management tool for in year monitoring.

OPERATIONAL BOUNDARY FOR EXTERNAL DEBT			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m
All Borrowing (as previously set)	269.300	293.300	303.300
Estimated loan to NEW Homes	4.100	3.200	0.100
Revised All Borrowing	273.400	296.500	303.400
Other Long Term Liabilities (previously set)	9.100	10.100	11.100
Revised Total	282.500	306.600	314.500

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	As set out within the report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Arlingclose Ltd – the Council’s Treasury Management Advisors.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	An overall Strategic Risk Register has been established for the SHARP Housing Programme. This is in addition to the scheme specific Risk Register for The Walks which is regularly updated in relation to emerging and changing risks.
4.02	The SHARP team continues to develop a framework for managing risk and opportunities the programme generates. Further work is on-going in order to improve the robustness in risk identification and management as part of the new CAMMS system which will contain Development Framework procedures.
4.03	Decisions made which involve the Council’s assets and its Capital Programme often have very large and long term financial implications which carry a variety of risks. This report assess the affordability, prudence and sustainability of the capital plans to manage those associated risks.
4.04	The provision of capital finance to NEW Homes to build housing, is considered fairly low risk as NEW Homes is wholly owned by the Council, the Council exerts a high degree of control over NEW Homes and the Council will register a charge against the new properties as security. The loan also provides a new income stream which could be replicated in future for other strategic priorities.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – 17 th May Cabinet report – SHARP, The Walks Flint – Affordable Housing Development

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Office: Liz Thomas

Job Title: Finance Manager - Technical
Telephone: 01352 702289
E-mail: liz.thomas@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

7.01 **Capital Expenditure:** Expenditure on the acquisition of Non-current Assets or expenditure that extends the life or value of an existing asset

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR): A measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by an authority that has yet to be financed from capital receipts, capital grants or revenue financing.

Council Fund (CF): The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged.

Capital Programme - The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.

Capital Receipt - Receipts (in excess of £10,000) from the disposal of an asset

Capital Scheme - An individual capital project which is monitored and managed in isolation. The aggregate of all schemes comprises the Capital Programme

Council Fund - The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged

Financing - The process of allocating resources to meet the cost of capital expenditure, which can be done on a project, asset or whole programme basis. This contrasts with making the invoice payments relating to capital expenditure, which should be managed within the authority's overall treasury management policy

Housing Revenue Account (HRA): The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure relating to its housing stock is charged.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP): A charge made to the Council Fund to repay borrowing taken out for capital expenditure. Authorities must determine their own prudent MRP charge each year, taking into consideration statutory guidance issued by the Government.

Non-current Asset - A resource controlled (but not necessarily owned) by an authority, from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the authority for more than 12 months

North East Wales Homes, (NEW Homes) - is a Housing company based in Flintshire and owned by Flintshire County Council. NEW Homes owns, leases and manages properties across Flintshire. The company was

established to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing available across the county; increasing housing choice for those who may not qualify for social housing but for whom market housing is unaffordable or difficult to access.

Prudential Code: The code of practice drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to underpin the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 in respect of an authority's duty to determine the affordability, prudence and sustainability of its capital investment needs.

Prudential Indicators - Required by the **Prudential Code**, these take the form of limits, estimates or actual figures used to support the local decision making process for capital investment

Revenue Expenditure: All expenditure incurred by an authority that cannot be classified as capital expenditure.

Revenue Support Grant (RSG): Is paid to each authority to cover the cost of providing standard services less the Council Tax income at the standard level.

Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) – Flintshire County Council House Building Programme which will build 500 new homes (200 Council) and 300 (affordable).

Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB), commonly referred to as Supported Borrowing: Each year Welsh Government provide Council's with a Supported Borrowing allocation. Council's borrow to fund capital expenditure equivalent to that annual allocation, Welsh Government then include funding to cover the revenue costs associated with the borrowing for future years within the Revenue Support Grant. The Council decides how this funding is spent.

Unsupported Prudential Borrowing: Borrowing administered under the Prudential Code, whereby authorities can set their own policies on acceptable levels and types of borrowing. The Prudential Framework allows authorities to take out loans in response to overall cash flow forecasts and other factors provided they can show that the borrowing is to meet planned capital expenditure in the current year or the next three years.

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 17 th May 2016
Report Subject	Approval of lending to NEW Homes to Fund a Development of 62 Affordable New Homes in Flint
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer, (Community & Enterprise)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NEW Homes Business Plan 2015/20 identifies growth through the development of 300 affordable homes between 2016 and 2020. Each new development scheme requires individual cabinet approval.

NEW Homes has been analysing the available capital funding options to develop 62 affordable homes on the site of The Walks, Flint and has identified that the preferred option would be to request approval to borrow the capital finance needed from the Council.

This report describes the current position with taking forward a development scheme for NEW Homes and seeks approval from Cabinet to on lend capital finance to NEW Homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet notes that NEW Homes wishes to develop 62 affordable properties on the Walks at Flint at a build cost of £7.397M and its board has agreed to seek approval from the council to provide capital finance to fund the development.
2	Cabinet agrees to delegate responsibility to the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the terms of the loan as described in paragraph 1.50 of this report • Approval of the terms of the loan agreement and any associated documents following satisfactory due diligence.
3	Cabinet approves the inclusion of the NEW Homes Walks development costs in its Council's Fund capital programme in 2016/17 to be funded by prudential borrowing.
4	Cabinet recommends to Council changes to necessary strategies and policies including; Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Accounting Policies.
5	Cabinet agrees to dispose of HRA land at the Walks to NEW Homes (Subject to Welsh Government consent) for c£187K, subject to final valuation of abnormal costs.
6	Cabinet notes that NEW Homes will develop a joint Marketing and Estate Management Strategy (including a Local Lettings Policy) with the Council for The Walks.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE DEVELOPMENT OF 62 AFFORDABLE NEW HOMES IN FLINT
1.01	<p>The NEW Homes approved Business Plan sets out key elements of the company's future growth strategy to increase the number of properties owned by the company as affordable housing over the next five years. The cabinet has approved the NEW Homes business plan.</p> <p>This plan includes the development of 300 new build properties, through the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP). The first proposed scheme is at The Walks, Flint which will see the provision of 62 new affordable houses and apartments.</p>
1.02	In June 2015 following an extensive procurement exercise, Wates Living Space were appointed as the Council's preferred Development partner for delivering the SHARP over the next five years.
	CONSIDERATIONS
1.03	The proposed re-development of The Walks will bring to the town a significantly improved housing offer for Flint town centre, utilising traditional construction methodology which will provide thermally efficient, well planned and secure properties for the current and future residents of Flint. It is widely recognised that the re-development of The Walks is a once in a generation opportunity to re-plan this key town centre site.

1.04	Appendix 1 shows the overall layout of the total proposed scheme for The Walks, Flint. In preparing the overall design, the primary consideration has been to compliment the Flint Conservation Area and also deliver the objectives of the Flint 2012 Master Plan in reinforcing the linkages between Flint Castle and the town centre. The proposed new road pattern and estate layout reflects the historic urban grid and suggests a recreation of John Speed's original town map and town perimeter fortification.																		
1.05	As Flint was originally constructed as a planned town based around a cruciform of streets, the design intent of the architectural proposals seeks to recreate this street pattern. Clwyd-Powys Archaeology Trust (CPAT) have a long-standing interest in Flint with excavation works already being undertaken to the neighbouring Leas Site.																		
1.06	The design and layout of the scheme has also been informed by the panel of the Design Commission for Wales (DCW). The Design Review Service allows development plans and proposals throughout Wales to be considered by the Design Commission for Wales' independent, expert multi-disciplinary team. A positive report was received from the DCW on the proposed scheme design and layout.																		
1.07	The proposed overall development provides a total of 92 No. residential properties. This comprises 30 social rented homes (the subject of a separate report on this agenda) and 62 affordable rented properties. The affordable rented properties will be let at 90% of market rent.																		
1.08	NEW Homes Property Mix																		
1.09	NEW Homes will deliver the following property mix on the site: <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1227 1401 1458"> <thead> <tr> <th>Property Type</th> <th>No.</th> <th>Rents (Monthly)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 Bed Apartment</td> <td>6</td> <td>£405.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Bed Apartment</td> <td>18</td> <td>£495.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Bed House</td> <td>23</td> <td>£495.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Bed House</td> <td>15</td> <td>£562.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>62</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Property Type	No.	Rents (Monthly)	1 Bed Apartment	6	£405.00	2 Bed Apartment	18	£495.00	2 Bed House	23	£495.00	3 Bed House	15	£562.00	Total	62	
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3 Bed House	15	£562.00																	
Total	62																		
1.10	Demand for Affordable Housing in Flint																		
1.11	There are currently 30 applicants who have applied to NEW Homes indicating a desire to live in Flint, the table below shows the break down by demand for number of bedrooms. <table border="1" data-bbox="284 1742 1348 1935"> <thead> <tr> <th>Number of Bedrooms</th> <th>Number of Applicants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Number of Bedrooms	Number of Applicants	1	9	2	12	3	9	TOTAL	30								
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TOTAL	30																		

1.12	NEW Homes is receiving regular enquiries from customers interested in The Walks, AND whilst they are encouraged to complete application forms, to increase the likelihood of being successful in securing a property, many do not. They indicate that they will contact NEW Homes when the properties are advertised. This would indicate that the demand for these properties is significantly higher than indicated by the number of active applications.
1.13	The register maintained by Grwp Cynefin also shows a further 8 households requiring 2 bed properties and 2 households requiring 3 bed properties. Increasing the number of identified applicants looking for properties in Flint to 40. These figures do not include applicants who are in contact with other letting agents in Flint. These people are likely to register an interest when the properties are marketed.
1.14	Housing Market Assessment of The Walks
1.15	An independent Housing Market Assessment (HMA) report was undertaken for The Walks in Spring 2015 to inform and assess the proposed tenure mix, unit mix and rent levels for the scheme. The report indicates that the level of demand for rented properties in Flint remains strong. There is a shortage of good quality housing stock within Flint, in particular 2 and 3 bed semi / terraced houses that fall within the affordability means of the local market.
1.16	<p>Currently, there are only 7 properties being advertised for rental on Rightmove of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x 2 Bed Semi / End Terrace properties range from £550 – £600 p.m.; • 1 x 2 Bed Cottage at £475 p.m.; <p>There are currently no 3 bed houses or 1 /2 Bed apartments currently advertised as being available to rent in Flint on Rightmove.</p>
1.17	This would suggest there is a shortage of property across the size range, particularly for 2 and 3 Bed properties which is a demand the proposed housing mix meets.
1.18	Marketing of the Scheme
1.19	The overall vision for marketing The Walks will be to create a united marketing strategy that reinforces the partnership between the Council and NEW Homes. The marketing of The Walks will encompass developing a single brand that is easily recognised by local people.
1.20	Key Design Features of the development
1.21	<p>All of the properties proposed have been designed in strict compliance with the NEW Homes approved Flintshire Housing Standard as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All properties proposed, including apartments and houses, are elevated, designed and positioned to be tenure blind and are designed and architecturally detailed in an identical manner irrespective of the form of tenure proposed. • The scheme fully complies with the space standards and room layouts

	<p>outlined and in many instances the properties are provided and proposed at the upper level of the anticipated and required square metre age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All properties proposed in 'The Walks' development contain an element of internal storage in order to comply with the requirements of modern day living. • External storage is proposed to the houses • To all houses on the development gardens have been designed to be private, secure and to have minimal overlooking from adjacent properties. In all instances private amenity garden spaces are in excess of 30 sq. m, with the house type layouts providing immediate and direct access to the garden spaces from the property. Most rear gardens are accessible from the rear of the properties through private and secure footpaths featuring lockable gates to the garden entrances in order to fully comply with the requirements of Secured by Design. • The design approach to the car parking solution is to ensure that each dwelling is provided within curtilage parking with the overall development providing 153 car spaces, giving an overall ratio in excess of 150%. In most instances car parking to individual dwellings is clearly overlooked from primary habitable rooms within the dwelling in order to provide secure and controlled car parking facilities for the residents. The car parking spaces provided for the apartment block and Castle Heights are also visually controlled from the proposed and existing dwellings in order to provide safe and secure car parking facilities.
1.22	Management of The Walks
1.23	The Council properties will be managed within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), whilst the affordable properties will be managed by NEW Homes. A joint Local Lettings Plan will be developed to ensure good management of the stock for the sensitive allocation of properties. Joint working arrangements will also be developed around tenancy management and repairs services.
1.24	Land Value
1.25	Flintshire County Council has commissioned an independent valuation for The Walks from the District Valuer. The open market value of the proportion of the site to be developed by NEW homes is £771k.
1.26	<p>There are projected abnormal site costs of £584K. These have been deducted from the valuation, leaving a net sale price to NEW Homes of c£187K. (This is the same process which was utilised for land disposed of recently to Pennaf Housing Group and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board for their development sites in Flint).</p> <p>An application for consent to transfer the land to NEW Homes has been made to Welsh Government with a formal response expected shortly.</p>

1.27	Build Costs								
1.28	The current anticipated build cost for the scheme is £7.397M. These costs have been subject to on-going value engineering and challenge. The costs have been broken down as follows:								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Build Costs for The Walks Site</th> <th>NEW Homes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Build Cost for the Walks site (Affordable provision)</td> <td>£7.21M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Land purchase Costs</td> <td>c£187K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Projected Build Costs</td> <td>£7.397M</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Build Costs for The Walks Site	NEW Homes	Build Cost for the Walks site (Affordable provision)	£7.21M	Land purchase Costs	c£187K	Total Projected Build Costs	£7.397M
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Total Projected Build Costs	£7.397M								
1.29	Planning approval for the scheme was received on the 22 th February 2016. The build for the scheme will commence in September 2016. The handover of the properties to NEW Homes will be phased over an 18 month period, with a projected completion in March 2018. Appendix 2 shows the proposed phasing sequence for The Walks.								
1.30	It is envisaged that the construction of The Walks will deliver a number of positive community benefits to the town including increased trade to local contractors and local supply chain.								
1.31	Funding Options Available to NEW Homes								
1.32	A number of different funding solutions have been identified and reviewed to finance the development. These options include NEW Homes borrowing privately itself from the market; leasing finance and the Council lending directly to NEW Homes. The detailed financial modelling undertaken for each option has utilised NEW Homes Development Scheme Assumptions about rental income and management and maintenance costs to assess the level of risk for NEW Homes in meeting the finance costs for each option.								
1.33	New Homes Board met on 26 th April and agreed in principle to proceed with The Walks development in Flint, with the preferred funding provider being Flintshire County Council. The options available and an appraisal of each is described in the paragraphs below.								
1.34	<p>There are 2 phases to funding any new development. The first being the construction phase during which the properties are built and the second the operational phase once the properties are built and let out.</p> <p>During the construction phase there is no income generated from renting the properties to fund interest and capital repayments. Therefore loans or lease agreements are normally structured so that no repayments are made during the construction phase and interest is accrued and paid over the life of the second phase.</p>								

1.35	<p>Whilst the private sector will offer finance during the development phase, their terms and conditions require the development land to be transferred into the ownership of the private funder from the outset as security for the loan. This places risk on NEW Homes (and the council as strategic partner) as should the development stall during construction for any reason, neither NEW Homes nor the Council would own the land and would not have sufficient control to be able to resolve the situation.</p> <p>To avoid this scenario, during the SHARP tender process proposals were received from bidders to provide construction phase funding (i.e. cash flow the development until the first property handovers are received). This funding would be repaid by commercial lending on completion. Wates can therefore provide funding for the development phase if required.</p>
1.36	<p>NEW Homes does not currently have enough credit history to borrow directly from the market to fund The Walks scheme independently. External funders would be willing to lend but require the Council to provide a financial guarantee to step in and pay loan or lease repayments in the unlikely event that NEW Homes defaults. In providing the financial guarantee the Council will incur a charge in the Council's revenue account, which the Council would need to recover from NEW Homes.</p> <p>The cost of The Walks scheme at c£7.397m is also considered a barrier to sourcing funding directly from the market, being too small to attract investment from institutional lenders such as pension funds etc, but with insufficient free equity in its unencumbered assets, to support a loan to cover the full scheme costs.</p> <p>Interest rates charged by the private market would be reflective of the perceived risk.</p>
1.37	Private Sector Leasing
1.38	<p>Under leasing arrangements, the ownership of the properties passes to the funder on completion and the funder leases the properties back to the Council or NEW Homes (again a financial guarantee from the Council is required by the funder). Title to the properties would revert to NEW Homes or the Council at the end of the term.</p> <p>Leasing finance costs are covered by net rents, which is gross rental income less an allowance for management and maintenance costs. Leasing charges increase (by CPI) each year.</p>
1.39	<p>Two models were provided by Wates as part of their tender: Octopus - QSH and Legal & General. (These offers were representative of those received during the tender process and are assured as offering best value on this basis). Both funders provided proposals to NEW Homes to fund the scheme.</p>
1.40	Octopus-QSH
1.41	<p>Octopus-QSH is a company which connects private investors with local</p>

	<p>authorities in order to provide and manage new affordable housing for the benefit of sustainable local communities. The company maintains an Investor Panel which draws upon a number of different investors which look for a minimum level of rental yield from the outset. The properties on The Walks would be leased under a Head Lease to the purchaser over a minimum of 125 year period. Development funding would be provided by Octopus via a Joint Venture partnership between QSH and Octopus. Long term finance following practical completion will be provided in due course by the raising of a new fund with the potential to grow further investment over 5-10 years.</p>
1.42	<p>The Octopus-QSH model is predicated on a minimum funding commitment of c10m, meaning that should this option be selected by NEW Homes, the company (council as guarantor) would be contractually bound to also utilise this funding for future schemes worth circa £3m. This ties NEW homes (and the council) in a way which the board were uncomfortable with at this stage, as there can be no guarantees about the future pipe line programme coming to fruition.</p>
1.43	Legal & General
1.44	<p>The Legal & General (L&G) standard leaseback model is also compliant with the model approved by the Council during the SHARP tendering process. This model would involve L&G funding both the development of the affordable units and making available long term leasing finance over 30, 40 or 50 years if required. Under this model, L&G would own a long leasehold (minimum 140 years) or freehold interest which would revert to NEW Homes for £1 at the end of the lease.</p>
1.45	<p>This leaseback model is predicated on a requirement that the developed properties are not impaired by a covenant restricting them to affordable rent, in case of default by NEW homes (the council). This would mean that L&G could re-let the properties at market rent and/or sell on the open market. Whilst the scenario of default is unlikely, the provision of a covenant would not be acceptable to the council, which as part of the disposal of the site to NEW Homes wishes to impose a covenant restricting use of the land to affordable housing in perpetuity.</p>
1.46	Council lending to NEW Homes
1.47	<p>The Local Government Act 2003 provides the council with the powers to lend finance to NEW Homes. This option, if agreed, could provide the council with a new revenue income stream alongside enabling NEW Homes to help the council meet the identified need for more affordable properties in the County. (The Housing Market Assessment 2015).</p>
1.48	<p>The process for lending would be that the council would borrow from the market and on lend to NEW homes. The loan would be organised into 2 phases. The first a short term development phase during construction, at a higher rate of interest reflecting that no security can be offered during construction other than the land value. During the development phase the</p>

	<p>loan would be structured so that NEW Homes would not make any repayments and the interest would accrue but not be payable.</p> <p>The second phase, on completion would see the loan refinanced into a long term loan secured against the properties. The principal to be repaid would be the total build costs plus the interest accrued from the 1st phase of the loan. The term could be varied to suit NEW Homes requirements subject to a maximum of 50 years.</p>
1.49	<p>In lending to a private company such as NEW Homes the Council must consider State Aid rules. These prevent the Council providing a competitive advantage to NEW Homes over other companies in the market place, (even though NEW Homes is wholly owned by the Council.)</p> <p>The Council can either lend at commercial interest rates and therefore provide no State Aid to NEW Homes, or it can consider lending at interest rates lower than commercial rates which would constitute State Aid. Lending at lower than commercial rates is lawful provided that the purpose of the loan qualifies for a State Aid exemption and certain criteria are not breached.</p> <p>The Council has received legal advice indicating that the provision of homes for rent (to those for whom the local housing market has failed) qualifies for a lawful state aid exemption. An application would need to be made to the European Commission for an exemption.</p>
1.50	<p>It is recommended that delegated authority is given to the council's Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer to agree the terms of a loan and the rate of interest to be charged to NEW Homes, after receiving external specialist advice. The level of interest rate charged will be higher than the rate the council will borrow at (so that the council can make a return), but not so high that NEW Homes cannot meet its own development scheme assumptions for a viable development.</p> <p>The loan would qualify as capital expenditure and therefore need to be included within the Council's Capital Programme funded from prudential borrowing, also requiring Cabinet approval. The loan would also have implications for policies set by full Council which would require amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators, policy for Minimum Revenue Provision and accounting policy for capitalising interest costs.</p>
1.51	<p>NEW Homes board agreed that Council borrowing would be their preferred route. It would be quicker to secure, enabling an earlier start on site. It also provides greater flexibility to agree interest rates and both the leasing finance options tie NEW Homes (and the council) to longer term commitments which could be high risk or unacceptable.</p> <p>For the council, the provision of capital finance to a wholly owned company for the provision of housing, is low risk and provides a new income stream which could be replicated in future for other strategic priorities.</p>
1.52	<p>The loan repayments from NEW Homes would consist of:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital repayments, which will be classed as capital receipts, and will be set aside to repay debt. Amounts will equal the Council's loan repayments (Minimum Revenue Provision) therefore offsetting any costs to the Council; • Interest receivable, which will be a source of revenue income to the Council contributing to the forecast deficit in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The interest charged to NEW Homes will be at a higher rate than the Council pays, therefore the loan to NEW Homes will generate a financial return for the Council.
1.53	The Council will also benefit from the additional Council Tax that the tenants living in the new properties will pay.
	Conclusion
1.54	NEW Homes was set up by the Council in April 2014 to improve the housing opportunities for those households which the local housing market has failed. Increasing the range of housing options for the "squeezed middle" is a key corporate objective for NEW Homes. The squeezed middle refers to those households whose income levels are too high to qualify for social housing, but do not earn sufficient income to be able to access, or service a mortgage independently.
1.55	This development will support delivery of a key strategic objective in the council's improvement plan..

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The anticipated build cost for the scheme is £7.397M. Costs have been subject to on-going value engineering and challenge by the Council's Design and Consultancy Team who will act as Employers Agent for the construction of the scheme.</p> <p>The Council will receive a new revenue income stream through on lending. The level of income received will be finalised once the final interest rate has been set.</p>
2.02	In addition to an additional 62 Affordable properties being provided and a broad range of community benefits delivered, the Council will also receive a new annual revenue stream of £64k from Council Tax payable on the site.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	There has been significant community consultation throughout the regeneration of Flint town centre. The proposed scheme was subject to a community consultation on Friday 9th October at Flint Church from 2pm till

	7pm. The consultation was attended by staff from Flintshire County Council Halliday Clark Architects and Wates Living Space. A register was taken with 73 names signed.
3.02	Consultation has also been undertaken with Design Commission Wales (DCW) on the proposed design and layout of The Walks.
3.03	A Business Consultation Event was held on Tuesday 22 March at St Mary's and St David's Church, Flint for businesses based in Flint.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	An overall Strategic Risk Register has been established for the SHARP Housing Programme. This is in addition to the scheme specific Risk Register for The Walks which is regularly updated in relation to emerging and changing risks.
4.02	The SHARP team continues to develop a framework for managing risk and opportunities the programme generates. Further work is on-going in order to improve the robustness in risk identification and management as part of the new CAMMS system which will contain Development Framework procedures.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Site Layout Plan The Walks, Flint
5.02	Appendix 2 - Proposed Phasing of Properties The Walks, Flint

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Office: Clare Budden Job Title: Chief Officer Community and Enterprise Telephone: 01352 703800 E-mail: clare.budden@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) – Flintshire County Council House Building Programme which will build 500 new homes (200 Council) and 300 (affordable).

North East Wales Homes, (NEW Homes) - is a Housing company based in Flintshire and owned by Flintshire County Council. NEW Homes owns, leases and manages properties across Flintshire. The company was established to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing available across the county; increasing housing choice for those who may not qualify for social housing but for whom market housing is unaffordable or difficult to access.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) - Flintshire County Council will be spending £111 million over six years on a major refurbishment and maintenance programme of works bring its 7,200 Council homes up to the Welsh Government's Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) new properties across the Council during the next five years.

Flintshire House Standard - The 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.

Standard Development Scheme Assumptions - agreed allowances for voids; maintenance costs; rental income levels (including CPI etc.) and will be used to assess all potential future development schemes to determine scheme feasibility and viability.

Community Benefits – the SHARP has contractualised Community Benefits which must be delivered as part of the programme. The Council sees an important outcome of the programme is the promotion of quality of life for Flintshire residents through improved employment, training and education opportunities.

Meet the Buyer – Event organised by the Council and Wates Living Space to engage with local SMEs to maximize local supply chain opportunities with Flintshire.

Flintshire Future Works - Training Academy established by Flintshire County Council to ensure that sustainable and meaningful apprenticeship opportunities are created for young people to not only work on the SHARP, but also other major Council construction programmes including the 21st Century Schools Programme and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

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NOTES

This drawing was produced using third party topographical survey data. Any discrepancies to be reported to the architect.



NOTES:

DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWING.

LAYOUT AND LEVELS ARE BASED ON A PROMAP SURVEY & ARE SUBJECT TO A FULL MEASURED TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY. ANY DISCREPANCIES TO BE REPORTED TO THE ARCHITECT.

AREA SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO TOPO SURVEY)

SITE 1 AREA - 17 174m²
 - 1.7 Hectares
 - 4.2 Acres

HOUSING	Area	No.
Type 1 - 2 BED	69m ² / 742ft ²	41No.
Type 2 - 3 BED	85m ² / 915ft ²	21No.
APARTMENTS		
Type 3 1 BED	45m ² / 484ft ²	6 No.
Type 4 2 BED	57m ² / 614ft ²	6 No.
Type 5 2 BED	62m ² / 667ft ²	4 No.
Type 6 1 BED	50m ² / 538ft ²	4 No.
Type 7 2 BED	57m ² / 613ft ²	6 No.
Type 8 2 BED	80m ² / 861ft ²	3 No.
Type 9 2 BED	79m ² / 850ft ²	1 No.
TOTAL		92No.

CAR PARKING SPACES

19 No. - Allocated to Castle Heights
 113 No. - 125% car parking of the 93 dwellings
TOTAL: 145 No.

Observational 600mm wide windows looking onto / over link footpath

20 Dwelling numbers denoted in red are designated Council homes

REV G 17.03.2016
 Apartment key annotation revised.

REV F 25.02.2016
 Alteration to scale (1:500)

REV E 18.02.2016
 Ramp near plot 16 removed as per Highways request, along with moving ramp forward for driveway access to plot 42

REV D 10.02.2016
 Garden and front access fencing & wall amendments throughout the scheme

REV C 10.02.2016
 Service margin run behind visitor parking (plot 12).

REV B 09.02.2016
 Bin strategy which was agreed with FCC & Cllr Roberts on 4th Feb 2016 implemented throughout the scheme.

Rear gates to plots 5,22,23,31,32,44,49,54 moved to rear of gable feature windows.

Rear access path to Castle Heights indicated. Footpath to rear of block 18 width increased to 2m with boundary fence.

Block 9 set off new estate road 3.6m as per block 2. Ramp positions brought in line with engineers layout.

Ramp access to bin store added to plot 18. 2 way traffic indicated on Sydney Street

Visitor car parking spaces increased to 6m x 2.4m surrounding plot 12. Mews court visitor space & service margin altered to increase to 6m x 2.4m.

REV A 16.10.2015 SJ
 For Approval

FOR APPROVAL

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE WALKS

DUKE STREET

FLINT

FOR

FOR WATES LIVING SPACE

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Date FEB 2015

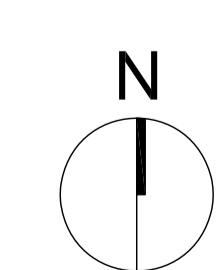
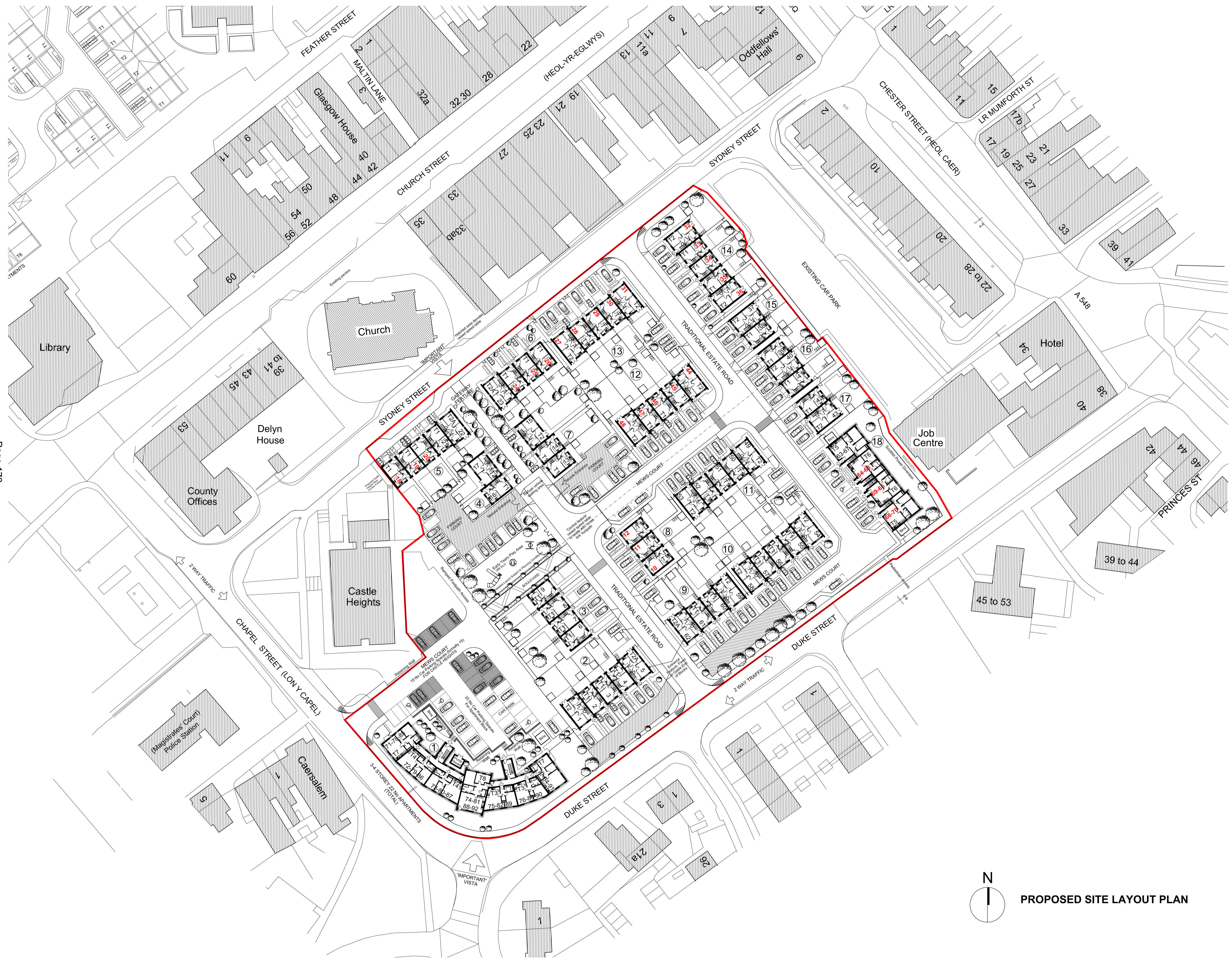
Scale 1:500

Drawn SJ Checked

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Dwg. No. 671.07 (90) 19 TW Rev. G



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN

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The Walks - Proposed plot hand over schedule

Block Ref	Plot No's	Tenure		Construction start	Hand over date
		Council	New Homes		
15	37-38		2	02/03/2017	07/09/2017
14	32-36	5		02/02/2017	21/09/2017
16	39-41		3	16/03/2017	15/10/2017
17	42-43		2	12/04/2017	18/10/2017
18	63-70	6	2	22/03/2017	15/11/2017
1	71-92		22	15/01/2017	19/11/2017
10	54-58		5	19/04/2017	06/12/2017
9	59-62		4	17/05/2017	20/12/2017
12	44-48	5		24/05/2017	22/01/2018
11	49-53		5	07/06/2017	05/02/2018
13	27-31	5		28/06/2017	26/02/2018
6	23-26	3	1	26/07/2017	12/03/2018
7	13-15		3	23/08/2017	26/03/2018
2	1-5		5	09/08/2017	09/04/2018
8	10-12	3		20/09/2017	23/04/2018
3	6-9		4	20/09/2017	07/05/2018
4	16-17		2	25/10/2017	14/05/2018
5	18-22	3	2	04/10/2017	04/06/2018

Tenure totals	30	62
Site Total	92	

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