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To: Cllr Ian Roberts (Leader)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Dave Hughes, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas

12 June 2019

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Cabinet which will be held at 9.30 am on Tuesday, 18th June, 2019 in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 7 - 14)

Purpose: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2019.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

STRATEGIC REPORTS

4 COUNCIL PLAN 2019/20 (Pages 15 - 64)

Report of Chief Executive - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To seek endorsement of Part 1 of the Council Plan 2019/20 prior to County Council adoption.

5 **DISCRETIONARY TRANSPORT POLICY REVIEW – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION** (Pages 65 - 84)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To provide feedback on the outcome of the consultation on the review of discretionary school & college transport policy and to consider the options available.

6 **THE COUNCILS CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SERVICE AND A SHARED SERVICE WITH WREXHAM** (Pages 85 - 92)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

Purpose: To consider proposals for joint working with Wrexham County Borough Council regarding the merging of the County Councils CCTV monitoring service with that of Wrexham.

7 **CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT** (Pages 93 - 226)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To note the findings from the All Wales Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

8 **SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 227 - 260)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To approve the draft report prior to publication in July 2019.

OPERATIONAL REPORTS

9 **REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE DEBT RECOVERY POLICY** (Pages 261 - 302)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

Purpose: To endorse changes to the current policy for Corporate Debt Recovery to take account of latest working practices and amendments in the law.

10 **COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES 2019/20** (Pages 303 - 306)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To seek agreement for the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2019/20.

11 **RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2018-2028** (Pages 307 - 430)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside

Purpose: To approve the final Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 following the statutory three month consultation.

12 **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS** (Pages 431 - 432)

Purpose: To provide details of actions taken under delegated powers.

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - COUNTY COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - FOR INFORMATION

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

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The report contains commercially sensitive information belonging to a third party and the public interest in not revealing the information outweighs the public interest in revealing the information.

13 **NEWYDD CATERING AND CLEANING LTD – PROGRESS REVIEW AND REVISED BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2019-2022** (Pages 453 - 466)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

Purpose: To provide a review of performance against the 2018/19 Business Plan and seek approval for the Business Plan for 2019/20 to 2021/22.

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The report contains commercially sensitive information belonging to a third party and the public interest in not revealing the information outweighs the public interest in revealing the information.

14 **AURA ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN** (Pages 467 - 510)

Report of Chief Executive - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To review progress of Aura since establishment in 2017.

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure until such time as those consultations/negotiations have been concluded.

15 **PAY MODEL AND PAY POLICY** (Pages 511 - 572)

Report of Chief Executive, Senior Manager, Human Resources & Organisational Development - Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

Purpose: To provide a progress report on (1) pay modelling for the implementation of the second year (2019) of the two year National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement (2018/19-2019/20) and (2) maintenance of structural design and terms of employment following the Single Status Agreement (2014).

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The report contains commercially sensitive information belonging to a third party and the public interest in not revealing the information outweighs the public interest in revealing the information.

16 **NORTH EAST WALES (NEW) HOMES BUSINESS PLAN 2019/2048** (Pages 573 - 602)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Purpose: To approve the North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2019/2048.

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure until such time as those consultations/negotiations have been concluded.

17 **THEATR CLWYD TRUST MODEL** (Pages 603 - 608)

Report of Chief Executive - Cabinet Member for Economic Development,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

Purpose: To receive the recommendation of the Theatr Clwyd Board of Governors on its recommended model of future governance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Robins', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

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CABINET
14TH MAY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held in the Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 14th May 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)

Councillors: Chris Bithell, Derek Butler, Christine Jones, Billy Mullin and Carolyn Thomas.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Education and Youth) and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES:

None.

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Helen Brown, Bob Connah, David Healey and Patrick Heesom.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bithell declared a personal interest in agenda item number 6 – School Organisation – Lixwm Community Primary School Consultation on the Proposed Change of Designation from a Community to a Voluntary Aided School. Councillors Banks and Jones declared personal interests in agenda item number 7 – Removal of School Transport Anomalies.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th April were submitted and approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Councillor Butler introduced the Town Centre Regeneration report which had been produced in response to the following key three drivers:

1. Continuing challenging economic conditions being faced by town centres in the UK;
2. A commitment in the 2018/19 Council Plan to develop a response; and
3. Concerns expressed by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members over the viability of Flintshire town centres and the need for the Council to establish a proactive response.

The report summarised the economic challenges facing town centres which were impacting on their sustainability. A series of proposed responses were outlined to increase the diversity of uses in towns, to strengthen the role of local stakeholder groups and to support businesses to adapt and compete more efficiently.

The Council had invested significant resources in strengthening local community leadership, and the following examples were cited:

- Working with Holywell stakeholders on the development of new governance for the leisure centre and on the trial reopening of the High Street to traffic;
- Supporting Buckley Town Council in developing a long term action plan for the town;
- Bringing together Flint stakeholders to steer the transformational regeneration of the town and to develop their aspirations for the foreshore area;
- Working with Deeside stakeholders to develop a long term aspirational strategy for the area and securing major Welsh Government (WG) investment towards its delivery; and
- Supporting stakeholders in Mold to develop a long term town plan and establishing a governance model for managing community green space.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the report and the significant proposals to help the challenges faced by town centres. He commented on the number of units within towns that were not owned by local businesses and the difficulties faced by trying to make contact with absentee landlords, and asked what could be done to encourage engagement with the Council. He also commented on the upper rooms of units not being used which could be utilised to address the housing shortage. Councillor Butler said contact had tried to be made on numerous occasions over recent years to little or no avail but the Council would continue to try.

Councillor Thomas commented on the development of Business Improvement Districts (BID) which were companies established by the local business community to make investments in their area that improved business trading conditions, attracted customers and reduced operating costs. There were over 300 BIDs in the UK and the feasibility of developing a BID in Mold town centre was being investigated.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed approach to supporting the regeneration of town centres in Flintshire be approved; and
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development to bid for external funding as it becomes available to support the approaches to town centre regeneration.

4. LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

Councillor Thomas introduced the Local Toilets Strategy report which provided an update on the completed statutory public consultation process. To assist the Council in developing its strategy, a number of individuals, stakeholder networks and organisations had been engaged to gather information which helped to develop a needs assessment and informed the draft strategy.

It was emphasised that whilst there was a duty to prepare a Local Toilets Strategy, it did not require the Council to provide and maintain public toilets directly nor was the Council required to provide additional dedicated facilities.

The statutory consultation opened on 4th February 2019 and was accessible until 26th February 2019 – 201 responses had been received. Those responses had been analysed and where necessary and appropriate had been included in the final Local Toilets Strategy.

The proposed strategy included a 12 point Action Plan for the two year period covered by the strategy and was appended to the report.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that in April 2019 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to focus on five specific areas that formed the basis of the strategy and the five questions asked, and responses, were detailed in the report. The Committee had supported the draft Local Toilets Strategy and the approach officers had taken in its development.

A number of comments were made on another Welsh Government (WG) initiative for local authorities which did not have any funds to support it. A discussion took place on the possibility of local businesses being awarded National Non Domestic Rate Relief if they were to offer toilet facilities to the public where approved as part of the local strategy. It was agreed this would be pursued with WG.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the details contained within the report and the outcome of the public statutory consultation on the Local Toilets Strategy be noted;
- (b) That the Local Toilet Strategy for Flintshire County Council be approved; and
- (c) That Welsh Government be requested to grant NNDR reductions to businesses for making toilets available to the public where approved as part of the Local Toilet Strategy.

5. SCHOOL ORGANISATION – LIXWM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF DESIGNATION FROM A COMMUNITY TO A VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL

Councillor Roberts introduced the report which provided details on the proposed change of designation for Lixwm Community Primary (CP) School from a Community to a Voluntary Aided School.

Lixwm CP School had been investigating sustainable solutions to maintain their school in its local community with other schools, the Diocesan Authority and the Council. This was following determination by Cabinet not to amalgamate Lixwm CP School with Brynford CP School.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) explained that this work had culminated in an agreement between the Governors of Lixwm CP School and the Governors of Ysgol Y Esgob Voluntary Aided (VA) School to seek to form a federation between the two schools. However, the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 did not allow schools with a faith or trust base to federate with community schools. It was therefore necessary for the Council to consult on a proposed change to the designation of Lixwm CP School from a CP to a VA School under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018.

The Chief Officer thanked the Diocesan Authority for their active involvement in discussions with the Council and Schools and for their support of the proposed strategy.

The anticipated timeline for the proposed consultation process was appended to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cabinet are satisfied that the Governing Body of Lixwm Community Primary School has explored suitable and sustainable models for provision of education in the Lixwm area; and
- (b) That Cabinet approve for consultation to be undertaken under The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 on a proposal to change the designation of Lixwm Community Primary to a Voluntary Aided school in order to facilitate a future federation.

6. REMOVAL OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT ANOMALIES

Councillor Thomas introduced the Removal of School Transport Anomalies report which, given the significant financial challenges facing the Council, provided an option for withdrawing the historical transport anomalies in July 2019, instead of July 2020 as previously agreed, to achieve a budget saving.

A school transport route optimisation and re-procurement exercise had been completed in September 2017, with the exercise delivering maximum service benefit by ensuring the most efficient use of vehicles and the most cost effective routes and vehicle capacity for the required number of eligible passengers. As a consequence of the review, a number of historical non-statutory transport arrangements were identified that were over and above the current Home to School Transport Policy and presented opportunities for alternative service delivery and potential efficiency savings.

Reports were submitted to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July and November 2018 where the option to support the continuation of anomalies

until July 2020 was agreed and then supported by Cabinet on 20th November 2018. However, given the significant financial challenges facing the authority, consideration of withdrawing the historical transport anomalies from July 2019 was presented as an option.

Option 1 was to withdraw the anomalies in July 2020 which would have an impact on the school transport budget but would allow the Integrated Transport Unit to undertake a more extensive consultation period with pupils for them to consider alternative transport arrangements.

Option 2 was to withdraw the anomalies in July 2019 which would provide a financial saving to the authority but would have significant impact on those pupils utilising the services as they were currently no alternative public transport options along those routes.

Councillor Thomas recommended that option 1 be supported in line with the previous Cabinet decision which was supported.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) provided clarification that the cohort of children who had previously attended John Summers High School would continue to receive free school transport to Connah's Quay High School until their time at the school had ceased. This was welcomed by Councillor Jones.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive explained that if the removal of school transport anomalies had been brought forward a year it would have had a positive impact on the budget of £229,000. It was understood and accepted that a further saving was not being taken as a values-based decision on the grounds of risk to learners and families.

Councillor Thomas said that the Council operated a parental choice policy and emphasised the need for parents to choose carefully. The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) explained that the school admissions form made the school transport policy clear and there was a requirement for a box to be ticked to say that had been understood. Colleges from Streetscene also attended secondary school open evenings to reiterate the details of the policy so that parents and carers were aware. If a school that was not the nearest school to the child was chosen, transport costs would be borne by parents and carers.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet notes the financial impact of providing the historical transport anomalies and continue to support the anomalies until July 2020.

7. PARC ADFER UPDATE

Councillor Thomas introduced the Parc Adfer Update report and explained that the North Wales Residual Waste Joint Committee had recently met to discuss changes to the requirements of environmental permits for Energy and Waste facilities in relation to Particulate Matter (PM) and made a recommendation on the reporting of PM2.5, in addition to the permit requirements.

As a result of concerns raised during the procurement process in relation to emissions to air from Parc Adfer, specifically of PM2.5 particulates, a contractual option was included in the contract with Wheelabrator Technologies Inc (WTI) to carry out monitoring and reporting of PM2.5 particulates over and above the normal monitoring regime that WTI would have to do under their permit as issued by Natural Resources Wales which was welcomed by Councillor Jones. In response to a question from Councillor Banks, the Chief Executive said that reporting technology would allow instant updates to be given on emission levels.

The Chief Executive explained that the site employed around 400 people which was in line with expectations as the completion of the build and the start of the commissioning became closer. Construction of the Parc Adfer facility began in January 2017, and commissioning of the facility and acceptance of the Partnership's residual waste was scheduled to begin in June 2019, reaching full operational capacity by late 2019. It was estimated that the plant would generate enough renewable energy to power more than 30,000 homes. In addition, a total of 34 new jobs were set to be created ranging from plant management to operational, technical and administrative roles.

Work had also been undertaken with all parties involved to ensure that lorries did not disturb residents by travelling on minor roads – assurances had been given that routing for lorries would be set via principle A roads.

The construction of Parc Adfer had been well managed – the British Safety Council had recently inspected the site and awarded the project a 5 star rating. Members would be invited to the site to meet the operational team. There would also be an educational facility on the site which school children would be invited to attend as part of organised school visits.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That Members be assured of progress and readiness for the commencement of Commissioning of Parc Adfer.

8. RENEWAL OF NORTH WALES CONSTRUCTION FRAMEWORK

Councillor Roberts introduced the Renewal of North Wales Construction Framework report which provided an update and confirmed the new arrangements for the Framework.

The North Wales Construction Framework was established in 2014 and ran until 2018. It was set up primarily to deliver the construction of new school buildings, or the remodelling and refurbishment of existing school buildings under the 21st Century Schools programme. However, the Framework evolved and could also be used by other public sector organisations in the region to deliver their non-school construction projects.

The Framework provided a streamlined, cost-effective and collaborative mechanism to secure contractors for construction projects in schools and other public buildings across North Wales. Twenty regional projects had delivered a number of community benefits which were outlined in the report – that number would likely increase as the final Band A projects were completed.

Details of the new Framework and the process undertaken were outlined in the report. The Framework would have a positive effect in the North Wales region creating new facilities for public use including new schools, creating jobs in the construction sector, improving educational attainment, providing opportunities for community involvement and engagement and help to promote a vibrant culture and Welsh language. The Framework would be the procurement vehicle for the Council's 21st Century Schools Band B investment programme.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council – Linderick Avenue, Southfields Close, Muirfield Road and Selsdon Close, Buckley. (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 12) Order 201.**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places Amendment No. 12 Order on Linderick Avenue, Southfields Close, Muirfield Road and Selsdon Close, Buckley.

- **The Flintshire County Council – Carlines Avenue, Grant Drive and Lincoln Road, Ewloe (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places (Civil Enforcement and Consolidation) (Amendment No. 25) Order 201.**

To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Loading and Parking Places Amendment No. 12 Order on Carlines Avenue, Grant Drive and Lincoln Road, Ewloe.

- **Disposal of Two Old Caterpillar Gensets via Part Exchange for the Hire of a Smaller Unit at Standard Landfill Site.**

Two old decommissioned 1MW CAT Gas Engine Gensets (which are now surplus to requirements) at Brookhill and Standards Landfill sites, to be disposed of for spares/scrap value.

10. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the press and no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 10.40 a.m.).

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Chair



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Council Plan 2019/20
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2017-23 was adopted to set priorities of the Council for the current five-year term of the Council. The Plan is subject to annual review and is led by Cabinet.

The 2019/20 Plan has been reviewed and refreshed for structure and content. The super-structure of the Plan remains the same as previous years with the introduction of an additional seventh theme.

The final version of the Council Plan will be published in a similar format to previous years.

The Council Plan is published as two documents. Part 1 sets out our intent. Part 2 sets out the performance measures, targets and milestones against which achievement will be measured and evaluated.

Internal member workshops and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee have provided feedback on the structure, format and content of the draft Plan.

Part 1 of the Plan is presented in final form for approval. Part 2 will be presented to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July.

The published Plan will be available on the Council's website by the end of July.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To recommend Part 1 of the Council Plan 2019/20 to Council for adoption.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN 2019/20
1.01	It is a statutory requirement for the County Council to adopt an Improvement Plan which we call our Council Plan.
1.02	For 2019/20 a review of the current themes and priorities has been undertaken and the Plan from 2018/19 updated and amended. Priorities have also been set to take into account of both local and national expectations.
1.03	<p>The main changes from the review are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the introduction of a seventh theme around – <i>Safe and Clean Council</i> - a change of theme name from <i>Supportive Council</i> to <i>Caring Council</i> - the introduction of longer term goals for the sub-priorities; and the expansion of the <i>Ambitious Council</i> theme to include our major capital projects which make a positive impact on local communities and the local economy.
1.04	<p>The Council Plan for 2019/20 retains the super structure of six themes with the additional theme - <i>Safe and Clean Council</i> - and supporting priorities as follows:</p> <p>Theme: Caring Council (previously Supportive Council) Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adult Services - Children’s Services - Adult and Children’s Services - Housing - Protecting People from Poverty <p>Theme: Ambitious Council Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Sector Growth and Regeneration - Investing in our Communities <p>Theme: Learning Council Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and Skills <p>Theme: Green Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable Development & Environmental Management - Safe and sustainable Travel Services <p>Theme: Connected Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resilient Communities - Customer Journey <p>Theme: Serving Council</p>

	<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective Resource Management – Workforce - Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets - Effective Resource Management – Collaboration - Effective Resource Management – Digital <p>Theme: Safe and Clean Council (New)</p> <p>Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe and Clean Communities
1.05	The Plan presentation will remain largely unchanged. National policy issues will enable or limit our ability to achieve will be updated.
1.06	<p>The Council Plan is published as two documents. Part 1 sets out our intent. Part 2 sets out the performance measures, targets and milestones against which achievement will be measured and evaluated.</p> <p>Part 1 of the Plan is attached as Appendix 1.</p>
1.07	<p>The main outcomes from the recent member workshops were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The revised seven theme format was supported to be retained for the life of the Plan in this current Council term - A ‘tracker’ document noting the changes between the 2018/19 Plan and the draft 2019/20 Plan to be shared (attached as Appendix 2) - Amend Part 1 of the Plan with the following sub priority additions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Re-instate ‘Independent Living’ under Caring Council o Broaden the carbon reduction/plastic-free sub priorities into a fuller Climate Change sub priority o Introduce Child Poverty under Caring Council <p>Other more specific suggestions were made to inform the content of the Plan. Where agreed at the workshops these have been incorporated in the redrafting.</p>
1.08	Part 1 of the Plan is presented in final form for approval. Part 2 will be presented to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. The published Plan will be available on the Council’s website by the end of July.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Council Plan ambitions are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the annual budget setting process.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	All Members have had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the draft Plan themes and priorities through the two workshops and a survey.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Progression of the Plan objectives is risk managed with reports made quarterly to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The risks to the statutory requirements of the Plan include not publishing the plan within statutory timescales and, not adhering to the prerequisite content. These risks are managed through adherence to well established procedures for publishing the Plan and ensuring that the content of the Plan reflects the requirements of the law.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1: Council Plan (Part 1) 2019-20. Appendix 2: Copy of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report of 13.06.19.</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<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
	<p>Council 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 Objectives and publish a Plan.</p> <p>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.</p>

COUNCIL PLAN 2019-2023

In-year priorities for 2019/20

Theme	In-year Priority	Page number
Caring Council	Adult Services	2
	Children Services	4
	Adult and Children's Services	5
	Housing	6
	Protecting People from Poverty	8
Ambitious Council	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	11
	Investing in our Communities	14
Learning Council	Education and Skills	16
Green Council	Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	18
	Safe and sustainable Travel Services	19
Connected Council	Resilient Communities	21
	Customer Journey	22
Serving Council	Effective Resource Management – Workforce	23
	Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	24
	Effective Resource Management – Collaboration	25
	Effective Resource Management – Digital	25
Safe and Clean Council	Safe and Clean Communities	26

Theme: Caring Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Extra Care Strategy	Providing a service to fill the gap between traditional care in the home and long term residential care
Longer term outcome / impact		Meeting the forecast demand through a sufficient and sustainable supply of quality and adaptable provision Developing the provider market to meet demand with innovation and flexibility
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of the Holywell Extra Care Scheme to extend supply in another community area Agreement of a preferred option to further extend supply in a further community area with Buckley as the priority area 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Domiciliary Care	Care services delivered to individuals in their own home
Longer term outcome / impact		Increasing the provision and adapting the models of domiciliary care to meet demand
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing Microcare services at community level Recruitment to populate domiciliary care workforce 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Independent Living	Supporting greater independence for individuals with a frailty and / or disability
Longer term outcome / impact		Supporting people to regain their independence, reduce reliance on the statutory sector and access care closer to home.
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective access to the social prescribing / 3rd sector service through the Single Point of Access. Effective management of admissions to step up / step down beds. Achievement of in house and independent sector domiciliary providers working towards the silver standard for Progress for Providers. 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Safeguarding Adults	Measures to protect the health, well-being and rights of individuals and allow them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect
Longer term outcome / impact		Protecting adults who have needs for care and support and are at risk of abuse or neglect, and preventing those adults from becoming at risk
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective evaluation systems for families attending adult case conferences • Strategy meeting recommendations being appropriate, measurable and effectively managed • High quality adult safeguarding referrals 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Strategic Review of Care needs	Proving care and support within available resources
Longer term outcome / impact		Ensuring that the Council's duty to provide care and support is met within available resources
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the annual inflationary costs of care providers • Effective and cost-efficient commissioning practices (including digital mapping of domiciliary care needs) • Completing the planning and design of the 32 bed expansion of Marleyfield House Care Home ready for the build phase • Introduction of an online financial self-assessment to give people the opportunity to arrange their own self-funded care 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult Services	Dementia Friendly Council	Award accredited by the Alzheimer's Society to recognise Councils leading and inspiring a change that will transform the lives of people with dementia
Longer term outcome / impact		Flexibility in the delivery of all services to better support the needs of those living with dementia
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of an action plan as a step towards achieving the award criteria • Successful application to become a Dementia Friendly Council 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Children's Services	Improving local placements for Children	Working with placement providers to enhance the local provision for children in Flintshire.
Longer term outcome / impact		Meeting the forecast demand with supply Developing the children's placement market to flexibly meet demand
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing an agreed Placement Strategy along with new local models to meet the rising demand for placements Testing and agreeing new regional models of support to extend and complement local provision 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Children's Services	Safeguarding Children	Measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of children and allow them to live free from abuse, harm and neglect
Longer term outcome / impact		Protecting children who are at risk of abuse and neglect, and preventing children from becoming at risk
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with the regional Pre-Birth Pathway to ensure that the risk to unborn children is effectively managed All children who are reported as having run away or go missing from home or care having a return interview with case management follow-up as needed 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Children's Services	Fostering Service Models	Foster carers provide a home for children whose family are unable to look after them
Longer term outcome / impact		Ensuring a resilient pool of in-house foster carers to provide care for local children with a variety of needs
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test and evaluate the <i>Mockingbird Model</i> of Fostering in 2019/2020 with the aim to have a proposed model ready for full implementation in 2020/2021 Maintenance of a resilient regional market for foster care 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Children's Services	Looked After Children	A looked after child is a child in the care of the local authority
Longer term outcome / impact		Reducing the numbers of children entering care and improving outcomes for those in care
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with Welsh Government a local strategy for effective and cost-efficient <i>edge of care</i> services • Set an affordable commissioning strategy for Out of County Placements for the medium to longer-term • Achievement of the actions and targets within our Corporate Parenting Strategy 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Adult and Children's Services	Learning Disability Service	Providing support to adults and children with a learning disability to become more independent
Longer term outcome / impact		Transforming the service for people with a learning disability, in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, to give people the opportunity to live independently and have more control over their lives
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of Hwb Cyfle, the new learning disability day service in Deeside on time, on budget and to standard • Achievement of the actions and targets for the regional learning disability service transformation project both regionally (as the lead authority) and locally 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Housing	Homelessness Strategy and Local Action Strategy	A strategy that sets out a regional approach to tackling homelessness in all its forms
Longer term outcome / impact		Increase early intervention and support to prevent homelessness and offer a range of options to cater for all needs when relieving homelessness
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of key aims and goals as set out within the Local Action Plan covering the period 2019/20 specifically:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a permanent emergency bed provision in Flintshire; ○ Supporting rough sleepers through the employment of an Outreach Worker; ○ Completion of a feasibility study for short term emergency provision for young people with follow-up actions; and ○ Completion of a feasibility study for a Housing First approach in Flintshire for people with complex needs with follow up actions • Increasing the number of available rented properties in the Private Rented Sector to provide housing solutions 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Housing	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)	The WHQS is a national standard of quality for homes set by Welsh Government
Longer term outcome / impact		Meet the requirements of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard which will ensure that Council tenants live in good quality homes which as far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household (e.g. specific disabilities)
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the targets within the comprehensive capital delivery programme of modernisation and refurbishment work to our housing stock for 2019/20 • Achieving WHQS for the total stock by 2020/21 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Housing	Housing Strategy	The strategy which enables an increase in the delivery of affordable quality housing, as well as the right support for our residents to enable them to remain independent in their own home
Longer term outcome / impact		Ensuring the supply of affordable and quality housing of all tenures
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the in-year aims and targets of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2024 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Housing	Provision of new social and affordable homes	To increase the supply of new build provision of affordable housing
Longer term outcome / impact		Ensuring a supply of affordable and quality housing of all tenures
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing new social and affordable housing (1) as set out in the Housing Revenue Account (2) through NEW Homes Development Plans and (3) through the commitments of our Housing Association partners drawing on Welsh Government funding where possible • Maximising the provision of affordable housing through market led schemes and developer obligations in line with planning policy requirements 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Housing	Housing needs of vulnerable groups	Suitable housing and support which meets the needs of vulnerable people
Longer term outcome / impact		Housing which provides a range of options to enable people to be suitably housed Provision of appropriate interventions (i.e. support or adaptations) to assist people to remain in their homes wherever possible
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of suitable housing through new build social housing developments and other supported housing provision • Effective implementation of the Welsh Government's recommended Service Standards for delivery of Housing Adaptations • Supporting people to remain in their homes through the provision of housing support and advice • Adoption of a renewed strategy for our sheltered and supported housing schemes following review • Effective management of the Specialist Housing register in partnership with Housing Associations to ensure the housing needs of vulnerable households are met 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Food Poverty	Inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet. It is not just about hunger, but also about being appropriately nourished to attain and maintain health and wellbeing
Longer term outcome / impact		Reducing food poverty and food insecurity in Flintshire
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forming a new social food enterprise with short and medium term objectives and targets Mapping / detailing areas where there are gaps in provision and then developing solutions Setting a food insecurity / food poverty action plan for Flintshire with partners with short and medium term objectives and targets 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Fuel Poverty	When a household spends more than 10% of its income on heating their home
Longer term outcome / impact		Increasing the level of funding and work/schemes to reduce fuel poverty in our communities
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreeing a funded action plan to support those in greatest fuel poverty Improvement of the energy efficiency ratings of current housing in Flintshire Solutions to extend gas supplies to those communities with no gas service Increasing the take up of solar, water and electricity systems 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Child Poverty	A child is considered to be growing up in poverty if they are living in a household where the income is below 60% of the median income.
Longer term outcome / impact		Reduction in the impacts of poverty on children across Flintshire
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-year mapping and assessment of child poverty to inform future programme and strategy development Outline our commitments working with partner agencies to target interventions to reduce levels of child poverty Effective planning, performance and implementation as the 'Delivery Authority' for the Childcare Offer for Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire and of its supporting capital programme 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Period Poverty	Equal and fair access to sanitary products is prohibited by financial constraints
Longer term outcome / impact		Equal and ready access to sanitary products
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to sanitary products in schools to support wellbeing and school attendance 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Universal Credit / Welfare Reforms	Major reform and changes to the benefits system such as the bedroom tax, Universal Credit and the benefit cap
Longer term outcome / impact		Creating a sustainable and stable environment where tenants can continue to remain in their properties through ongoing support and management of their current tenancies
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents being supported to sustain their tenancies, pay their rent and remain in their property Timely and supportive services to applicants for/recipients of Universal Credit in partnership with providers including the Department for Work and Pensions 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Flexible Funding Programme	Welsh Government grant regime which aims to deliver a wide range of support services for the most vulnerable people in our communities. The grant includes Housing Support Grant (including Supporting People and the Homelessness Prevention Grant) and Children's and Communities Grant (Social Services).
Longer term outcome / impact		Achieve the best possible outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our communities through the most flexible use of the funding
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective deployment of these two new grants under new governance and management arrangements Meeting need through streamlining services and developing new methods of delivery and commissioning Successful engagement of stakeholders to inform choices on new service models Measured performance using new and meaningful performance measures 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Protecting People from Poverty	Becoming Work-ready	Integrated employability programme that provides support for people in or at risk of poverty throughout Flintshire
Longer term outcome / impact		Continued provision of an employability mentor service that covers the whole of Flintshire and focuses on the most deprived areas
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of targets for supporting individuals to enter employment, learning or volunteering 		

Theme: Ambitious Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Growth Deal and Infrastructure	The collaborative strategy between Governments, councils and public sector partners and the business community for (1) investment in regional infrastructure - digital, transport, and sites and premises (2) priority economic sector support and growth (3) foundation sector support and growth and (4) skills and employment
Longer term outcome / impact		<p>Sustaining economic growth through local and regional business development, employment and training support</p> <p>Developing the transport infrastructure and employment sites and transport services, widening access to employment and training sites</p> <p>Meeting demand for business and housing growth through a ready supply of sites</p> <p>Skills and employment support enables individuals to take advantage of economic opportunities</p>
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing our part in agreement of a Heads of Terms with the governments of UK and Wales to unlock a Growth Deal for the region and for Flintshire • Assessment of the priority needs of Flintshire for improved digital connectivity • Agreement and the first stage of implementation of a digital strategy for the region which improves connectivity (access and processing capacity / speed) for businesses, public sector partners and communities in Flintshire) 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Regional Business Growth	A co-ordinated approach to inward investment and the demands of businesses
Longer term outcome / impact		An environment and infrastructure where business is sustained and grown
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a regional hub to co-ordinate inward investment and respond to the demands of businesses • Planning of new infrastructure schemes to provide business growth in Flintshire (Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ) etc.) for the medium-term • Provision of a new Park and ride facility within Deeside Industrial Park • Preparation of a support plan for businesses to manage the eventuality of a transition out from the European Union (Brexit) 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Production of the Local Development Plan (LDP)	15 year plan to guide development within the County whilst protecting and enhancing the built and natural environments
Longer term outcome / impact		<p>Identification of a portfolio of sites and policies to meet ambitions in relation to growth in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors</p> <p>Identification of a portfolio of sites and policies to protect and enhance the built and natural environments</p>
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing the LDP on deposit on time in September for consultation with stakeholders and the public as the next step towards adoption of the Plan Final preparation of the Plan for submission to Welsh Government 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Future of Town Centres	Clarification of the role which the County Council will take in its long term support for our Town Centres
Longer term outcome / impact		Town centres and their businesses which can thrive whilst adapting to changing economic circumstances
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of a strategy to ensure long term sustainability of town centres leading to updated bespoke local town plans Testing of the model of a Business Improvement District for Mold (through a local ballot of rate paying businesses) as a pilot exercise 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Integrated Transport Strategy	A long term sustainable transport solution which successfully integrates all modes of transport whilst maintaining and promoting at its heart, a sustainable, affordable and environmentally friendly Public Transport Service
Longer term outcome / impact		Developing the transport infrastructure and employment sites, and transport services, widening access to employment and training sites
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key interventions for cycleways, active travel, highway improvements, bus network and rail improvements • Key interventions for accessing employment, health, leisure and education facilities by accessing national funds with winning business cases • The LDP Deposit Plan making provision for local growth which will be supported by new or improved infrastructure 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Social Enterprises	Businesses that have a clear social or environmental mission.
Longer term outcome / impact		Supporting local communities to be resilient and self-supporting with resilient service models to sustain local public services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of the social enterprises supported/created by the Council • Implement Project Search with our partner HFT, to achieve real jobs for people with a learning disability 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Investing in our Communities	Theatre Capital Plan	Investment in the Theatr Clwyd site in support of a sustainable business plan and operating model for the Theatr as a primary arts industry hub and provider in the region and in Wales
Longer term outcome / impact		The theatre continues to be sustainable and high performing
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National support secured for the business case for major capital investment for refurbishment of Theatr Clwyd Reaching an agreement between the Board of Theatr Clwyd, the County Council and the Arts Council of Wales on the most sustainable, legal, governance and financial / commercial model for the Theatr for the future from 2021/22 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Investing in our Communities	Future of County Hall Campus / Civic Estate	Developing a Masterplan for the Mold Campus
Longer term outcome / impact		A sustainable and deliverable plan for the long term future of the campus which supports public sector partners' ambitions
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of a Masterplan for the County Hall campus, recognising the needs of existing and future occupiers, with agreed aims and objectives, timelines and financing Agreement of a solution for a future civic hub with or without public sector partner co-investment 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Investing in our Communities	Implementation of major capital Education Programmes: 21 st Century Schools - Band B Welsh Medium Capital Investment	Investment in high quality school buildings for the future
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality learning opportunities and learning environments for learners of all ages

Achievement will be measured through:

- Complete construction projects at Connah’s Quay High School (Phase 2) and Ysgol Penyffordd on time, to budget and to standard
- Commencement of investment projects at Ysgol Glan Aber, Ysgol Castell Alun, Queensferry CP (linked to the Plas Derwen project) and Ysgol Glanrafon, Mold (Welsh Government Welsh Medium Grant)
- Successful navigation of the proposed remaining Band B through both Council democratic process and Welsh Government Business case process

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Investing in our Communities	Sustainable and Modern Archive Services	Development of a North East Wales Archive Service and a new purpose-built archive facility
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality, accessible, responsive and cost effective public archive services

Achievement will be measured through:

- Creation of a single joint service between Flintshire and Denbighshire County Councils
- Securing national support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for capital funding for a new regional facility

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Investing in our Communities	New Pupil Referral Unit – Plas Derwen	Specialist educational provision for vulnerable learners
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality learning opportunities and learning environments for learners of all ages

Achievement will be measured through:

- Entering a framework agreement and beginning the design and development phase of a new combined educational facility at Shotton
- Obtain cost certainty and submit a Full Business Case to Welsh Government to release capital funding

Theme: Learning Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Education and Skills	Core Education Offer and Performance	Providing high quality learning opportunities for learners of all ages
Longer term outcome / impact		Supporting learners from 3 to 18 years of age to aspire to high levels of educational attainment and achievement
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil performance in 2019 assessment/examination outcomes at ages 7, 11, 14, 16 and 18 years exceeding the Wales national average Agreement of an action plan to follow the Estyn inspection of the local authority due to be held in the first quarter of the year and effective implementation of those actions 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Education and Skills	Implementation of the new National Curriculum	National education policy change with a revised national curriculum which will provide a continuum of learning from 3-16 years
Longer term outcome / impact		By 2026, all pupils from 3-16 will be taught the new curriculum which better prepares them for their future lives and employment
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools making suitable preparations for the transition to the new curriculum Teaching staff receiving quality professional development through the self-evaluation system 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Education and Skills	Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Tribunal Act	National legislative change to support children / young people with Additional Learning Needs
Longer term outcome / impact		A reform of the current legislative framework by providing a new statutory approach for supporting children with learning needs from birth to age 25 years. Implementation over three years, commencing September 2020
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective implementation of the new corporate and schools system to support pupils with Additional Learning Needs Training completed for all key employees as part of the implementation Effective implementation of the Communications Strategy as part of the implementation 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Education and Skills	Post 16 Transport Policy	Review of Council policy for transportation of post 16 learners
Longer term outcome / impact		To have in place an affordable and sustainable model for post 16 transport
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement and implementation of a new and sustainable policy following the consultation exercise 		

Theme: Green Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Climate Change	Calculating the Council's total carbon footprint (inclusive of all sources and sinks of carbon emissions) across all Council activities to support an action plan to reduce carbon emissions, and reducing single use plastic consumption
Longer term outcome / impact		Carbon emissions are reduced across all council activities mitigating climate change Making adaptations to our ways of working to become a plastic free Council
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a 'state of play analysis' of current Council activities on carbon reduction underpinned by the mapping of existing activity data • Completion of a greenhouse gas inventory covering scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and greenhouse gas sequestration across the Council's land assets • An agreed plan to design and resource further energy efficiency and sustainable energy schemes such as the ground mounted solar PV schemes in Flint and Connah's Quay • Completing the renewable energy assessment through the Local Delivery Plan process in support of the future strategy • Agreement of a strategy for fleet conversion, away from diesel and petrol vehicles, for the medium and longer-term • Developing a local plan to meet the need access to E- charging points across the county network • The adoption of a strategy to reduce the Council's reliance on single use plastics 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Affordable and sustainable collection and treatment services for recyclable, compostable and residual waste	Increase the rates and quality of recyclable and compostable waste whilst reducing residual waste
Longer term outcome / impact		Maximising the recovery and rates of recyclable, re-usable and compostable waste, and reduce landfilled waste Treatment of residual waste at the regional Parc Adfer facility as a sustainable and cost-effective solution
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the recovery of recyclable, re-usable and compostable waste to set targets • Re-adopting a Waste Management Strategy for the medium-term with aims, objectives and targets • Parc Adfer opened on time and to operational requirements with the diversion of regional and local non-recyclable domestic waste to the new facility • The impact of a public relations campaign on community behaviour to reduce plastic production and use 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Natural Environment	Optimising the role in which the natural environment can play in meeting our communities' needs
Longer term outcome / impact		A vibrant natural environment which promotes access to open and green spaces and their value in contributing to well-being
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of our natural environment and accessible green space networks to deliver health, well-being and resilience goals • Protecting the resilience of our natural environment by increasing the biodiversity value of council owned or managed land 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Local Development Plan (LDP)	15 year plan to guide development within the County whilst protecting and enhancing the built and natural environments
Longer term outcome / impact		Identification of a portfolio of sites and policies to meet ambitions for growth in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors, and to protect and enhance the built and natural environments
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success of measures to protect the built and environmental assets through the LDP process 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Alternative local transport arrangements	Alternative transport services in local communities where no public transport services exist
Longer term outcome / impact		Connecting passengers to key destination hubs and enable access to education, employment, retails, health, social and leisure destinations
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effective introduction of an in-house minibus service as an innovative and sustainable based transport scheme to meet need and demand 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Core Bus Network	Core bus network is characterised by a number of key destinations across the County (hubs), such as main towns or public transport interchanges/railway stations with direct, high frequency bus services operating between the hubs and on some cross-boundary corridors
Longer term outcome / impact		Connecting passengers to key destination hubs and enable access to education, employment, retails, health, social and leisure destinations
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range, quality, reliability and frequency of services on the core bus network either through commercially viable services, partnership arrangements or contracted services 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Highway Network	Prioritising the Council's road infrastructure
Longer term outcome / impact		Improved travel connectivity across the road transport network
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the infrastructure on the highway network to ensure the resilience, efficiency and reliability of road transport 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Active Travel	Provide opportunities for increasing levels of walking and cycling (active travel) and enable access to sustainable and alternative methods of travel
Longer term outcome / impact		Developing and increase active travel infrastructure; improve connectivity and enable access to education, jobs and services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting the statutory requirements of the Active Travel Act 		

Theme: Connected Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Resilient Communities	Community Resilience	Working with communities to help them to develop skills and resources to be able to deal with challenging and difficult situations which exist or when they occur
Longer term outcome / impact		Supporting local communities to be resilient and self-supporting
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of the aims, objectives and targets for the four priority projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Holway, Holywell – community-led regeneration ○ Social Value – a social value framework to maximise local investment in communities ○ Social Prescribing – a model for participation by local people with improvements in personal well-being ○ Get Flintshire Moving – participation by local people with improvements in personal health 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Resilient Communities	Community Health	Supporting our services and partners to further develop programmes of Social Value
Longer term outcome / impact		Improving the health of communities through our social value programmes
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aura Leisure and Libraries activities to add social value through their community activities commissioned by the Council through our Service Agreement 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Resilient Communities	Social Value	Establishing a framework to collaborate directly with contractors and suppliers to support additional social value investment in communities, directly linked to PSB identified, corporate and community priorities Building sustainable partnerships between the public sector supply chain and local communities
Longer term outcome / impact		Securing community benefits through social value investments
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a Social Value Framework with an action plan with aims, objectives and targets • Progressive impact in the following areas:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the value of investment by contractors and suppliers ○ the value of non-monetary investments by contractors and suppliers ○ the geographic spread of social value investment across communities ○ Positive contributions to the social policy priorities of the Council and its partners 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Customer Journey	Single Integrated Contact Centre	Combining customer contact teams from services across Flintshire County Council with parallel redesign of digital self-serve capabilities via <i>My Account</i>
Longer term outcome / impact		Widening digital access to public services Provide a single, resilient, consistent point of contact for the customer
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A seamless and successful transition to an Integrated Contact Centre • Improvements in customer service • Extension of the range of digitised services in Social Services, Education and Revenues and Benefits • Rates of transference of customers to digital self-service via <i>My Account</i> 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Customer Journey	Customer Strategy	A strategy setting out how the Council will provide services for customers
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality, accessible, responsive and cost effective public services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the aims, objectives and targets of the adopted Strategy • Meeting the set customer standards 		

Theme: Serving Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Workforce	Sustainable Pay Policy	Agreement of a new pay model to effect the implementation of the second year (2019) of the two year National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement (2018/19 – 2019/20)
Longer term outcome / impact		Continuing to be a high performing and innovative public sector organisation with ethical and social values
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a compliant and sustainable new pay model within 2019/20 • Reductions in the local gender pay gap • Retention rates of key personnel through offering competitive pay and reward 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Workforce	Health and Well-being Workforce Plan	Measures to support and maintain a safe and healthy working environment
Longer term outcome / impact		Continuing to be a high performing and innovative public sector organisation with ethical and social values
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a Well Being Strategy for the workforce with aims, objectives and targets • Workforce retention and attendance rates • Rates of referrals Occupational Health on mental health grounds and rates of case resolution success • Effective in-work poverty services for employees at risk 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Workforce	People Strategy	Enables the Council to attract and retain the most talented individuals to drive forward the Council’s challenging agenda
Longer term outcome / impact		Continuing to be a high performing and innovative public sector organisation with ethical and social values
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective succession planning for senior and supporting management positions • Maintaining competitive pay and reward, and terms and conditions of employment • Increasing the number of apprenticeships which result in a positive outcome 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Sustainable Annual Budgeting	Ensuring that spending requirements are able to be met by estimated funding levels over the medium/long term
Longer term outcome / impact		Continuing to be a high performing and innovative public sector organisation with ethical and social values
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance against the set of adopted Medium Term Financial Strategy key performance indicators • Achieving balanced annual budgets which support the policy aims of the Council 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	An account in which the Councils housing revenue (rent) and housing costs (property management and maintenance) are held. The business plan sets out the strategic direction for activity within the Housing Revenue Account
Longer term outcome / impact		Provision of high quality social housing and support services to our tenants through effective business planning
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cost-effective Housing Revenue Account Business Plan • Maintaining affordable service charges which achieve income targets • Effective management of rent arrears to maintain income targets 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Income and Concessions / Commercialisation	Ensuring that the Council's approach to raising income is maximised in an ethical way
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality, accessible, responsive and cost effective public services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of income target • Agreement and implementation of a programme of cost recovery and commercial set models 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Collaboration	Collaboration – Best Use of Resources	Reviewing further opportunities for collaboration where the business models suit all parties and value for money is optimised
Longer term outcome / impact		Continuing to be a high performing and innovative public sector organisation with social values Providing high quality, accessible, responsive and cost effective public services as sustainable models
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the effective and cost-efficient performance of all existing regional, sub-regional and local collaborative services • Successful transition to a combined CCTV monitoring service hosted by Wrexham County Borough Council • Agreement to implement a sub-regional sustainable urban drainage system approval body as a new statutory service • Successful transition to a new service model for enforcement services • Agreement of the scope and objectives of the next phase of Alternative Delivery Models for Council managed services 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Effective Resource Management – Digital	Digital Strategy	Re-designing services to use technology to improve digital access to services for customers and improved ways of working for employees
Longer term outcome / impact		More people have digital access to public services and make use of digital
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful implementation of priority projects within the digital programme plan • Agreement of a programme for upskilling non IT users of the community in digital, in partnership with other public and third sector partners, for the medium and longer-term 		

Theme: Safe and Clean Council

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and Clean Communities	Community Safety	Adopting a consistent and collaborative approach to address community safety across Flintshire and the region
Longer term outcome / impact		Reduced crime and re-offending, plus lower levels of anti-social behavior within our communities
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement against the actions and targets of the Regional Community Safety Plan and the Flintshire Well-Being Plan The performance of North Wales Police in partnership with the Council as statutory Community Safety partners Meeting our responsibilities under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) programme 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and Clean Communities	Corporate Safeguarding	Making safeguarding part of all Council services' business
Longer term outcome / impact		Protecting people from the risk of any form of abuse
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement against the actions and targets of the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and Clean Communities	Public Protection (Food Safety and Standards)	Protecting public health by providing services in Food Safety and Standards and Food Hygiene
Longer term outcome / impact		Providing high quality, accessible, responsive and cost effective public Services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the percentage of broadly compliant establishments within the County for public protection 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and Clean Communities	Streetscene and Transportation Standards	A range of service standards and performance measures for the provision and management of Streetscene Services
Longer term outcome / impact		An agreed set of standards for Streetscene services which can be monitored and provide assurance about performance of the “visible” public realm services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance against current performance standards for front-line Streetscene and Transportation • Completion of a review and of performance standards for front-line Streetscene and Transportation Services for future years 		

Priority	Sub - Priority	Definition
Safe and Clean Communities	Environmental Improvement and Enforcement	Service performance measures for the provision and management of Environmental Improvement and Enforcement
Longer term outcome / impact		An agreed set of standards for Environmental services which can be monitored and provide assurance about performance of the “visible” public realm services
Achievement will be measured through:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of enforcement against our standards for car parking, litter and dog fouling 		

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CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 13 th June 2019
Report Subject	Council Plan 2019/20
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan for 2017-23 was adopted by the County Council to show the key priorities of the Council for the current five year term of the Council. The Plan is subject to annual review and is led by Cabinet.

The 2019/20 Plan has been reviewed and updated on structure and content. Two internal member workshops have been held to invite contributions to the review, and a survey was circulated to all members to canvass views and opinion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To update on the actions to complete the review of the Council Plan 2019/20 in readiness for the recommendation of the Plan to Council for adoption.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	COUNCIL PLAN REVIEW
1.01	<p>Two Member workshops were held (30 May and 5 June) as part of the annual process of Plan review.</p> <p>The main outcomes were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The revised seven theme format was supported to be retained for the life of the Plan in this current Council term- A 'tracker' document noting the changes between the 2018/19 Plan and the draft 2019/20 Plan to be shared (attached as Appendix 1)- Amend Part 1 of the Plan with the following sub priority additions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Re-instate 'Independent Living' under Caring Councilo Broaden the carbon reduction/plastic-free sub priorities into a fuller Climate Change sub priorityo Introduce Child Poverty under Caring Council <p>Other more specific suggestions were made to inform the content of the Plan. Where agreed at the workshops these have been incorporated in the redrafting. Members have received follow-up information from the workshops by circular email.</p>
1.02	<p>County Council will be asked to adopt Part 1 of the Council Plan in June on the recommendation of Cabinet. Part 2 of the Plan, with the detail of the performance measures, will follow in July and will be reported to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The published Part 1 of the Plan will be in graphic format for presentation and readability. It will contain a review of the pre-existing narrative of current plans, and overview of risks to achievement, and a summary of our adopted Well-being Objectives.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting on performance against the Plan will follow as normal.</p>
1.03	<p>To widen participation in the review and use of the Plan for the future it is proposed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• that contributions to the review of the Plan for 2020/21 be invited in the third quarter from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees• that the initial review of the Plan is aligned in timing to the annual budget setting process• that Parts 1 and 2 of future Plans be made available at the same time• that the seven theme format be retained for the current Council term• that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be invited to make fuller use of the themes of the Plan in planning their forward work programmes using a simple guide to show which themes and priorities fall under which Committee

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Council budget and the Council Plan are aligned. Where budget decisions on new initiatives within the Plan, reports will be presented for review and approval at points in the year as normal.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation has been carried out with portfolio management teams, Members, and key partners.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Actions to achieve Council Plan outcomes and impacts are risk assessed to understand and manage the impact that certain activities can have.</p> <p>Risks will be identified within the development of Part 2 of the Plan and published within the public Part 1 version.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Tracker of changes made between the Council Plans of 2018/19 and the draft 2019/20.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<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	Council 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 Objectives and publish a Plan.

Council Plan Tracker – Changes between 2018/19 and 2019/20

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4 = Moved within the Plan for a better fit with another Priority or Sub-Priority

5 = No significant change

2018/19 Theme: Supportive Council			2019/20 Theme: Caring Council		
2018/19 Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Appropriate and Affordable Homes	Provide new social and affordable homes (p14)	Social and affordable homes	Housing	Provision of new social and affordable homes (p7)	5
	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment plan targets achieved.(p14)	WHQS	Housing	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (p6)	5
	Address the increasing frequency of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments and improve the Council’s own permanent site by i) effective use of the protocol with partners for management of unauthorised encampments; ii) improve the Council’s permanent Riverside site with support of Welsh Government funding; iii) explore options to identify a transit site through the Local Development Plan (p14)	Gypsy and Traveller Encampments	Not referenced		i) 1 ii) 1 iii) 1
Modern, Efficient and	Improving the quality of private sector housing (p 16)	Private sector housing quality	Housing ‘Quality’ not referenced, but ‘quantity’ is	Quantity of private rented sector (p6)	2

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2018/19 Theme: Supportive Council			2019/20 Theme: Caring Council		
2018/19 Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Adapted Homes	Delivering the council’s housing growth needs (p16)	Housing growth	Housing	Housing Strategy (p6) Provision of new social and affordable homes (p7)	4
	Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable groups (p16)	Housing Vulnerable Groups	Housing	Housing needs of vulnerable groups (p7)	5
	N/A	N/A	Housing	Homelessness Strategy and Local Access Strategy (p5)	3 <i>(Homelessness was previously a KPI, not a sub priority in its own right)</i>
Protecting People from Poverty	Support Flintshire residents to better manage their financial commitments (p18)	Universal Credit / Welfare Reform	Protecting people from poverty	Universal Credit/Welfare Reforms (p9)	2
	Working collaboratively to minimise Universal Credit (UC) risks (p18)	Universal Credit Risks	Housing	Homelessness Strategy and Local Action Strategy (p5)	1 <i>(Personal Support (budgeting and digital) now delivered nationally)</i>
	Develop skills programmes and delivery mechanism for North Wales Growth Deal (p18)	Growth Deal	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Growth Deal / Infrastructure investment incl. digital (p11)	2, 4
	Develop and deliver programmes to improve domestic energy efficiency to reduce Co2 emissions and fuel poverty (p18)	Fuel Poverty	Protecting people from poverty	Fuel Poverty (p8)	4

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2018/19 Theme: Supportive Council			2019/20 Theme: Caring Council		
2018/19 Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
	Develop a strategy to address food poverty (p19)	Food Poverty	Protecting people from poverty	Food Poverty (p8)	2, 4
	N/A	N/A	Protecting people from poverty	Period Poverty (p8)	3
	N/A	N/A	Protecting people from poverty	Flexible Funding Programme (p9)	3
	N/A	N/A	Protecting people from poverty	Childcare Offer (p9)	3
	N/A	N/A	Protecting people from poverty	Becoming Work-ready (p10)	3
Independent Living	Expand and support the care sector to enable people to live well and have a good quality of life (p20)	Care Sector	Adult Services	Split into separate sub Priorities: Extra Care Strategy (p2) Domiciliary Care (p2) Strategic Review of care needs and the Council response (p3)	2, 4
	Support greater independence for individuals with a frailty and / or disability, and for people at risk of isolation. (p20)	Independence for individuals	Children’s Services Adult and children’s Services	Improving local Placements for Children (p4) Split into separate sub Priorities: Strategic Review of care needs and the Council response (p3)	2, 4 2, 4

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2018/19 Theme: Supportive Council			2019/20 Theme: Caring Council		
2018/19 Priority	2018/19 "What we will do"	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
				Dementia Friendly council (p3) Learning Disability Service (p4)	
	Improve outcomes for Looked After Children	Looked After Children	Children's Services	Looked After Children (p5) Improving local placements for Children (p4)	2
Integrated Community Social and Health Services	Develop and integrate services for carers with our commissioned providers	Care Providers	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>Business as usual</i>)
	Embed the long term use of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) to meet local needs and demands	Integrated Care Fund	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>ICF is realigned with local priorities every year - Business as usual</i>)
	Embed the Early Help Hub into everyday practice by working with statutory partners and the third sector	Early Help Hub	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>Business as usual</i>)
	Working with the new Wales Programme to recognise Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)	Adverse Childhood Experiences	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>Business as usual – links with Early Help Hub</i>)
Safeguarding	All Council portfolios to understand and act on their responsibilities to address safeguarding.	Corporate safeguarding	Safe and Clean	Corporate Safeguarding (p29)	2, 4
	Identify and address the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and sexual violence.	Domestic Abuse and	Safe and Clean	Community Safety (p29)	2, 4

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2018/19 Theme: Supportive Council			2019/20 Theme: Caring Council		
2018/19 Priority	2018/19 "What we will do"	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
		Sexual Violence			
	Strengthen regional community safety through collaboration and partnership arrangements.	Regional Safety	Safe and Clean	Community Safety (p29)	2, 4
	N/A	N/A	Children's Services	Safeguarding Children (p4)	3
	N/A	N/A	Children's Services	Fostering Service Models (p4)	3

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2018/19 Theme: Ambitious Council			2019/20 Theme: Ambitious Council		
Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	The Regional Economic Growth Deal will be developed to final approval stages with UK and Welsh Governments this year, including agreement of funding allocations and formal governance arrangements.	Growth Deal	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Growth Deal / Infrastructure investment incl. digital (p11)	2
	Guide the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ), Northern Gateway and Warren Hall mixed use development site. Propose that the developments maximise economic and social value for the County and that they deliver the commitments made in the Regional Economic Growth Deal.	Regional Economic Growth Deal	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Regional Business Growth (p11)	2
	Develop long term strategic approach to Council's economic estate and land.	Economic estate	N/A	N/A	1 <i>(completed)</i>
	Protecting the scale and quality of apprenticeships both regionally and locally	Apprenticeships	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Regional Business Growth (p11)	4
	Develop a more strategic approach to regenerating and supporting town centres in partnership with Town Councils.	Town Centres	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Future of Town Centres (p12)	2
	Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRIP) – developing Flintshire's role and its local programme	WG targeted investment programme	N/A	N/A	1
	Propose that the development of regional and local transport strategy and initiatives maximises the potential	Transport	Business Sector Growth	Integrated Transport Strategy (p13)	2

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2018/19 Theme: Ambitious Council			2019/20 Theme: Ambitious Council		
Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
	for economic benefits and improve access to employment and tourism destinations.		and Regeneration		
	N/A	N/A	Investing in our Communities	Theatre Capital Plan (p12)	3
	N/A	N/A	Investing in our Communities	Sustainable and Modern Archive Services (p15)	3
	N/A	N/A	Investing in our Communities	New Pupil Referral Unity – Plas Derwen (p16)	3

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2018/19 Theme: Learning Council

2019/20 Theme: Learning Council

Priority	2018/19 "What we will do"	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
High Performing Education	Provide effective learning opportunities and quality learning environments for all pupils aged 3-18 to achieve their potential and high levels of educational attainment.	Education Offer	Education and Skills	Core Education Offer and Performance (p17)	2
	Provide effective support to schools identified as causing concern to quickly re-establish good educational standards	Performance	Education and skills	Core education offer and performance	2
	Prepare for national reform on curriculum and inclusion.	Education – National Curriculum	Education and Skills	Implementation of the new National Curriculum (p17) Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Bill (p17)	2
	Continue substantial investment in the school estate through the School Modernisation Strategy and maximising use of Welsh Government funding streams e.g. 21 st Century Schools Programme, Welsh Medium Education Grant, Infant Class Size Grant & Early Years Grant. Continue programme of capital works and repairs and maintenance across Flintshire schools.	School Modernisation	Investing in our Communities	Implementation of major capital Education Programmes: 21 st Century Schools - Band B Welsh Medium Capital Investment (p15)	2, 4
	Maintain low levels of young people/adults 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' and increase opportunities for apprenticeship and employment.	NEETs	Education and skills	Core education offer and performance (will be included as a measure)	2
	Fully embed Flintshire's Youth Council to ensure that young people across the	Flintshire youth council	N/A	N/A	1 (completed)

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2018/19 Theme: Learning Council

2019/20 Theme: Learning Council

Priority	2018/19 "What we will do"	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
	authority are involved in the evaluation and delivery of services that impact on them				
	N/A	N/A	Education and Skills	Post 16 Transport Policy (p18)	3

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2018/19 Theme: Green Council

2019/20 Theme: Green Council

Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Improving, protecting and enhancing the built environment	Local Heritage	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>Completed Actions – now business as usual</i>)
	Managing our natural environment and accessible green space networks to deliver health, well-being and resilience goals.	Natural Environment	Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Natural Environment (p20)	2
	Maximising the potential of Council assets for energy efficiency: control/reduction of Council energy consumption and thereby cost.	Energy Efficiency	Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Carbon Footprint (p19)	2
	Maximising the recovery and recycling of waste with a view to reducing the reliance on landfill.	Waste & Recycling	Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Affordable and sustainable collection and treatment services for recyclable, compostable and residual waste (p19)	2
	Strengthening regional air quality collaboration to help promote better health and well-being outcomes.	Air Quality	Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Natural Environment (p20)	2
	Publication of the Deposit version of the Local Development Plan preferred strategy.	Local Development Plan	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Production of the Local Development Plan (LDP) (p21)	2, 4
			Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Local Development Plan (LDP) (p21)	2

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2018/19 Theme: Green Council

2019/20 Theme: Green Council

Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Accessing and using available grant funding to support Council priorities for accessing employment, health, leisure and education.	Accessibility	Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Alternative local transport arrangements (p21) Active Travel (p22)	2
	Prioritising 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.	Highway Condition	Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Highway Network (p22)	2
	Supporting isolated communities to develop innovative and sustainable area based transport schemes.	Transport Schemes	Safe and sustainable Travel Services	Alternative Local Transport Arrangements (p21) Core Bus Network (p21)	2
	Delivering a compliant, safe and integrated transport service.	Transport Service compliance	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>now business as usual</i>)

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2018/19 Theme: Connected Council

2019/20 Theme: Connected Council

Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Resilient Communities	Build stronger social enterprises with the sector itself leading development of the sector.	Social Enterprises	Business Sector Growth and Regeneration	Social Enterprises (p13)	2, 4
	Grow the capacity of the social enterprise sector and Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) to become more self-sustaining.	Alternative Delivery Models	Resilient Communities	Social Value (p23)	2
	Ensuring and delivering community benefits.	Social Value – Previously Community Benefits	Resilient Communities	Social Value (p23)	2
	Enabling the third sector to maximise their contribution towards developing community resilience	Community Resilience	Resilient Communities	Social Value (p23) Community Resilience (p23)	2 2
	Ensure that the Council maximises its contribution to achieving the priorities of the Public Services Board’s Well-being Plan	Well-being Plan	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>now business as usual</i>)
	Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are not disadvantaged when accessing Council Services.	Armed Forces	N/A	N/A	1 (<i>now business as usual</i>)
	N/A	N/A	Resilient Communities	Community Health (p23)	3
	N/A	Contact Centre	Customer Journey	Single Integrated Contact Centre (p24)	4

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2018/19 Theme: Serving Council

2019/20 Theme: Serving Council

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Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
Effective Resource Management – Workforce	Develop and implement a renewed five year financial plan that reflects anticipated funding, costs and efficiencies to support strategic decision making over the life of the Council.	Financial Plan	Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Sustainable Annual Budgeting (p26)	2
	Through the People Strategy we aim to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.	People Strategy	Effective Resource Management – HR and OD	People Strategy (p25)	2
	Delivery of key annualised objectives from the Digital Strategy and Customer Strategies.	Strategies – Digital & Customer	Effective Resource Management – Digital	Digital Strategy (p28)	2
				Customer Journey	Customer Strategy (p24)
	Delivery of key annualised objectives from the Capital and Asset Management Strategy.	Capital and Asset Management Strategy	Investing in our Communities	Theatre Capital Plan (p14) Future of County Hall Campus / Civic Estate (p14) Capital Education Programmes / 21 st Century Schools / Welsh Medium Capital Investment (p15) Sustainable and modern archive services (p15) New pupil referral unit – Plas Derwen (p16)	Theatre (3) Campus / Civic Estate (2) Capital Education Programmes (2) Archive Services (3) Plas Derwen (3)
	Maximising the generation of the Council’s income streams	Income Generation	Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Income and Concessions / Commercialisation (p27)	2

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2018/19 Theme: Serving Council

2019/20 Theme: Serving Council

Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
	Adopting the Ethical Code for the Procurement of Supply Chains	Procurement	N/A	N/A	1 <i>(completed)</i>
	Delivering the highest possible standards of Information Security	Information Security	N/A	N/A	1 <i>(completed)</i>
	N/A	N/A	Effective Resource Management – HR and OD	Sustainable Pay Policy (p25)	3
	N/A	N/A	Effective Resource Management – HR and OD	Health and Well-being Workforce Plan	3
	N/A	N/A	Effective Resource Management – Finance / Assets	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (p26)	3
	N/A	N/A	Effective Resource Management – Collaboration	Collaboration – Best Use of Resources (p27)	3

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2018/19 Theme: N/A

2019/20 Theme: Safe and Clean Council (New Theme)

Priority	2018/19 “What we will do”	Subject / Topic	2019/20 Priority	2019/20 Sub Priority (and page number)	Key
	Supportive Council / Safeguarding Identify and address the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Strengthen regional community safety through collaboration and partnership arrangements	Community Safety	Safe and Clean Communities	Community Safeguarding	2, 4
	Supportive Council / Safeguarding All Council portfolios to understand and act on their responsibilities to address safeguarding.	Safeguarding	Safe and Clean Communities	Corporate Safeguarding	2, 4
	N/A	N/A	Safe and Clean Communities	Public Protection (Food Safety and Standards)	3
	N/A	N/A	Safe and Clean Communities	Streetscene and Transportation Standards	3
	N/A	N/A	Safe and Clean Communities	Environmental Improvement and Enforcement	3

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Discretionary Transport Policy Review – Outcome of Consultation
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet agreed a range of options for formal consultation on the discretionary school and college transport policy areas of post 16 provision and benefits entitlement in December. Consultation was carried out between 18 February and 5 April 2019. This report summarises the outcome of the consultation and invites decisions. This report has also been considered by the Environment and the Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a joint meeting and the feedback from the meeting is included within this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet make decisions on the transport policy issues which are the subject of this review, taking into account the outcomes of the consultation.
2	That negotiations be re-opened with Coleg Cambria on the level of recharged cost for the discretionary transport service.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	THE BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES
1.01	<p>Post-16 transport to college and schools and provision of free transport under the benefits criterion is a discretionary service. The Council continues to face significant reductions in revenue and has to consider different ways in which services are provided. The provision of discretionary transport is not considered to be sustainable in the current financial climate, and is an area where budget savings might be possible.</p>
1.02	<p>The current transport policy, attached as Appendix 1, says that free transport will be provided for post 16 students living in Flintshire attending a first course of full time study at a school or college subject to (1) meeting the three mile distance criteria and (2) providing the student is attending the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. Free transport will be provided to specified sites only. These sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all Secondary School sites within Flintshire offering post-16 courses • Coleg Cambria sites at Connah’s Quay, Northop, Wrexham and Llysfasi (for land based courses only) • Chester Catholic High School, Prestatyn High School, Rhyl 6, St Brigid’s School and Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St. Asaph <p>Transport is only provided to an educational establishment which is not the nearest if there is a considerable variation between the student’s course and the course on offer at the nearer institution. The courses should be at a higher level than the previous one e.g. GCSE resits would not normally qualify for assistance.</p>
1.03	<p>The discretionary entitlement to free transport under the benefits criterion has been included in Flintshire’s home to school transport policy since 1996. Flintshire remains the only Welsh local authority to retain this particular discretionary entitlement which reduces the distance criteria from 3 miles to 2.5 miles to the nearest appropriate school/education establishment.</p> <p>Under the policy, free transport is provided for pupils of statutory school age whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax Credit. If Cabinet decide to retain this entitlement, it is proposed that it is updated to make Free School Meal (FSM) the sole benefit criterion to qualify for free transport. Benefits entitlements which trigger an entitlement for FSM are currently Universal Credit, Income Support, Income based Job Seeker’s Allowance, Income related Employment & Support Allowance, Guarantee Pension Credit and Child Tax Credit with an annual income of £16,190 or less.</p> <p>As FSM has not been used previously to determine eligibility for this age group, the figures noted in later the report are estimated.</p>
1.04	<p>The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal framework relating to travel and home to school transport provisions for learners in Wales. The Measure requires local authorities to assess the travel needs of</p>

	<p>learners up to the age of 19. Although there is no statutory duty to provide free transport to post 16 learners who continue in further education, the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary arrangements. If a local authority uses this power, the policy must be applied to all learners in similar circumstances living in the local authority's area, and the policy must be fair, reasonable and comply with relevant equality legislation to ensure that it does not unlawfully discriminate between learners. In other words, the policy must be applied equally to learners in all types of maintained schools and to those attending other educational and training establishments such as colleges.</p>
1.05	<p>Prior to changing a school transport policy, consultation must be carried out with all stakeholders including those likely to be affected by the proposed change. In accordance with the Learner Travel Information (Wales) Regulations 2009, the school transport policy must be published before 1st October of the year preceding the academic year in which it applies. Therefore, in order that parents and learners are aware of transport implications when deciding on which school or college to attend, the earliest any changes could come in to effect, following consultation, is September 2020.</p>
1.06	<p>The Council currently transports a total of 1950 post 16 students: 1500 to Coleg Cambria sites and 450 to Sixth Forms at Secondary Schools. The annual total cost of college transport to Coleg Cambria has reduced recently following re-tendering and is now £860k. Under a Service Level Agreement with Coleg Cambria, the college contribute 25% towards their transport costs, reducing the actual costs to the Council to £645k. The cost of transporting the pupils attending Sixth Forms at Secondary Schools is included within the total school transport budget, as the pupils travel on buses carrying both Sixth Form and Secondary School passengers.</p> <p>If it was agreed to introduce a fare that would result in full cost recovery, under the Council Policy for Fees and Charges, this recharge to the College would discontinue. If a charge is set below the level of full cost recovery then Cabinet would expect the recharge to be maintained and possibly negotiated to make the transport service more sustainable.</p>
1.07	<p>Consultation was carried out using an online consultation tool, between 18 February and 5 April. The consultation was published on the Council's website and communications were sent to stakeholders including all Flintshire schools, Coleg Cambria, all Councillors and Community Councils, Diocesan authorities, Youth Council, neighbouring authorities and schools, AM's, MP's and the local press.</p>
1.08	<p>The options included in the consultation, as agreed by Cabinet on 18 December 2018, are attached in full as Appendix 2, along with a summary of the responses received.</p>
1.09	<p><u>Options 1 to 6: Post 16 transport</u> Option 1 proposes maintaining the status quo while Options 2 and 3 relate to proposals to introduce a charge at varying levels. Option 4 proposes discontinuing post 16 transport, and Options 5 and 6 cover excluding Welsh Medium and/or denominational schools from proposals to introduce a</p>

	<p>charge. The majority of responses favoured maintaining the status quo (87%) and not discontinuing free post 16 transport (92%).</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 650 responses • 566 in favour of retaining current policy (Option 1) • 545 against introducing a charge (Option 2) • 69 indicated £50 per term would be reasonable (out of 93) • 521 against introducing a charge and exempting students eligible for free school meals (Option 3) • 560 against discontinuing free post 16 transport (Option 4) • 436 against excluding Welsh Medium schools from a charge (Option 5) • 464 against excluding Welsh Medium and denominational schools from introducing a charge (Option 6).
1.10	<p><u>Options 7 to 9 - Benefits Criterion</u></p> <p>Option 7 proposes maintaining the status quo while Options 8 and 9 propose removing the entitlement. The majority of responses favoured retaining the benefits criterion (93%) and not phasing it out (91%).</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 436 in favour of retaining the “benefits” policy (Option 7) • 555 against removing it completely (Option 8) • 544 against phasing it out (Option 9).
1.11	<p><u>Recommendations from Environment and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committees</u></p> <p>At a joint meeting of the Environment and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on May 20th 2019, the outcome of the consultation on the discretionary transport policy was discussed at length. The Committee also received direct representation from the Flintshire Secondary Headteacher Federation and from Coleg Cambria representing both the college and the Deeside 6th Hub who had been invited by the Chair to attend.</p> <p>It was widely acknowledged that retaining the status quo and continuing to provide free post 16 transport in the current financial climate was not a feasible option because of the cost burden to the authority. However, many members expressed concern about the introduction of a charge potentially discouraging learners from more challenging economic circumstances from accessing post 16 provision. This was echoed by the Headteacher and Coleg Cambria representatives.</p> <p>The Joint Committee recommended:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Cabinet support Option 3 as outlined within the report i.e. that a charge be introduced for all post 16 transport to the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy but that the charge be waived for learners who are entitled to free school meals. The committee did not resolve to recommend a charging level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the discretionary policy for statutory aged pupils (11-16) be retained i.e. those in receipt of benefits* receive free transport if they live 2.5 miles from their nearest school rather than 3 miles. • That Cabinet consider concessions for sibling groups in Post 16 education. <p>*The benefits which generate an entitlement to free school meals are Universal Credit, Income Support, Income based Job Seeker’s Allowance, Income related Employment & Support Allowance, Guarantee Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit with an annual income of £16,190 or less.</p>																								
1.12	<p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Option 3 would result in all learners travelling to post 16 approved establishments that are three miles or more from their home address being charged, with the exception of those pupils in receipt of free school meals and those students/pupils assessed with learning difficulties and/or disabilities under the current policy.</p> <p>This provides some mitigation against the risk of learners from low income households being deterred from accessing post 16 education.</p> <p>This is also the most equitable option as it treats all post 16 learners the same i.e. there is no separate provision for those accessing their education in a faith or welsh medium based establishment as outlined in Options 6 and 7. Any positive discrimination in favour of these two groups could have resulted in a legal challenge.</p>																								
1.13	<p><u>Charging Levels for Option 3</u></p> <p>The original consultation included the following table to seek views on the levels of charging that could be considered by the Council should a determination be made to levy a charge. These tables have now been reviewed to reflect full cost recovery options. The cost calculations were based on an average of 15% of all pupils being in receipt of a free school meal entitlement.</p> <p><u>Table 1</u></p> <p>Financial Impact - Coleg Cambria Transport (Budget £860,500)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 1630 1369 1890"> <thead> <tr> <th>Charge to Parent per term (£)</th> <th>Charge to Parent Annually (£)</th> <th>Gross income (£)</th> <th>Remaining cost pressure (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>50.00</td> <td>150.00</td> <td>191,000</td> <td>669,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80.00</td> <td>240.00</td> <td>306,000</td> <td>554,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100.00*</td> <td>300.00</td> <td>382,000</td> <td>478,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>150.00</td> <td>450.00</td> <td>574,000</td> <td>286,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>225.00</td> <td>675.00</td> <td>860,500</td> <td>Nil</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Charge to Parent per term (£)	Charge to Parent Annually (£)	Gross income (£)	Remaining cost pressure (£)	50.00	150.00	191,000	669,500	80.00	240.00	306,000	554,500	100.00*	300.00	382,000	478,500	150.00	450.00	574,000	286,500	225.00	675.00	860,500	Nil
Charge to Parent per term (£)	Charge to Parent Annually (£)	Gross income (£)	Remaining cost pressure (£)																						
50.00	150.00	191,000	669,500																						
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150.00	450.00	574,000	286,500																						
225.00	675.00	860,500	Nil																						

Table 2**Financial Impact – Secondary Sixth Form Transport – based on similar pupil journey costs.**

Charge to Parent per term (£)	Charge to Parent Annually (£)	Gross income (£)	Remaining cost pressure (£)
50.00	150.00	57,000	201,000
80.00	240.00	92,000	166,000
100.00*	300.00	115,000	143,000
150.00	450.00	172,000	86,000
225.00	675.00	258,000	Nil

*Same charge as the charge levied for concessionary seats. However since the consultation closed Cabinet has determined to increase the cost of a concessionary seat to £150 per term/£450 per year with effect from September 2019. This level of charge is regarded as a benchmark charge and one which should be applied consistently in the interests of fairness and equity.

If Cabinet should determine to levy a charge and implement Option 3, then setting the charge at £150 per term would match the rate for a concessionary seat for the academic year 2019-20. The level of any charging for post-16 transport should therefore be kept under review in accordance with targets set for cost recovery for services under the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the policy for Fees and Charges.

Charging at this rate would not recover the full cost of the transport service and would still leave the Council with a cost pressure. Charging any less would reduce the financial contribution and add to the cost burden. Charging more e.g. to achieve full cost recovery could have a detrimental impact on the numbers of learners accessing post 16 provision, particularly for those whose family income is just above the threshold for free school meals and might experience in-work poverty.

It is anticipated that if a charge is introduced, parents will be able to make payment via the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) Contact Centre as they do currently for concessionary fares. As the implementation date for any change of policy is September 2020 there is sufficient time if improvements to online payments is made through the roll out of the Council's Digital Strategy.

1.14 Concessions for Siblings at post 16

The school transport policy for statutory aged learners does not make any provision for siblings. Some committee members raised concerns about the cost pressure on families where there may be siblings in post 16 provision should a charge be introduced. Those eligible for free school meals would automatically be supported should Option 3 be adopted but the concern was for those families who are above the threshold for free school meals but do experience in-work poverty.

The Joint Committee asked Cabinet to consider whether some provision could be made within the post 16 transport policy for this issue as follows:

	<p>a) Setting a fixed rate of reduction for a sibling in post 16 provision. (This would result in a small reduction in income for the Council, noting that the numbers of siblings in years 12 and 13 would not be high).</p> <p>b) Making provision for such a request to be considered on an individual basis based on financial need. (This approach would need clear guidelines on how financial need would be assessed so that the process is robust, transparent and has the appropriate measures to protect the confidential financial circumstances of families applying).</p> <p>Cabinet has already determined that for statutory transport policy there is no provision for siblings, due to the difficulty in administering the arrangement particularly where siblings do not share the same address or surname.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The Council has adopted a policy under which it will seek to recover the full cost of providing a service, where possible, through the level of charges it sets. Should the Council not opt to fully recover the cost of discretionary transport services then a funding pressure will remain to be met. If a termly charge of £100 were set, for example, then a sizeable funding pressure of £355,000 would remain as the opportunity cost of continuing with a subsidised service.</p> <p>A cost pressure of £621,000 would equate to a 0.9% Council Tax increase in the absence of any other available resource to fund the continuing service subsidy.</p>
2.02	<p>If a charge is agreed, an additional resource will be required in the Integrated Transport Unit to administer and manage the process, including liaising with parents and students, collecting income and chasing any arrears. If a discretionary arrangement was introduced to provide concessions for siblings at post 16, this would potentially increase the administrative workload to undertake financial assessments.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Consultation has been carried out with all stakeholders in accordance with the requirements of the Learner Travel Measure.</p>
3.02	<p>Consultation was conducted over 6 weeks from 18 February to 5 April 2019. Adequate notice of any changes to the policy must be given in order that parents/learners have sufficient information about travel arrangements prior to expressing a preference for a school/college. In order to publish the policy in time for the 2020/21 academic year, approval to any changes must be agreed by July 2019 at the latest.</p>

3.03	Any new options put forward as part of decision-making would to be subject to a new consultation exercise.
3.04	The Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the outcome of the consultation at their meeting on 20 th May 2019. Their observations will be reported verbally.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	A local authority could be at risk of challenge by way of judicial review or complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales if adequate consultation is not carried out or the school transport policy is not applied consistently and fairly in all cases. This risk can be evaluated by completing an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). An IIA has been completed in respect of the options and is on the Council's web site.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Current Home to School Transport Policy Appendix 2 – Consultation Responses

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Integrated Impact Assessment: https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/LifelongLearning/Schools/School-Transport/Integrated-Impact-Assessment.pdf Contact Officer: Gill Yates, Admissions Manager Telephone: 01352 704187 E-mail: gill.yates@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Concessionary Seat – where a pupil does not qualify for free school transport but can be placed on an existing transport route which has empty seats. Current charge is £150 per term. Integrated Impact Assessment - a systematic method of analysing a policy to identify how it affects people from different backgrounds, as required under the Equality Act 2010. Digital Strategy – a Council Strategy to develop Digital Information and Technology to support the Council's Improvement Priorities and strategic plans over the next five years.

Current Transport Policy

The LA is required to determine whether the provision of transport for pupils of statutory school age is necessary to facilitate the attendance at a designated school of the pupil concerned. If such transport is deemed necessary, then the transport must be provided free of charge.

Statutory transport provision

The LA provides free transport for children of compulsory school age

(i.e. 5-16yrs) as follows:-

- where a child receiving primary education lives over two miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- where a child receiving secondary education lives over three miles from the nearest appropriate school.

The LA also provides free transport for pupils of statutory school age:

- where the route to school is considered to be hazardous by the LA in consultation with the Environment Directorate;
- where transport to a named school is identified in a pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs. This would normally be on medical or educational grounds and would be deemed essential in the context of other criteria identified in this policy
- where a child requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists.

Other transport provision

Free transport is also provided for pupils of statutory school age:

- where a child whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax Credit, resides more than 2.5 miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- to the nearest Welsh medium school under the criteria identified above;
- to the nearest voluntary aided school where the admission to the school is on denominational grounds, subject to the distance criteria. Consultation with individual schools will take place to confirm the oversubscription criteria under which pupils are admitted. Suitable evidence of adherence to the faith of the school such as a baptismal certificate or a letter from a priest may be requested.

Post-16 Transport

Free transport will be provided for post 16 students living in Flintshire attending a first course of full time study at a school or college, subject to meeting the 3 mile distance criteria and providing the student is attending the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. Free transport will be provided to specified sites only. These sites are:

- All Secondary School sites within Flintshire offering post-16 courses
- Chester Catholic High School, Coleg Cambria sites at Connah's Quay, Northop, Wrexham and Llysfasi (for land based courses only), Prestatyn High School, Rhyl 6, St Brigid's School, Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St. Asaph.

Transport will only be provided to an educational establishment which is not the nearest if, in the judgement of the LA, there is a considerable variation between the student's course and the course on offer at the nearer institution. The courses should be at a higher level than the previous one: for example GCSE retakes would not normally qualify for assistance.

Free transport after the age of 19

Free transport is provided to eligible students who have reached 16 years of age and have not yet reached the age of 19 on 1st September of the academic year. The free transport will be maintained for

students for the length of their initial course even if they reach their 19th birthday before the end of that course.

Concessionary fares

The LA may provide concessionary transport, at a cost, where a pupil/student does not qualify on the above criteria but can be placed on an existing contract transport route which has empty seats. In these circumstances:

- a charge of £100 per term will apply. (This is subject to an annual review)
- concessions may be withdrawn at short notice, with a pro-rata rebate, when seats become unavailable.

However, under the Transport Act 1985, concessionary fares cannot be made available where public service transport runs along a school route at convenient times for the start and finish of the school day. Application forms for concessionary seats can be obtained on [www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/ school transport](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/school_transport) or from the Integrated Transport Unit, Tel No: 01352 704532.

Pupils/students with learning difficulties/disabilities

Specialised transport will be provided for pupils/students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities when specified in the statement of SEN. The LA will consider a pupil's special educational needs or disability, irrespective of whether the pupil has a SEN statement, when deciding which is the nearest suitable school. The transport requirements will depend on individual circumstances and each application will be considered on its own merits. When other factors are identified in the statement, e.g. specialist provision, transport may be provided for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to travel beyond their nearest school/college. Young people who have severe medical conditions that seriously affect their mobility may be provided with free transport even though they do not meet the distance criteria. In all cases, the request must be supported by medical evidence.

Travelling expenses for parents of pupils placed by a Statement of SEN in schools outside Flintshire

Where such pupils are placed in boarding schools more than 100 miles from home, the LA will assist with travelling expenses for parents to attend the statutory Annual Review meeting, by the most cost effective means of:

- arranging transport, or
- making a cash payment (currently 20p per mile), or
- providing a ticket (or cash equivalent) for one or both parents on public transport

Such assistance will also be given when a pupil who normally travels in a vehicle provided for a group, is unable to travel at the same time as the group because of his/her ill-health. Medical certification will be required. The LA will not normally assist with travelling expenses for other functions or meetings.

Definition of criteria

Appropriate school criteria

An appropriate school is deemed to be the nearest school which provides education for the relevant age and ability of a pupil, the nearest Welsh medium school or the nearest Voluntary school. The LA is not responsible for the cost of transport:

- where parental preference results in a pupil being placed in a school or facility other than the nearest appropriate school;
- to schools maintained by other Authorities where admission to those schools is a result of parental preference, unless that school is the nearest school.

- The Authority operates arrangements with neighbouring authorities for Flintshire pupils whose nearest appropriate school is outside the Flintshire County boundary;
- of pupils who reside outside Flintshire but who receive their education in Flintshire schools.

Age Criteria

The LA has no legal responsibility to those not deemed entitled to free transport.

- The LA does not provide transport for pupils attending nursery school or nursery classes at the age of three. Transport is provided from the commencement of the school year in which the child attains the age of five.
- The LA currently makes provision for pupils above compulsory school age, who qualify, to be transported free of charge to the nearest appropriate school or college as detailed in the Transport Policy.

Criteria for the Provision of Escorts

An escort may be provided by the Authority for pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, who qualify for transport under the defined criteria. Provision of escorts will take place after consideration by relevant officers of the individual needs of the pupils or group of pupils and the nature of the transport available.

Applying for School and College Transport

If you consider, using the above criteria, your child may qualify for free school transport you will be required to complete an application form. An application needs to be made at entry to Reception, Secondary and Post-16 and is not retrospective. You will also be required to re-apply should any of your circumstances alter during the period your children attend school, or if your child's course alters. Application forms are available on www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/schooltransport or from the Integrated Transport Unit, Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Flintshire. CH7 6LG (Tel: 01352 703243/704636/704532). Applications for transport to colleges should be directed to the college concerned (details below). Applications can be made at any time of year although students are recommended to apply at the end of the summer term prior to commencing courses in September.

Mode of Transport

In determining the mode of transport required, the following principles will apply:

- the need for specialist transport;
- the Additional Needs of a pupil as defined in a pupil's statement.

In all cases, the efficient use of resources will dictate the mode of transport (subject to the above conditions). Transport may be provided by means of school contract transport services or existing public transport services which, together with the type of transport (bus, minibus, train, taxi, etc.) will be dictated by cost effectiveness. In some cases, one contract bus may transport different pupils to more than one school site. In exceptional circumstances, a cash payment (currently 20p per mile) may be available for transporting pupils who meet all the criteria, if deemed by the LA to be more cost effective.

Collection and Return

Transport will normally be to and from bus stops or pick-up points for groups of pupils. It will only be provided from door-to-door in exceptional circumstances. The maximum distance a pupil is expected to walk to and from pick-up point will depend upon, for example, the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the route they are expected to walk.

Travel Behaviour Code

The Welsh Assembly Government has issued a Travel Behaviour Code which is compulsory for all learners up to the age of 19. It applies to all modes of travel to and from education institutions. Learners must comply with the Code whilst travelling to and from their place of learning. Under the Code, travel

arrangements may be withdrawn from learners whose behaviour during the journey to or from school or college is not of an acceptable standard. The driver will, in accordance with the agreed procedure, report any incidents of misbehaviour to the LA and Headteacher of the school concerned. Any such incidents will be investigated and appropriate action taken, if necessary, including suspension from transport.

Smoking on Buses

Smoking is not permitted on any vehicle contracted to the Council for the conveyance of school pupils to and from school. Any pupils found smoking on school or college buses will be reported for disciplinary action to be considered.

Parents have responsibility for:

- getting their child to and from school where they do not qualify for free school transport;
- applying for free transport where their child qualifies;
- informing the LA and the school of changed circumstances which may affect transport;
- ensuring that their child is ready and waiting for transport at the appropriate time and place. It is the parent's responsibility to accompany the child to and from the vehicle;
- ensuring that their child's behaviour while using school transport is acceptable.

General Transport Enquiries

School Transport
Streetscene & Transportation
Tel: 01352 704532
Email: school.transport@flintshire.gov.uk
Website: www.flintshire.gov.uk/schools/schooltransport

Colleges

Coleg Cambria (Connah's Quay)
Kelsterton Road
Connah's Quay
Deeside,
Flintshire,
CH5 4BR
Tel: 01244 831531

Coleg Llandrillo
Transport Officer
Llandudno Road
Rhos on Sea
LL28 4HZ
Tel: 01492 546666

Coleg Cambria (Yale)
Grove Park Road
Wrexham
LL12 7AB
Tel: 01978 311794

1. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1.1 The following table shows how responses to the consultation were submitted and the number received:

<u>Method of Submission</u>	<u>Number Received</u>
Online response form	647
Letters and emails	3
	650

2. Post 16 Transport

The following tables show the number of online responses for and against each of the proposals:

2.1 Option 1

Maintain status quo. The Council will retain the current level of post 16 transport provision to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy.

	Number	Percentage
YES	566	87.48%
NO	81	12.52%
TOTAL	647	100%

2.2 Option 2

Introduce a charge for all post 16 transport provision to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy.

	Number	Percentage
YES	60	9.92%
NO	545	90.08%
TOTAL	605	100%

If you have answered “yes” to question 2, how much do you think would be reasonable?

Charge per term (£)	Number of responses	Percentage
50.00	69	74.19%

80.00	9	9.68%
100.00	3	3.23%
150.00*	12	12.90%

TOTAL	93	100%
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*£150.00 will be the cost of a concessionary seat on learner transport from September 2019. A concessionary seat is one that can be bought by a learner who does not have a statutory entitlement to free transport.

2.3 Option 3

Introduce a charge for all post 16 transport to all educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy as in Option 2 but the charge be waived for learners who are eligible for free school meals.

	Number	Percentage
YES	83	13.74%
NO	521	86.26%
TOTAL	604	100%

If you have answered “yes” to question 2, how much do you think would be reasonable?

Charge per term (£)	Number of responses	Percentage
50.00	62	63.92%
80.00	15	15.46%
100.00	6	6.19%
150.00*	3	3.09%
173.00**	11	11.34%
TOTAL	97	100%

*£150.00 will be the cost of a concessionary seat on learner transport from September 2019. A concessionary seat is one that can be bought by a learner who does not have a statutory entitlement to free transport.

** Represents full cost recovery of post 16 transport

2.4 Option 4

Discontinue learner transport for all post 16 students and all learners to make their own arrangements.

	Number	Percentage
YES	46	7.59%
NO	560	92.41%

TOTAL	606	100%
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2.5 Option 5

Exclude **Welsh Medium** schools from Options 2 and 3.

	Number	Percentage
YES	162	27.09%
NO	436	72.91%
TOTAL	598	100%

2.6 Option 6

Exclude **Welsh Medium and denominational** schools from Options 2 and 3.

	Number	Percentage
YES	135	22,54%
NO	464	77.46%
TOTAL	599	100%

3. Benefits entitlement

3.1 Option 7

Maintain status quo and continue the current “benefits” policy.

	Number	Percentage
YES	436	73.40%
NO	158	26.60%
TOTAL	594	100%

3.2 Option 8

Remove the “benefits” provision completely for all learners with effect from September 2020.

	Number	Percentage
YES	41	6.88%
NO	555	93.12%
TOTAL	596	100%

3.3 Option 9

Phase out the “benefits” provision i.e. no new students to receive free transport under this criterion with effect from September 2020.

	Number	Percentage
YES	53	8.88%
NO	544	91.12%
TOTAL	597	100%

4. Letters and emails

4.1 Email received from local resident – supports a charge of £240 per year with exemptions for ALN Learners and those in receipt of Income Support/Working Tax Credit.

4.2 Letter from local resident – strongly opposed to any charge.

4.3 Letter from Secondary School Chair of Governors – opposed to any charge.

5. Response from Secondary Headteachers’ Federation

Letter from Secondary Heads’ Federation – Option 3 provides the best compromise, ie introduce a charge of £100 per term but it should be waived for Learners entitled to free school meals/benefits. The full response from the Heads’ Federation is below:

“At its meeting on 13th February, the federation of secondary headteachers discussed the options proposed for post 16 transport in the strategic review of the discretionary transport policy.

All headteachers expressed serious concerns that changes to post 16 transport would reduce options for post 16 learners and would potentially impact on the number of students progressing to post 16 courses. Headteachers felt that students need support to access the post 16 provision most suited to their learning need and that removal of transport could impact on this.

However, headteachers also understand the need to reduce costs and recognise the significant cost of post 16 transport.

Taking into account the need to support learners accessing post 16 education whilst reducing costs, headteachers agreed that option 3 provided the best compromise. This option ensures transport is provided for the most deprived learners and still secures a cost saving of £498,000.

We would be grateful if you could take our views into account in the discussions of the various proposed options.”

6. Response from Coleg Cambria

The full response from Coleg Cambria is below:

The College welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the proposed options to amend the Council’s School and College Transport Policy. The rationale for the proposed changes is clearly stated in the consultation document and the College, as a stakeholder

who would be directly affected by any changes, is keen to continue the well established positive and constructive dialogue with senior council officers.

Coleg Cambria is committed to delivering excellent teaching and learning in order to stretch, challenge and inspire all learners to explore and achieve their full potential. The College provides a comprehensive, flexible and responsive curriculum offer which enhances learning opportunities and provides a broader range of provision and options for all learners - whatever their background. The provision of appropriate transport plays an important role in supporting young people to participate in education and training and importantly to access the education and training of their choice. This contributes to sustaining and improving learner participation, retention and achievement rates.

The College and the Council currently have a strong partnering approach to provide an effective integrated student transport network, which meets the needs of students well, allowing them to access a broad curriculum offer and the education and training of their choice. This approach also recognises some of the significant constraints of the local transport infrastructure and promotes a more sustainable mode of travel.

Whilst the College's preference would be: Option 1 - Maintain status Quo, it recognises the considerable pressure to make savings on public spending and to provide services that can be delivered more efficiently and cost effectively. If a decision was taken to introduce a charge, it should be introduced in a phased manner with financial support available for students in low income households and kept to a level which would not cause financial hardship. On this basis, Option 3 would appear to be the most suitable and would deliver financial savings.

The College's response on the proposed options is set-out below:

OPTION 1 - Maintain status quo. The Council will retain the current level of post 16 transport provision to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport policy (www.flintshire.gov.uk/schooltransport).

Do you agree with OPTION 1? Yes

In addition to the points raised above:

The transformational change to post-16 provision in Flintshire needs to be considered as part of the consultation proposals. The creation of a new purpose built post-16 facility at Deeside has given students a better and wider choice of subjects at one location in a modern facility with the latest technology. This has also improved the learning experience and removed the need to bus students around the county to different delivery locations and has thus already contributed to reducing transport costs.

Free transport at the time of change would undoubtedly have contributed towards acceptance of the proposal and with the ability to access post-16 education at local schools removed.

The project has made a significant contribution towards delivering the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act by applying the sustainable development principles to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of people living in the communities served by the College.

Failure to allow access to the full provision of vocational skills subjects could lead to issues with equality of access to education and training and could result in some learners no longer taking up their course, possibly leading to NEETs or being forced to enrol onto the wrong course. Such a change in policy will have a clear impact on low income households.

Local transport infrastructure could lead to excessive journey times, exceeding the best practice guidance. In rural areas, the public transport network is just as much of a barrier as the cost of transport, and so designated student bus services need to be provided.

OPTION 2 - Introduce a charge for all Post 16 transport to all the educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy

Do you agree with OPTION 2? No

OPTION 3 - Introduce a charge for all Post 16 transport to all educational establishments referred to in the current Transport Policy as in Option 2 but the charge be waived for learners who are eligible for free school meals.

Do you agree with OPTION 3? No - but charge waived for eligible learners if charge introduced

OPTION 4 - Discontinue learner transport for all Post 16 students and all learners to make their own arrangements

Do you agree with OPTION 4? No

OPTION 5 - Exclude Welsh Medium schools from Options 2 and 3.

Do you agree with OPTION 5? No

OPTION 6 - Exclude Welsh Medium and denominational schools from Options 2 and 3.

Do you agree with OPTION 6? No

OPTION 7 - Benefits Entitlement - maintain status quo and continue current benefits policy.

Do you agree with OPTION 7? Yes

OPTION 8 - Remove provision completely for all learners with effect from September 2020.

Do you agree with OPTION 8? No

OPTION 9 - Phase out benefits provision i.e. no new students to receive free transport under this criterion with effect from September 2020.

Do you agree with OPTION 9? No

7. Online Responses

7.1 The following table shows the groups of people who responded to the consultation and how many were received:

GROUP	NUMBER RECEIVED	% RECEIVED
Parent/carer	196	36.98%
Learner	248	46.79%
Teacher	12	2.26%
School support staff	4	0.75%
Governor	13	2.45%
Other*	57	10.75%
TOTAL	530	

*Includes students, local residents, relatives, parents, Councillors, Community Councillors.

8. STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDER	Number
Parent, Abermorddu Primary School	1
Alun School, Mold - Parents	3
Alun School Mold -Learners	3
Alun School, Mold Teacher	1
Argoed High School - Parents	5
Argoed High School - Governors	2
Castell Alun - Parents	27
Castell Alun - Learner	1
Castell Alun - Governor	1
Coleg Cambria - Parents	10
Coleg Cambria - Learners	2
Coleg Cambria - Teacher	1
Coleg Cambria - Governors	2
Coleg Cambria - Other	2
Deeside 6 th - Parents	6
Elfed High School - Parents	5
Elfed High School – Governors	2
Elfed High School - Learner	1
Flint High School - Parents	11
Flint High School - Teachers	2
Hawarden High School - Parents	4
Hawarden High School - Learners	2
Holywell High School - Parent	1
Llysfasi - Parent	1
Maesglas - Parent	1
Northop College - Parent	1
Northop Community Council	1
Prestatyn High School - Parent	1
St Richard Gwyn - Parents	4
Sandycroft Primary - Parent	1

Sandycroft Primary - Governors	2
St David's High School - Learner	1
Venerable Edward Morgan - Governor	1
Yale College - Parent	1
Ysgol Derwen - Other	1
Ysgol Glanrafon - Parent	1
Ysgol Glanrafon - Learners	2
Ysgol Gwenffrwd - Parents	2
Ysgol Maes Garmon - Parents	41
Ysgol Maes Garmon - Learners	230
Ysgol Maes Garmon - Governors	2
Ysgol Maes Garmon - Teachers	8
Ysgol Maes Garmon - Other	22
Ysgol Mornant, Gwespyr - Parent	1



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	The Councils Closed Circuit Television Service and a Shared Service with Wrexham
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system is monitored from a dedicated and secure monitoring suite in Phase 3 of County Hall, Mold. There are a total of 120 public realm cameras on the current network together with ancillary equipment i.e. screen wall, recording equipment, servers

Issues surrounding CCTV can be emotive, with members of the public generally comforted by the camera installations and knowing that there is someone 'looking out for them' as they go about their daily business in our towns. However, austerity has forced Local Authorities to seriously consider the role of CCTV.

The report considers a number of options relating to CCTV installation and these are set out within the report. Relocation of the service to Wrexham has continued to be explored for some time; this option would provide a joint CCTV service managed by Wrexham. Flintshire would remain responsible for Fibre costs, camera maintenance and replacement

Wrexham's facility in Rewither Tower is modern with an layout which always envisaged additional partners, in fact there is a space for a screen wall, such as is used by Flintshire CCTV and desk provision is already in place, although some minor work to integrate the systems will be required as will the necessary connectivity between County Hall and Redwither Tower. The option to merge services will provide the necessary resilience for both partners and assist both partners manage costs more effectively.

Developments with CCTV have seen increased use of deployable cameras to areas or hot spots of high crime and anti-social behaviour. These have been highly effective when used alongside the existing fixed camera network and increased use of these cameras is being further considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet supports the merging of the CCTV monitoring function with Wrexham.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COUNCILS CCTV SERVICE AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE
1.01	The CCTV system is monitored from a dedicated and secure monitoring suite in Phase 3 of County Hall, Mold. There are a total of 120 public realm cameras on the current network together with ancillary equipment i.e. screen wall, recording equipment, servers.
1.02	The service was set up a number of years ago as part of an initiative led by the United Kingdom and Welsh Governments linked to Community Safety. This resulted in an extensive programme of CCTV control rooms being installed throughout Wales with the major capital costs being met by Welsh Government and ongoing revenue costs being met by County Councils and partners. In terms of revenue there is a small contribution provided by North Wales Police, circa £17k with Town Councils contributing circa £100k.
1.03	The camera network monitoring was, until very recently, provided through an external service provider. Camera maintenance and replacement is carried out through an external contractor on an ad hoc basis.
1.04	There has been very little capital investment in the CCTV control room. The most recent work, which is currently in progress, is the replacement of the data/image recorder, earlier work has involved the replacement of the screen wall, a critical necessity with replacement needed due to the failure of many of the monitoring screens. In addition, a total of 15 cameras have been purchased over the last three years to replace defective stock.
1.05	The monitoring contract has now naturally expired and the monitoring service has now been taken in house and staff transferred under TUPE in the interim period.
	Consideration of Future Service Provision and Options
1.06	Issues surrounding CCTV can be emotive, with members of the public generally comforted by the camera installations and knowing that there is someone 'looking out for them' as they go about their daily business in our towns. However, austerity has forced Local Authorities to seriously consider the role of CCTV, more particularly because the major user and service which derives the most benefit (North Wales Police) also contribute the least financially. In this context, it is understood that within North Wales, two monitoring centres are currently unstaffed and four are staffed but operating

	various limited shift patterns.
1.07	As noted above, the current location of the CCTV suite is problematic in that it is located in phase 3, an area to be demolished under the County Hall rationalisation plans. If the facility is to continue then it needs to be relocated, do nothing is not an option.
1.08	Relocation to Phase 1 or 2 is an option, but considered unviable as the capital set up costs are high, and the facility would have to be relocated again in any case due to the demolition of phases 1 and 2 at some point in the future.
1.09	Relocate to Ewloe was considered early on in the development and refurbishment stage and still remains a potential solution but capital costs again are high.
1.10	<p>Relocation of the service to Wrexham has continued to be explored for some time; this option would provide a joint CCTV service managed by Wrexham. Flintshire would remain responsible for Fibre costs, camera maintenance and replacement.</p> <p>Wrexham's facility in Rewither Tower is modern with an layout which always envisaged additional partners, in fact there is a space for a screen wall, such as is used by Flintshire CCTV and desk provision is already in place, although some minor work to integrate the systems will be required as will the necessary connectivity between County Hall and Redwither Tower. The option to merge services will provide the necessary resilience for both partners and assist both partners manage costs more effectively.</p>
1.11	The provision of a public realm CCTV services are not a statutory service, however, as has been noted above there is substantial and positive community benefit and reassurance derived from having such systems in place. Many organisations have been adopting innovative ways of delivering the service and as noted above the Council has been actively discussing with Wrexham a shared service solution.
1.12	Developments with CCTV have seen increased use of deployable cameras to areas or hot spots of high crime and anti-social behaviour. These have been highly effective when used alongside the existing fixed camera network and increased use of these cameras is being further considered.
1.13	There is very little performance information flowing from NWP into the use or otherwise of the system, but it is clear that they rely heavily on such systems to monitor the public realm and derive substantial benefit from it. In addition, there is evidence that reductions in policing are creating pressures on CCTV operatives through the increased tasking of image reviews in support of their work, activity that they (NWP) would normally undertake. It is only right that as part of this work, we reopen discussion with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and North Wales Police on a sustainable funding model for the future.
1.14	There are a number of additional benefits that could be grown from a joint approach with Wrexham. This includes the provision of a key-holding

	service and alarm monitoring service.
	Conclusion
1.15	CCTV is seen in many communities as a significant contributor in the fight against crime, and to this end many town Councils fund its ongoing use. However, to run a facility and maintain it is expensive and economies of scale need to be reflected in any future service model. The joint provision of CCTV services through Wrexham is seen as positive in evidencing joint working, cost sharing and securing a sustainable service.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The current monitoring contract delivered through the external service provider has now ended. Staff who delivered that service have now transferred into the Council under TUPE and the service is being directly managed by the County Council.
2.02	In terms of the financial impacts, a joint CCTV monitoring service with Wrexham has a number of clear benefits including increased resilience and the sharing of costs. Financial information is set out in the attached appendix A.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Discussions have been taking place with Wrexham to understand service scale and dimension.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The joint approach with Wrexham does not progress and Flintshire is then left with no CCTV service. In terms of mitigation the Council could either close the facility engage agency operators through its agency arrangement or retender.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Financial modelling.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Neal Cockerton, Chief Officer, Housing and Assets

	Telephone: 01352 703169 E-mail: neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) – A video surveillance system that is not openly transmitted.</p> <p>TUPE - The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/246) and are the United Kingdom's implementation of the European Union Business Transfers Directive. It is an important part of UK labour law, protecting employees whose business is being transferred to another business.</p>

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Appendix 1
CCTV Costings

	2018/19 Actual Costs			2019/20 Joint Proposed Costs	2019/20 Proposed costs split by Authority	2019/20 Proposed costs split by Authority		
	WCBC £	FCC £	TOTAL £	TOTAL £		WCBC £	FCC £	TOTAL £
Employee Costs	324,755	175,274	500,029	374,435		224,661	149,774	374,435
Premises and office costs	10,901	3,026	13,927	40,000		24,000	16,000	40,000
Equipment and Material costs	1,392	24,021	25,413	12,000		7,200	4,800	12,000
BT Costs and camera maintenance	44,329	77,059	121,388	163,220		97,932	65,288	163,220
Total Expenditure	381,377	279,380	660,757	589,655	Proposed split	353,793	235,862	589,655
% of overall expenditure	58%	42%				60%	40%	
Income generated	-72,000	-94,821	-166,821	-166,821	Income generated	-72,000	-94,821	-166,821
Total Net Costs	309,377	184,559	493,935	422,834	Total Net Costs	281,793	141,041	

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Social Services.
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire have a comprehensive Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) that looks at i) the supply of childcare in Flintshire including: type, quantity of provisions, location, costs, places available, choice and ii) the gaps in childcare including: location choice, barriers to take up provision, places unavailable. This report provides an overview of an Annual Progress Report that has been produced to assess progress against the actions, priorities and milestones identified in the CSA.

Positively, the report also identifies the CSA as the basis of a successful bid to Welsh Government for early year's capital. The capital programme is aligned to the 3-4 year old childcare offer to facilitate and support the co-location of the childcare provision and foundation phase to create a wraparound childcare provision wherever possible. For 2019-21 there are 12 schemes amounting to £5 million. There is also £440k allocated for small capital grants to support all registered providers with the childcare Offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet to consider the effectiveness of the Council's strategic response to securing sufficient, sustainable, and high quality, childcare within the county that is responsive to the needs of children and their families.
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2	To support the on-going work and commitment to the delivery of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every five years and the annual Progress Report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	<p>Many parents require support in their childcare choices and want to be assured that their option is the best for their child and the family. Childcare offers long-lasting social, economic and academic benefits for children and parents. Studies have shown that children, including babies and infants, benefit from a childcare environment. Finding quality childcare where children are supported, engaged, encouraged and exposed to positive attitude can help set the groundwork and support intellectual and social outcomes. Parents often create social capital as a result of interaction with other parents, benefitting their community.</p>
1.02	<p>The Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) provides a legislative basis for the vital role local authorities’ play as strategic leaders in the local provision of childcare. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which local authorities already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector – to shape and secure children’s services and focuses in particular on the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents’ needs <p>This is developed with partners via the Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) group in accordance with its Terms of Reference; and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child <p>This is delivered by the Family Information Service under <i>Section 27</i> of the 2006 Act). During 2018 the Dewis system was adopted as the childcare resource database by the Family Information Service, and progress continues to be made on a new childcare website (www.fis.wales) accessible online.</p>
1.03	<p>The local authority has the responsibility and lead role in co-ordinating effort across services; enabling different organisations such as childcare providers from all sectors, Jobcentre Plus, community focused schools,</p>

	integrated family centres and local health services to work together to secure sufficient high quality, sustainable provision that is responsive to the needs of children and their families.
	<i>Section 22</i> of the 2006 Act places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to take up, or remain, in work; or access education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. This duty is supported by the Welsh Government PaCE programme (Parents and Childcare in Employment) which is designed to tackle poverty through sustainable employment by providing individual support to out of work parents who consider childcare to be their main barrier to accessing employment and / or training opportunities.
	Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
1.04	The Childcare Act 2006 requires all Local Authorities in Wales to carry out a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) every five years. Flintshire’s CSA for 2017-2022 looks at the supply of childcare in Flintshire (including type, quantity of provisions, location, costs, places available, choice) and the gaps in childcare (including location, choice, barriers to take up provision, places unavailable).
1.05	The CSA (Appendix 1), has been refreshed for 2019 through an Annual Progress Report (Appendix 2), and details the actions, priorities and milestones to maintain strengths and address areas for development. This annual progress cycle sustains focus, and activity in supporting and developing childcare provision, and is led by the Childcare Development Officer for Flintshire.
1.06	In order to carry out the assessment and gather the information required to achieve and deliver a successful CSA and Progress Report, it is necessary to undertake detailed consultations with a number of individuals, groups, agencies and organisations which are summarised in Section 3.00 of this report. To fill the gaps requires cross service and key stakeholder support, working with childcare providers. The CSA is led by the Family Information Service.
1.07	All of the information gathered for the Assessment and subsequent Progress Report has been analysed to present a picture of childcare supply and demand by post coded area as proscribed by the 2006 Act. In addition to the collation of this quantitative statistical data, representative umbrella organisations, providers and those accessing the childcare market have been surveyed to provide qualitative information. (See Section 3.00 below).

Annual Progress Report – key issues	
1.08	<p>The Annual Progress Report (Appendix 2) identifies core strengths including an assessment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ childcare is well located and meets the needs of the majority of parents ✓ childcare is generally reliable ✓ the majority of respondents believed childcare is of good quality
1.09	<p>However, there are clear areas of pressure, and gaps, which have been identified through an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ assessment of demand ➤ assessment of supply ➤ analysis of supply and demand of overall provision ➤ identification of issues facing specific categories of parents
1.10	<p>The Annual Progress Report identifies the action/milestones that have been achieved during 2018/19 to respond to the gaps and areas for development. Highlights include work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit more childminders, particularly in rural areas • Support the registration of Open Access Play-schemes • Improve awareness, amongst agencies and training providers, of the availability of crèche facilities in Flintshire • Provide more information relating to nannies on the Voluntary Approval Scheme to be made available through the Family Information Service (FIS) (this is currently under review by Welsh Government) • Encourage relevant childcare providers to widen the age range they cater for • Promote of the availability of Working Tax Credits or Universal Credits and Employer Supported Schemes (including the new, nationwide Tax Free Childcare scheme) • Enhance and extend provision to meet the childcare needs of those working atypical hours before 8am, after 6pm, overnight and at weekends • Develop holiday care provision in Mold and Holywell • Provide more Welsh medium childcare of all types across Flintshire, particularly full day care • Supporting and encouraging all childcare settings to provide at least some bilingual elements • Encouraging families with other languages to use established childcare settings <p>Many of these themes require sustained action with progress relating to planned improvement milestones.</p>

1.11	The next full CSA is due by 2022. Work is already taking place to improve provider and parental involvement and feedback in the assessment to ensure a deeper understanding of the issues to enhance the assessment of demand, sufficiency and areas for development.
1.12	<p>Other issues reflected in the Action Plan include ongoing challenges to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure continuing development and sustainability funding for the sector • Consistent and regular promotion and prioritisation of the grants available to settings and parents • Enable continued investment in IT support for settings to be involved in the sufficiency assessment • Achieve consistency with other programmes including the 3-4 Year Old funded Childcare Offer reciprocating the offer with bordering counties or Early Entitlement; FIS streamlining the Extra hands grant procedures; • Secure funding for the mandatory training schedule for supporting childcare providers and other training opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD); • Promoting level 2 and Level 3 courses across all settings and introduction of the qualifications framework.
1.13	Work will continue throughout 2019/20 to respond to these challenges with progress reported in the annual report for 2019/20.
Childcare Offer and Capital Investment	
1.14	<p>From the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the Early Years partnership Flintshire was able to submit a successful bid to Welsh Government for early year's capital. The primary purpose of the capital programme, for the 3-4 year old childcare offer, is to facilitate and support the co-location of the childcare provision and foundation phase to create a wraparound childcare provision wherever possible. Any new building or refurbishment should create an indoor and outdoor environment for children ages 3-4, which will be calm, uplifting, safe and attractive as well as efficient, tough and flexible representing good value for money for the lifetime of the building. The building must be a standard suitable for the delivery of registered childcare. For 2019-21 there are 12 schemes of approx. £5million. There is also £440k allocated for small capital grants to support all registered providers with the Offer. Decisions are made on a partnership basis with key stakeholders, including the school modernisation team, head teachers, Early Years Support team, umbrella organisation partners including Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, PACEY and National Daycare Nursery Association.</p>
1.15	The Childcare Offer has been successful in Flintshire, however, the takeup has been a 'disruptor' to other programmes including Flying Start and the Foundation Phase. The partnership continually monitors the childcare sufficiency and work together on any impacts due to a reduction in spaces,

	and impacts on child pathways. For the first time in 11 years, 2019 saw the need for Flying Start to introduce eligibility criteria being unable to make a full offer in some locations due to closure of some settings e.g. Flint as a short term remedial action. It has been necessary for cross-partner approach to address some of the situations. Since the introduction of the Offer there are 12 out of 30 holiday play schemes providing care from three years old. And out of 24 After School Clubs registered to care for 3 year olds 8 have recently extended their registration to this lower age range. Some are now remodelling their business model and are catering for before and after school provision, catering for children in the extended age range of 8-11 years. Some childminders wishing to increase their numbers have been deterred due to incurred costs from Flintshire's planning department.
1.16	Information to parents and settings is available through a variety of mechanisms including 'Childcare Choices', Welsh Government booklets, FISF newsletters to childcare settings, DEWIS, FIS Childcare Choices, FISF 'help with childcare costs' leaflet, universal credit support, social media and the www.fis.wales website.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The local Authority is required to carry out a full CSA every five years and produce an annual review of the CSA's Action Plan. The Flintshire County Council Childcare budget is used to support the expenditure for these processes, however, the budget has been considerably reduced since 2015/16 and the Childcare Development Officer post and administrative support post are funded from Grant. During 2018-19 the childcare grant was used by December. A business case was presented to Welsh Government and extra grant monies secured for a further quarter (Jan – Mar) to meet parent and setting requests.
2.02	The FIS Training Schedule is funded from the Children and Communities grant. This Training Schedule generates a small income which provides for delivery of a further Training Schedule for childcare providers across the county.
2.03	Occasional additional funding streams are secured to support the work of the Childcare Development team. For example the Disabilities Consortia applies grant funding administered by Action for Children which enables the processing of the Extra Hands grants, including the Childcare Offer SEN grant.
2.04	Significant childcare capital funding has been secured for 2019-21. Governance arrangements have been developed to ensure appropriate

	oversight and project support/management both within Flintshire and with Welsh Government as part of the grant conditions.
2.05	There is also £440k allocated for small capital grants to support all registered providers with the Offer. Decisions are made on a partnership basis with key stakeholders, including the school modernisation team, head teachers, Early Years Support team, umbrella organisation partners including Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, PACEY and National Daycare Nursery Association.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>In order to gather the information required to achieve and deliver a successful Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan, it is crucial to consult with a wide range of stakeholders.</p> <p>Under schedule 2 of the Statutory Guidance appropriate stakeholders have been identified and involved in the undertaking of the Assessment and the development of the Action plan. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Children Board; • Umbrella / Professional partner organisations - Included on the membership list for the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Years Wales (previously Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (Wales PPA)); ○ Mudiad Meithrin; ○ National Day Nursery Association (NDNA); ○ Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY); ○ Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club (CPCCKC) <p>The <i>Childcare Act 2006</i> states that the EYDCP is responsible for “...ensuring the fulfilment of the duty under Section 22 and Section 26 of the <i>Childcare Act</i> to secure sufficient childcare provision and to assess, on an annual basis, the sufficiency of childcare in the Local Authority area.” (WG Guidance Circular 013/2008 p6). The Flintshire EYDCP will work collaboratively with relevant agencies to achieve the priorities identified in any Action Plans of the statutory <i>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment</i> (CSA). (Extracted from Flintshire EYDCP Terms of Reference – please refer to Appendix 4).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Medium Education Forum – The lead officer for the Welsh Medium Education Forum chairs this forum as it regularly discusses issues related to childcare and early years education. These matters

are also discussed at the Early Entitlement Partnership meetings which the Childcare Development Officer attends. And conversely the Welsh Medium Education Forum Chair, alongside the Mudiad Meithrin's Deputy Manager for North and Mid-Wales region regularly attend the Flintshire EYDCP where there is assured co-ordination of issues related to local childcare in the Welsh medium sector;

- **Strategic Play Forum** – The Childcare Development Officer regularly corresponds with the Flintshire Play Development Team; attends Play Sufficiency seminars and is a member of the Strategic Play Forum. The Play Development Officer has provided a 100% response to all CSA surveys of Open Access Play-schemes, both registered and excepted;
- **Job Centre Plus** – The Job Centre Plus service is represented at Flintshire EYDCP meetings by PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) representatives;
- **Care Inspectorate Wales** –The Early Years and Family Support Service Manager / nominated deputy attends a Biannual Engagement meeting with CIW. The Family Information Service team receives weekly reports from CIW containing the latest registered, cancelled and suspended registrations in the County;
- **Family Information Service** – The Family Information Service has provided integral support in the processing of SASS returns and the parental and employer surveys and this information has been used to inform the supply and demand sections of the CSA. The completed CSA is published and promoted via FIS information sharing channels so that it is accessible to parents / carers, childcare workers and other professionals with an interest in the sector;
- **Neighbouring Local Authorities** – Regular contact is maintained with neighbouring local Authorities which include Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Cheshire West and Chester. Through consultation with cross border colleagues we have been able to share information regarding Early Years education places and parental enquiries. This information is included within the Cross Border section of the CSA report (Section 12);
- **Local Employers** – FIS support local employers by providing information to employees; attending jobs fairs; providing outreach support and surveying employers for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Local employers were contacted and several completed a postal survey and this provided an insight into barriers that are faced by parents returning to work and the range of childcare services that are required to meet their needs.
- **Other stakeholders** consulted include – schools; local authority departments such as Planning, Housing, Lifelong Learning; the Healthy Pre-schools team and social housing landlords including Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. This consultation usually took the form of emails and face to face discussions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Staffing - The Childcare Development Officer and the Business Support Assistant posts within the Childcare Development team are funded equally from both the Flintshire County Council Childcare Budget and the new Children and Communities grant – Childcare and Play (formerly the Out of School Childcare grant prior to 2019/20). The FCC budget has, since 2015/16, faced considerable reductions and the Welsh Government funding element has not increased for several years in line with inflation or increased demand evidence - with a clear associated risk to available resources and ongoing operations.
4.02	Process costs – As above, and funded from the Flintshire County Council Childcare Budget, the CSA requires a staff commitment and a financial commitment to cover surveying and consultation and production costs.
4.03	There is a statutory duty upon all Local Authorities in Wales to produce a CSA; therefore failure to deliver a robust assessment will result in local scrutiny and scrutiny from Welsh Government, alongside an impact on the strategic planning and direction of the local childcare sector and a likely impact on employment opportunities.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (March 2017) without annexes
5.02	Appendix 2 – Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (March 2019)

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
	<p>Contact Officer: Gail Bennett, Early Years and Family Support Service Manager Telephone: 01352 703953 E-mail: gail.bennett@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

7.01

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – The inspectorate that has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. They also provide professional advice to Welsh Ministers and policy makers.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessments: A report that brings together a range of different data and information to develop a picture of the current childcare market and to identify whether there are any gaps in supply.

Dewis – Website and database with social care and wellbeing information.

Family Information Service - A confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance service for families with children and young people aged between 0 and 19 years of age. The FIS work with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to ensure our customers know where and how to access information and support.

Flying Start - Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme to provide a range of services helping children get the best start in life.

Foundation Phase: the statutory curriculum for all 3 to 7 year olds in Wales, in both maintained and non-maintained settings.

The Childcare Offer': 30 hours of funded childcare and education for 3 and 4 year olds, in working families for 48 weeks a year.

Working parents: both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a lone parent family), with each parent earning, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW). Some of this is still to be defined as the work develops.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Form

Name of Local Authority: Flintshire County Council

Name of responsible officer: Nerys Affleck

Date of Completion:

Please note that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must be received by the Welsh Government by 31st March 2017.

1. Introduction

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

As well as establishing a baseline of provision, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment will enable Local Authorities to:

- measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in the area
- identify gaps in the market and plan how to support the market to address them

Principal Statement

The Law

1.1 The Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which local authorities already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector – to shape and secure children’s services and focuses in particular on the provision of:

- sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents’ needs; and
- information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child,

1.2 The local authority has the responsibility and lead role in coordinating effort across services, enabling different organisations, such as childcare providers from all sectors, Jobcentre Plus, community focused schools, integrated centres and local health services, to work together to secure sufficient high quality, sustainable provision that is responsive to the needs of children and their families.

1.3 Section 22 of the 2006 act places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to:

- take up, or remain, in work; or
- undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

2. Contents

1. Introduction/ Context
2. Partnership Working and Consultation
3. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Local Well Being Needs Assessment
4. Population
5. Overview – Childcare Types, Services and Places
6. Supply of Childcare
 - 6.1. Childminder
 - 6.2. Full Day Care
 - 6.3. Sessional Day Care
 - 6.4. Crèches
 - 6.5. Out of School Care
 - 6.6. Open Access Play Provision
 - 6.7. Nanny
7. Understanding the Needs of Parents/ Carers
 - 7.1. Overview of Consultation
 - 7.2. Current Use of Childcare
 - 7.3. Demand for Childcare Provision
 - 7.4 Barriers to Childcare Provision
8. Free Nursery Education and Flying Start Provision
9. Free Breakfast Club provision
10. Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare
11. Sustainability
12. Cross Border
13. Workforce Development and Training
14. Results of Consultation with Stakeholders (as outlined in section 2)
15. Summary - Gap Analysis & Areas for Improvement

Annexes

Annex 1	Childminder Supply Data
Annex 2	Full Day Nursery Supply Data
Annex 3	Sessional Day Care Supply Data
Annex 4	Crèches Supply Data
Annex 5	Out of School Care Supply Data
Annex 6	Open Access Play Provision Supply Data
Annex 7	Nanny Supply Data
Annex 8	Parental Current Use Data
Annex 9	Parental Childcare Demand Data
Annex 10	Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase) Provision
Annex 11	Flying Start Provision
Annex 12	Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare
Annex 13	Workforce Development and Training
Annex 14	Action Plan

Annexe 1 to 13 are currently pending translation to Welsh and will be added to the Family Information Service Flintshire website as soon as possible

1. Introduction/ Context

Methodology

All of the information gathered for the Assessment has been analysed by area to present a picture of childcare supply and demand by post coded area as proscribed by the Act.

Area 1 – CH4

Area 2 – CH5

Area 3 – CH6

Area 4 – CH7

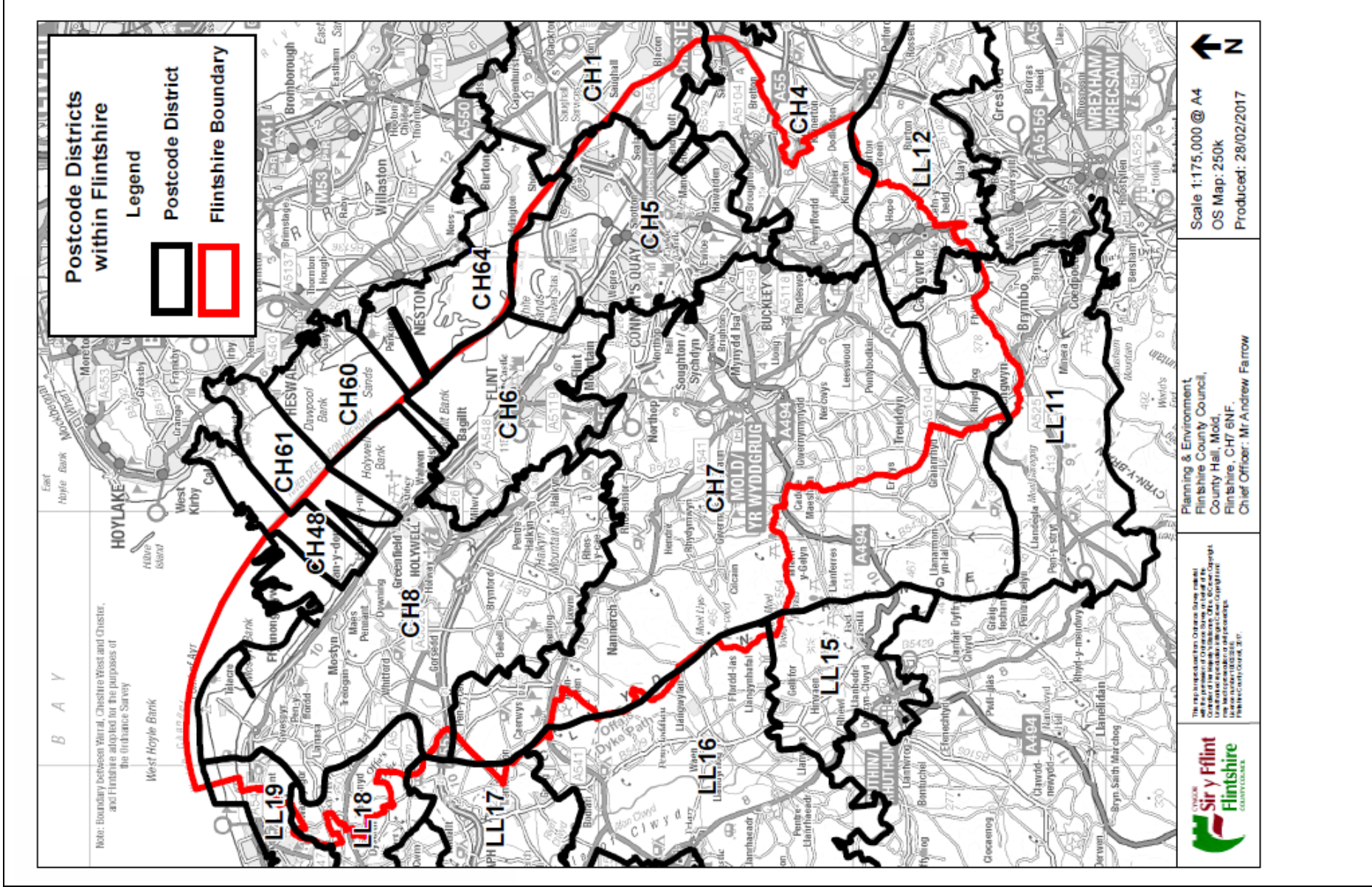
Area 5 – CH8

Area 6 – LL12

Area 7 – LL18

Area 8 – LL19

Map of post coded areas:



From September 2016 and December 2016, a consultation exercise took place to establish the views of parents and carers in Flintshire regarding childcare. Through a mixture of outreach work and structured questionnaires, the views of parents /carers as to the availability and accessibility of childcare were sought.

An electronic survey was publicised to all parents of children in Flintshire via schools, through existing childcare provision, local press, County Council website and Twitter account, a variety of minority group networks, local employers and in a number of other locations where parents meet. 133 responses were received from the on-line Survey Monkey questionnaire.

Face-to-face consultation took place through existing structures such as Family Information Service Flintshire (FISF) Outreach visits to parent and toddler groups; integrated centres; family learning groups in schools; pre-schools and other locations where parents were already meeting. As a result a total of 38 parents completed hard copies of the survey and returned them via post. Parents in more deprived areas and in marginalised groups (such as parents of disabled children) were targeted to provide balance against the possibility that fewer parents in these areas and groups would return surveys.

All Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) registered childcare providers were required to complete a Self-Assessment of Service (SASS) form on-line. Settings providing term time care were instructed to complete the form during the week of 11th to 15th July 2016 and holiday care providers were required to complete the form during the week of 1st August to 5th August 2016. A total of 77.1% of registered childcare providers in Flintshire completed the on-line application

The key challenge in undertaking this CSA was ensuring the accuracy of the data. Unfortunately the response rate to the parental questionnaire was minimal with feedback commenting on the length and receptiveness of the format. Flintshire's childcare providers' response rate to the SASS 1 on-line survey was 76.1% a vast improvement on previous return rates. Nevertheless, the data included within the annexes is incomplete as many providers failed to answer some of the questions within the SASS return and it is evident that in some instances they have misinterpreted the questions and provided conflicting answers.

The actions identified in the CSA Action Plan will be approved by Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (FEYDCP) and, over the next five years, progress made against these targets will be monitored and reported quarterly at our FEYDCP meetings.

2. Partnership Working and Consultation

Under schedule 2 of the Statutory Guidance appropriate stakeholders have been identified and involved in the undertaking of this Assessment and the development of the Action plan. They include:

- **Safeguarding Children Board** - Awaiting email response
- **Umbrella/ Partner Organisations**
Included on the membership list for The Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (FEYDCP) are:
 - Wales Preschool Playgroups Association (Wales PPA) ,
 - Mudiad Meithrin,
 - National Day Nursery Association (NDNA),
 - Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY),
 - Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club (CPCCKC)

The *Childcare Act 2006* states that the EYDCP is responsible for “....ensuring the fulfilment of the duty under section 22 and section 26 of the *Childcare Act* to secure sufficient childcare provision and to assess on an annual basis the sufficiency of childcare in the Local Authority area.” (WG Guidance Circular 013/2008 p6). The FEYDCP will work collaboratively with relevant agencies to achieve the priorities identified in any Action Plans of the statutory *Childcare Sufficiency Assessment* (CSA). (Extract from FEYDCP Terms of Reference).

- **Welsh Medium Education Forum** – The lead officer for the Welsh Medium Education Forum chairs the forum as it regularly discusses issues related to childcare and early years education. These matters are also discussed at the Early Entitlement Partnership meetings which the Childcare Development Officer attends. And conversely the Welsh Medium Education Forum Chair, alongside the Mudiad Meithrin’s Deputy Manager for North and Mid Wales region regularly attend the FEYDCP where there is assured co-ordination of issues related to local childcare in the Welsh medium sector
- **Strategic Play Forum** – The Childcare Development Officer regularly corresponds with Flintshire Play Development Team, has attended the Play Sufficiency seminar 2016 and will be a member of the Strategic Play Forum when it is formed later this year (2017). The Play Development Officer has provided a 100% response to all CSA surveys of open access playschemes, both registered and excepted.
- **Job Centre Plus Offices** – The Job Centre Plus are represented at FEYDCP meetings by PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) – A Welsh Government initiative to assist in overcoming barriers to work when childcare is the main issue.

- **CSSIW** – A CSSIW representative attends FEYDCP quarterly meetings. The Childcare Development Officer receives weekly reports from CSSIW containing the latest registered, cancelled and suspended registrations in the County.
- **Family Information Services** – The Family Information Service has provided integral support in the processing of SASS returns and the parental and employer surveys and this information has been used to inform the supply and demand sections of the CSA. The completed CSA will be published on the FIS website so that it is accessible to parents/carers, childcare workers and other professionals.
- **Neighbouring Local Authorities** – Regular contact is maintained with neighbouring local Authorities which include Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Cheshire West and Chester. Through consultation with cross border colleagues we have been able to share information regarding Early Years education places and parental enquiries. This information is included within the Cross Border section of this report (Section 12).
- **Local Employers** – FISF support local employers by providing information to employees, attending jobs fairs, providing outreach support and surveying employers for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Local employers were contacted and several completed a postal survey and this provided an insight into barriers that are faced by parents returning to work and the range of childcare services that are required to meet their needs.
- **Other stakeholders** consulted included schools and other local authority departments such as Planning, Healthy Preschools and the social housing landlord, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. This consultation took the form of emails and face to face discussions.

3. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Local Well Being Needs Assessment

Welsh Government have developed a 'common data set' to support the assessments of local well-being required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This data set uses four themes: social; economic; cultural; and environmental well-being of an area and in doing so draws upon a range of statistical research and evidence including:

- National Well-being Indicators
- Public Health Outcomes Framework Wales
- Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) Population Assessment Toolkit
- Welsh Government's sustainable development indicators
- Office for National Statistics' Measuring National Well-being
- Natural Resources Policy Statement, Environment Bill
- Planning Act (Wales) 2015

This common data set provides a starting point for Public Service Boards (PSBs) across Wales to begin to assess well-being in the area and the production of the assessment. It is just a part of the evidence base which PSBs will use to support their assessments, which will also include local evidence and intelligence including the views of citizens through assessments such as the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

The first Draft Assessment of Well Being for Flintshire is out for consultation until 31st March 2017

Any gaps highlighted by the CSA will be fed into the Local Well Being Needs Assessment.

4. Population

Flintshire is a county in North East Wales, bordering the English county of Cheshire to the east, Denbighshire to the west and Wrexham to the south. The coast along the Dee estuary is heavily developed by industry and the north coast much developed for tourism. The Clwydian Mountains occupy much of the west of the county. The Chief towns are Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Hawarden, Holywell, Mold, Queensferry, and Shotton. The main rivers are the Dee (the estuary of which forms much of the coast) and the Clwyd.

Unless, stated otherwise the demographic information within this section is based on data from the Census 2011, along with more recent population estimates produced by Welsh Government. This is the same information used by the local authority to develop the Local well Being Needs Assessment.

Population Figures

- The number of children in the population is important in deciding how much childcare is likely to be needed to meet local demand. In Flintshire currently 19% of the population are children. For the purposes of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment the National Office for Statistics reported in 2015 that there are 28,349 children and young people Flintshire between the ages of 0 and 15 years.
- While the population of Flintshire as a whole has increased from 152,666 in 2011 to 154,074 in 2015, the population of children during this period has fluctuated but is forecast to fall to 26,793 by 2039. Currently there are around 1,700 live births per year in Flintshire. However, the overall trend in birth rates is downwards therefore by 2026 it is expected that there will be between 11% and 17% fewer children and young people living in the region than there were in 2001. Interestingly the largest decrease in children numbers will be amongst the 3 to 7 year olds.
- Children with a Disability
The rate for children and young people reported as disabled according to Disability Discrimination Act definitions is 7.3% of the 0-18 population. There were 2,337 children with a disability in Flintshire in 2015 and this figure is projected to gradually increase to 2,343 by 2020.

- Poverty

A household is taken to be in poverty if the total annual household income (including any benefits received) is below 60% of the average for Great Britain (GB). Around 30% of households in Flintshire are below this average and this means 5,770 children are living in poverty.

- Family Composition

Flintshire has 18,737 households with dependent children. The number of lone parents is an important factor in childcare demand as they are less likely to be working when their children are younger but have greater need for childcare to support work once their children are in school. In Flintshire there are 4,466 lone parent households. In 35.6% of such households parents are in part-time employment and 29.2% are in full-time employment. 35.1% are not in employment.

- Ethnicity

In the 2011 Census 95.9% of people living in Flintshire identified their ethnic group as 'White British'. This compares with 93.2% across Wales, and 80.5% across England & Wales

- Welsh language profile

Welsh is spoken by 13.2% of people in Flintshire compared to 19% across Wales and 35% in North Wales. Welsh is used across most areas of the county by a significant minority. In five areas of the county, Welsh is spoken by over a fifth of residents.

- Employment

Flintshire is an attractive place to work with an overall strong economy and good comparative performance in jobs growth. A high proportion of Flintshire residents (43%) work outside of the County, but this is balanced by a high number of people who commute into Flintshire for work. Employment in the manufacturing sector is well above the national rate, 30% compared to 8% for GB and 11% for Wales). There is a low reliance on the public sector for employment (19%) against the Wales average (32%).

Households

- The Flintshire Unitary Development Plan 2000 - 2015 allowed for nearly 500 new houses to be built each year in Flintshire up to 2015. While this scale of house building will probably not result in a significant increase in demand for childcare across Flintshire, where significant developments are taking place of a type likely to attract families with young children, discussions within the local authority are needed to ensure that the impact on the childcare market is assessed. Please see the table below showing forecasted developments.

Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

AREA	TOTAL UNITS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Afonwen	19	0	5	7	7	0
Bagillt	57	0	12	0	20	25
Broughton	253	50	55	62	62	0
Buckley	435	37	59	116	107	54
Caerwys	54	0	18	18	18	0
Coed Talon/Pontybodkin	57	0	0	19	19	19
Connah's Quay	339	25	25	50	60	30
Drury and Burntwood	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ewloe	30	3	17	0	0	0
Ffynnongroyw	11	0	4	4	3	0
Flint	632	60	93	94	60	60
Flint Mountain	8	3	2	0	0	0
Garden City	1373	0	92	105	135	150
Gronant	38	0	14	15	9	0

Gwernymynydd	17	4	5	8	0	0
Hawarden	20	6	1	1	1	1
Higher Kinnerton	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holywell	236	0	29	40	32	0
HCAC	35	5	10	10	10	0
Leeswood	55	0	15	0	0	0
Lixwm	1		1	0	0	0
Mancot	4	4	0	0	0	0
Mold	293	50	60	50	50	25
Mostyn	71	1	19	18	18	16
Mynydd Isa	58	0	0	19	20	19
New Brighton	36	3	15	6	6	6
Northop Hall	71	10	10	10	10	7
Penyffordd	17	2	7	8	0	0
Penyffordd/Penymynydd	70	44	0	0	0	0
Rhes y cae	10	0	5	5	0	0
Saltney	43	27	14	0	0	0
Sychdyn	39	0	26	13	0	0
Whitford	41	0	0	0	7	34
Total	4420	334	612	678	54	473

5.1 Number of Childcare Providers & Type of Services (Registered and Unregistered/ Approved)

Childcare Type	Registered	Unregistered/ Approved)	Childcare Services Offered	Registered	Unregistered/ Approved
Childminder	94 (70.1%)		Full day care throughout the year	88	0
			Half day care throughout the year	126	0
			Before school	75	0
			After school	79	0
			Wrap Around	51	0
			Holiday Provision	70	0
			Other	6	0
Day Care					
Full Day Care	29 (93.5%)		Full day nursery throughout the year	24	0
			Half day nursery throughout the year	24	0
			Before school	14	0
			Morning Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	4	0
			Afternoon Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	5	0
			After school	14	0
			Wrap Around	20	0
			Lunch	14	0
			Holiday Provision	14	0
			Crèche	0	0
			Other	1	0
Sessional Day Care	37 (90.2%)		Morning Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	28	
			Afternoon Playgroup/ Cylch Meithrin	6	
			Wrap Around	6	
			Lunch	5	
			Other	2	

Crèches	3 (60%)		Operates Full Day		
			Operates Mornings		
			Operates Afternoons		
			Holiday Provision		
			Other		3
Out of School Care	37 (79.6%)		Before School	14	
			After School	24	
			Holiday Provision	10	
			Playscheme sessions		
			Other		
Open Access Play Provision	2	60	Before School		
			After School		
			Holiday Provision		
			Playscheme sessions	2	60
			Other		
Nanny		2 (40%)	Full day care throughout the year		2
			Half day care throughout the year		2
			Before school		1
			After school		1
			Wrap around a part time Early Education placement, e.g. playgroup or school nursery		1
			Holiday provision in the school holidays		1
			Other		
TOTAL	201	63			

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Providers & Services provided (Registered and Excepted/ Approved)

AREA 1 - CH4

- 18 Childminders providing the full range of services
- 4 Full Day Care providers providing the full range of services
- 3 Sessional Day Care providers providing Morning playgroup sessions only
- There are no Registered crèches in this area
- 4 Out of School Care providers providing before and after school sessions only
- 5 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
- There are no Approved nannies in this area

AREA 2 - CH5

- 23 Childminders providing the full range of services
- 10 Full Day Care providers providing the full range of services
- 7 Sessional Day Care providers providing the full range of services
- 2 Creches providing morning and afternoon sessions only
- 10 Out of School Care providers providing before and after school and holiday child care
- 8 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
- 1 Registered Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
- 1 Approved Nanny providing full day care only

AREA 3 - CH6

- 1 Childminder providing full day care and holiday provision only
- 4 Full Day Care providers providing the full range of services
- 3 Sessional Day Care providers providing Morning playgroup sessions only
- There are no Registered crèches in this area
- 3 Out of School Care providers providing after school and holiday child care only
- 9 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
- There are no Approved nannies in this area

AREA 4 - CH7

43 Childminders providing the full range of services

9 Full Day Care providers providing the full range of services

15 Sessional Day Care providers providing the full range of services

1 registered crèche providing other services only

12 Out of School Care providers providing before and after school and holiday child care sessions

21 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions

1 Approved Nanny providing the full range of services

AREA 5 - CH8

5 Childminders providing the full range of services

2 Full Day Care providers providing the full range of services

6 Sessional Day Care providers providing Morning playgroup sessions, Lunch and other services

No Registered crèches in this area

8 Out of School Care providers providing before and after school and holiday child care sessions

12 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions

No data collected from this area from Nannies

AREA 6 - LL12

2 Childminders providing the full range of services

No registered Full Day Care providers in this area

1 Sessional Day Care provider providing – no services listed

There are no Registered crèches in this area

No data collected from this area for Out of School Care

3 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions

There are no Approved Nannies in this area

AREA 7 - LL18

There are no Registered Childminders in this area
There are no registered Full Day Care providers in this area
There are no registered Sessional Day Care providers in this area
There are no Registered crèches in this area
There are no Registered Out of school care providers in this area
2 Excepted Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
There are no Approved Nannies in this area

AREA 8 - LL19

No data collected for this area from childminders.
There are no registered Full Day Care providers in this area
1 Sessional Day Care provider providing afternoon Playgroup sessions and a wraparound service
There are no Registered crèches in this area
There are no Registered Out of school care providers in this area
1 Registered Open Access Play providing Playscheme sessions
There are no Approved Nannies in this area

5.2. Childcare Places – Supply and Demand per Childcare Type

Registered Provision – Term Time

Childcare Type	Places as per registration	Term Time				
		Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	701	1079	755	429	23	16
Day Care	4148					
Full Day Nursery	1572	2,677	2,223	1,747	25	30
Sessional Day Care	898	1,301	1,137	454	37	8
Crèches	83	95	35	68	0	1
Out of School Care	1595	2,257	2,487	1850	20	13
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Excepted and Approved Provision – Term Time

Childcare Type	Term Time				
	Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	0	0	0	0	0
Day Care					
Full Day Nursery	0	0	0	0	0

Sessional Day Care	0	0	0	0	0
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	0	0	0	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nanny		7	0	0	0

Registered Provision – School Holidays

Childcare Type	Places as per registration	School Holidays				
		Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	701	537	2,104	186	5	16
Day Care	4148					
Full Day Nursery	1572	1,008	4,518	151	0	30
Sessional Day Care	898	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Crèches	83	49	31	-	0	1
Out of School Care	1595	618	2,074	660	0	13
Open Access Play Provision	195	N/A	409	N/A	N/A	6
Nanny	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Excepted and Approved Provision – School Holidays

Childcare Type	Term Time				
	Maximum Capacity of childcare places available daily	Number of Children using service	Number of Vacancies	Number of children on Waiting List	Number of childcare places required
Childminder	0	0	0	0	0
Day Care					
Full Day Nursery	0	0	0	0	0
Sessional Day Care	0	0	0	0	0
Crèches	0	0	0	0	0
Out of School Care	0	0	0	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	3783	N/A	N/A	
Nanny		7	0	0	

Geographical Distribution of Childcare Places per Childcare Type – Supply and Demand – Term Time

The figures below include supply data from the SASS forms completed in July 2016.

Area 1 - CH4

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	181	150
Full Day Care	270	227
Sessional Day Care	54	120
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	224	257
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 2 – CH5

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	302	174
Full Day Care	1,032	689
Sessional Day Care	327	379
Creches	71	35
Out Of School Care	558	1027
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 3 – CH6

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	5	5
Full Day Care	489	428
Sessional Day Care	105	53
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	86	72
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 4 – CH7

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	464	362
Full Day Care	664	560
Sessional Day Care	466	331
Creches	24	0
Out Of School Care	772	725
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 5 – CH8

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	104	20
Full Day Care	231	319
Sessional Day Care	297	210
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	617	406
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 6 – LL12

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	23	44
Full Day Care	0	0
Sessional Day Care	25	19
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 7 – LL18

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	0	0
Full Day Care	0	0
Sessional Day Care	0	0
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

Area 8– LL19

Childcare places per Childcare Type –Term Time

Childcare Type	Total Maximum Capacity	Total Number of Children Attending
Childminders	0	0
Full Day Care	0	0
Sessional Day Care	27	25
Creches	0	0
Out Of School Care	0	0
Open Access Play Provision	N/A	N/A
Nanny	N/A	N/A

6. Supply of Childcare

6.1. Childminder

6.1.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016 with 70.01% of registered childminders completing.

- **Range of services provided**

The majority of childminders across the County provide the full range of services surveyed. However, within Area 4 (CH7) less than 50% of childminders provided a Wraparound service. It is also noted that, across the county, 32% of childminders choose not to provide Half Day Care (AM or PM), however, perhaps there was no uptake of this service when the data was collected. There are no registered childminders within Area 7 (LL18).

- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

During term time across the full range of services offered there are significantly more part time than full time places taken with less than 7% of places taken ad-hoc. This description holds true across all geographical areas. Also, during school holidays almost identical percentages apply to the take up of full time, part time and ad-hoc places across all areas.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

The survey asked for all children with statements or awaiting formal assessment and the number of children was 28 which accounted for 4% of all children attending the childminder settings and 3 of them are funded Early education places. A third of these children have speech, language and communication difficulties. A contributing factor to this number being so low could be because the majority of children attending childminder settings are pre-school age and would therefore not have a statement nor would they be awaiting for formal assessment as yet.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

At this point in time (Spring 2017) Flintshire do not have any registered childminders delivering their service through the medium of Welsh

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

32 of the childminders surveyed recorded no vacancies whatsoever and only 28 had five or less vacancies for the chosen survey weeks in term time and school holidays. The remaining 29 childminders accounted for 490 vacancies and the majority of these vacancies were in the CH5 (Connah's Quay and Shotton) and CH7 (Buckley and New Brighton) areas. Only 9 childminders had waiting lists during term time and that figure falls to 2 during school holidays with 24 children in total waiting for places. However, some childminders with waiting lists also had vacancies so we believe that these childminders have misunderstood the question and included children that are booked in to start at a later date and the place is not yet required.

- **Opening times and range of session lengths**

Childcare providers were not instructed to use a 24 hour clock and therefore it is difficult to provide a thorough analysis from the times provided. Also, 20 respondents did not understand what was required and only included a start time or did not include any hours at all. Most childminders, as instructed, have provided their full time hours which range from 7.00am to 9.00am starts and finish times from 4.00pm to 7.00pm. During term time over 50% started before 8am and this figure fell to just below 50% for school holiday. Settings offering childcare after 6pm accounted for 15% of the respondents during both term time and school holidays. No childminders indicated that they provided overnight care under the 'Childcare Operating Outside of working hours' question however one childminder in Garden City noted under other services offered that they provided overnight care, suggesting that some childminders found the survey format confusing. Only one childminder in Holywell West offered weekend cover with the service available 7am to 7pm seven days a week.

- **Age range of children**

Childminder registration covers caring for children under 12 years old however, of the childminders surveyed 7 accommodated the 12 – 17 year old range. Only 17 respondents offered care for babies under 12 months old, with the majority of childminders caring for the 2 year to 11 year old range. During term time by far the busiest age range using childminders is the 5 – 7 year olds, followed by 8 – 11 year olds, 2 year olds, three olds then 4 year olds. During the school holidays approximately a third fewer children are using childminder services across all age ranges, according to the childminders surveyed, possibly due to parents taking annual leave at this time of year.

- **Range of charges**

This survey question asked for an hourly rate but was entitled 'Childcare Fees – Cost Per Session' and therefore this resulted in one third responding with an hourly rate and the remaining two thirds quoting their session fees. For the purpose of this analysis we have chosen the responses that provided an hourly rate and have assumed that they have used the guidance notes

to correctly calculate this amount. For full day care those providing an hourly rate ranged from £2.50 to £4.05 per hour. For a half day (AM or PM) during term time or school holidays were being charged from £2.50 to £4.66 per hour. Before school fees ranged from £3.00 to £4.00 per hour with After school exhibiting a wider range from £2.50 to £4.80. Only a fifth of respondents provided a wraparound fee and this ranged from £2.50 to £4.00 per hour. These figures give an average hourly rate of £3.50 per child per hour

6.1.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- There is a good spread of childminders throughout Flintshire and a wide range of services provided by these childminders
- The majority of childcare places are taken on a part-time and ad-hoc basis, so it is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of families.
- Across all areas of Flintshire there are vacancies during term time and school holidays
- Childminders provide a significant amount of after school care for children aged five and over, particularly in Area 4 (CH7).
- Childminders are registered as inclusive practices and are therefore willing and able to provide childcare for children with special educational needs or a disability.
- The majority of childminders in Flintshire provide childcare before 8am.
- The cheapest childcare provision is available in Connah's Quay however these settings tend not to include sibling discounts.

Weaknesses:

- There are no Welsh medium in Flintshire and only 29% having some bilingual elements to their provision.
- According to the SASS data there is very limited provision for parents seeking atypical hours to cover shift patterns with the earliest start being 7.00am and latest finish at 7.00pm. However, we are aware of some childminders providing care outside of these hours on an ad-hoc basis.
- Of those childminders completing the SASS on-line only one indicated that they provided overnight care.
- Only one childminder in Area 5 (CH8) provided weekend childcare on both a Saturday and Sunday.

- Childminders providing care in the areas bordering Cheshire West are the most expensive at £35.00 per full day, however, none of these setting make any additional charges.

6.2 Full Day Care

6.2.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016 with 93.5% of registered Full Day Care providers completing

- **Range of services provided**

The majority of Full Day Care settings provide Full Day Nursery sessions however less than 50% of respondents deliver Half Day Nursery provision and the same applies to settings providing before and after school, lunch and holiday provision. Also, less than 20% of these Full Day Care settings provide AM or PM Playgroup sessions, however, we can surmise that these are the settings registered as full day care because they deliver both AM and PM sessions. There is no registered Full Day Care provision in Area 6, 7 and 8 (LL12, LL18 and LL19) however these are rural areas bordering neighbouring Counties where Day Care provision is available close by. Only one Full Day Care provider completed the SASS as a setting solely operating as a holiday club, however, the FISF have details of seven settings providing this service with the majority providing Summer holiday cover and only one setting providing Christmas holiday cover in Buckley.

- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

During term time 30% of places are taken by full-time children, whilst part-time places account for 67% and ad-hoc bookings only 3%. These figures change significantly during school holidays with full-time places only accounting for 14% and part time places taking 78% of all places and finally ad-hoc taking 8%.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

There are 42 places filled by children who have a disability or special educational needs. 5 of whom are funded Early education places. The majority of these children had medical conditions or speech, language and communication difficulties. These children are spread across all areas of Flintshire where full day care is available.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

Two settings provide morning and afternoon Cylch Meithrin provision, one in Treuddyn and one in Holywell. They both also provide wraparound care and lunch provision. At the time of the survey 75 places were filled. There currently are no Welsh medium registered Day Nurseries in the County.

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

Three settings, in Mancot, Sealand and Connah's Quay reported no vacancies. The remaining 26 settings recorded 1,898 with the highest number of day care vacancies in Mold, Flint, Connah's Quay and Ewloe. Of the 50% of providers who offered half day sessions the majority of vacancies were for the afternoon sessions, particularly in Flint, Shotton, Northop and Bagillt. Almost 50% of all After School vacancies were in Flint. For those providing Playgroup sessions the afternoon sessions had considerably more vacancies than the morning sessions, which is verification that morning sessions better suit the needs of this younger age range of children. Only one setting in Sealand had a waiting list for the school holidays as well as term time (however, this setting failed to add any numbers to the subsequent boxes of the survey). Another two settings in Penyffordd and Connah's Quay have term time waiting lists only with most vacancies during the Summer and Autumn terms.

- **Opening times and range of session lengths**

Four settings failed to provide any times whatsoever and two settings only provided start times. Of the remaining 23 respondents they provided a range of sessions available during term time and school holidays, these mostly operating between 7.30am and 6.00pm or somewhere in between. No settings ticked the Weekend Care box, however, one setting in Buckley provides full day care session from 08.00am to 4.00pm on a Saturday. No settings provide overnight care. 11 of the respondents did not provide Holiday care whilst two settings that did chose not to provide any hours. Of the remaining 18 respondents the majority had hours identical to their term time hours and virtually all provided 13 weeks of childcare during the school holidays.

- **Age range of children**

All Full Day care settings in Flintshire care for children under the age of 12 in line with CSSIW registration requirements. There is an even distribution of registered full day care settings who can cover for children in all the age categories. Just under half of the

full day care providers can accommodate children from 0- 7 years. Almost all providers are able to accommodate children between 2 and 4 years as this takes into account the full day care registrations providing either two playgroup sessions or wraparound provision over 4 hours. In Area 5 (CH8) there is no full day care provision for 5 – 11 year olds.

Range of charges - According to the SASS data collected the hourly cost of full day care ranges between £3.55 and £4.35 and for a half day or less it ranges from £2.80 to £6.60 per hour, with the cost of lunch care ranging from £1.00 to £6.66. A third of the respondents have given the cost of the full session rather than the hourly cost and in many cases they also not indicated the session length so it is not possible to calculate the hourly rate in these instances. 22 of the settings offer a sibling discount with the majority who did not in Areas 2 and 4 (CH5 and CH7). None of the settings have any additional charges.

6.2.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- There is a good range of services provided by full day care settings with just short of half providing wrap around care, after school care, lunch clubs and holiday care.
- Full day care is by far the most commonly used service followed by half day care in the morning and after school provision.
- Children with special educational needs or a disability are noted to be accessing all the settings in all areas where full day care is available.
- There are currently vacancies across all areas in settings providing full day care, half day care, before or after school and playgroup sessions.
- Only two settings out of the 29 have waiting lists.
- There are a wide range of session lengths available in all areas and hours available ranging from 7.30am starts to 6.00pm
- Areas 1 to 8 all have full day care available during at least 13 weeks of the school holidays, with the only exception being Christmas week.
- 75% of the settings provide sibling discounts with none charging for additional items such as food, travel or nappies

Weaknesses:

- There are no Welsh medium Day Care Nurseries in Flintshire. The only registered full day care providers are two Cylch Meithrins operating in Treuddyn and Holywell.

- *There is no registered Full Day Care provision in Area 6, 7 and 8 (LL12, LL18 and LL19) however these are rural areas bordering neighbouring Counties where Day Care provision is available close by.*
- *Less than 50% of respondents deliver Half Day Nursery provision and the same applies to settings providing before and after school, lunch and holiday provision.*
- Take up of full-time childcare places during school holidays is particularly low and therefore where it is taken it tends to be on a part time basis which could lead to sustainability issues for this sector.
- Both Playgroup sessions and half day nursery sessions running in the afternoon struggled to attract as many children as attended their morning sessions.
- No settings provide overnight care and only one setting in Buckley provided a full day care session on a Saturday.
- There is no full day care provided before 7.30am or after 6.00pm
- In Area 5 (CH8) there is no Full Day Care provision for 5 – 11 year olds

6.3 Sessional Day Care

6.3.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016 with 90.2% of registered Sessional Day Care providers completing

- **Range of services provided**

A number of the sessional care providers are now registered as full day care as they provide two sessions and a lunch service or a wraparound delivery over four hours. There is no sessional care available in Area 7 (LL18 – Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor). There are no afternoon sessions in Areas 1, 3 and 5 (CH4, CH6 and CH8) and no morning sessions running in Areas 6 and 8 (LL12 and LL19). There are only six settings offering lunch club in Connah's Quay, Shotton, Mold, Holywell and Treuddyn and of these Shotton, Mold and Treuddyn also offer wraparound care. Other settings providing wraparound care are in Cilcain, Gronant and Shotton. None of the settings deliver sessions during school holidays

- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

There is a significantly higher take up of places in morning playgroup / Cylch Meithrin than afternoon sessions. All data collected refers to term time however two settings completed the school holiday section in error, again showing that the SASS layout was confusing. 54% of places are filled on a part time with 45% accounting for full-time places and the remaining 1% are ad-hoc places.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

There are 21 children with special educational needs or a disability attending sessional care. 9 of who are funded Early education places. These children are spread across all areas of the county with the majority, with statements or awaiting formal statements, having speech, language and communication difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

There are no Welsh medium playgroups operating in Areas 1, 6,7 and 8 (CH4, LL12, LL18 and LL19). In Area 2 there are two Cylch Meithrins , one in Shotton and one in Garden City offering 88 places and 46 children attending. In Area 3 (Flint) there are two Cylch meithrins but only one completed the SASS and has a capacity for 60 with 31 attending. Area 4 has three Cylch Meithrins in (Mold (x2) and Treuddyn) but only one from Mold completed the SASS with a capacity of 24 and 37 attending. Finally Area 5 has a Cylch Meithrin in Holywell and Picton and the Picton setting completed the SASS and shows a capacity of 56 and attendance of 24.

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

Vacancies account for almost a third of the capacity all settings across the county. Assuming that the settings have calculated their vacancies correctly using the guidance provided Area 3 (CH6) and Area 8 (LL19) have vacancies exceeding 50%. There are no waiting lists for Welsh medium provision. Settings delivering through English or English and some bilingual elements reported only 7 on a waiting list for Spring term, 17 for Summer term and 15 for Autumn term. However, we assume that many of these are ineligible children waiting to be old enough to start as there are sufficient vacancies in the area.

- **Opening times and range of session lengths**

Eight settings failed to provide any opening times. Of the remaining 29 respondents 22 provide morning sessions and of those only 10 operated from Monday to Friday with the majority opting for a combination of days ranging from one to four mornings per week. The sessions generally range from 2 to 4 hours in length, starting between 8.30am and 9.30am and finishing between 11.00am and 1.00pm. Of the eight settings providing afternoon sessions, which tend to only open a few days of the week, six of them provided wraparound cover. Afternoon sessions run from 2 to 3.75 hours in length, starting between 11.30am and 12.45pm and finishing between 2.30pm and 3.15pm. Lunch time sessions are 1 hour length.

- **Age range of children**

Of the 978 children cared for by sessional day care providers 28% are 2 year olds, 53% are 3 year olds and 19% are 4 year old. The areas attracting the higher numbers of 2 year olds do so as they include Flying Start providers. In Areas CH4, CH7 and CH8 there are more four year olds which is attributed to the higher number of Early Education Providers in these areas.

- **Range of charges**

According to the SASS data, the hourly rate for morning sessions and afternoon sessions ranges from £1.00 to £10.00. These figures suggest that some settings have misinterpreted the guidelines for calculating an hourly rate and they have in

fact include their session rate. From local knowledge we know that the average session cost would be between £5.00 and £6.50. Lunch sessions are recorded as costing between £2.00 and £3.00. Only two settings reported a wraparound session fee at £11.00 in Treuddyn and the other £22.50 in Cilcain. Only seven settings offered sibling discounts ranging from 10% to 50% and one setting offered a twins discount. Only two settings had additional charges, one in Mold and the other in Holywell. They both charged for nappies, meals, transport, snacks and other (which was a registration fee).

6.3.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- 15 of our Sessional care providers are Flying Start providers and offer free childcare places for two year olds.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good with many of these children receiving support funded by the Local Authority.
- There are sufficient vacancies for all sessional care; although there are no sessional day care providers in Area 7 (LL18 – Gwaenysgor and Trelawnyd), there nearest cross border provision will be in Dyserth or Prestatyn.
- There is a range of charges but it tends to be cheaper per hour than other types of childcare, particularly for morning only or afternoon only sessions.
- Waiting lists are minimal and tend to hold details of those waiting to meet the age requirements.
- Some settings offer lunch club and wraparound services to meet the needs of working parents.

Weaknesses:

- The range of services offered is limited with the majority of settings offering only morning sessions.
- Only 10 settings operated a Monday to Friday service with the remainder open from 1 to 4 days per week
- There are no Cylch Meithrins operating in Areas 1, 6, 7 and 8 (CH4, LL12, LL18 and LL19).
- The majority of places are only filled on a part time basis and take up of afternoon playgroup places in particular is low.

6.4 Crèches

6.4.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016 with 60% of registered Crèches completing

- **Range of services provided**

Of the three settings that provided data via the SASS all recorded that they provided Other services only – a setting in Queensferry offered morning sessions throughout the year and only afternoon sessions during term time. The other two settings in Buckley and Shotton offered ‘Occasional childcare to support training or other parental activities’.

Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)

Due to the nature of crèche provision all attendance is ad-hoc with the Queensferry setting providing care for children when their parents utilise the adjoining leisure facilities and the other two settings running alongside training course as and when required. At the time of completing the SASS attendance was high at the Queensferry setting with 40 children attending however, the other two settings had a negligible attendance number, due probably to only one course running that week with a crèche requirement.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

No figures were provided by any of the settings for this section of the SASS, possibly due to the ad-hoc nature of bookings.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

There is no Welsh medium Crèche facility available in the county with the three settings who completed the SASS delivering their services as ‘English with some bilingual elements’.

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

All settings listed vacancies which would be expected due to the ad-hoc nature of most bookings. None of the settings held a waiting list.

- **Opening times and range of services**

The Queensferry crèche opens Monday to Friday all year from 9.30am to 12.00pm and during term time only, also opens Wednesdays and Fridays from 12.30pm to 2.30pm. The Shotton provision delivers a service term time on a Monday from 9.00am to 12.00pm and on a Friday from 12.00pm to 3.00pm.

- **Age range of children**

The Queensferry setting caters for 0 – 12 year olds whilst the Buckley and Shotton settings specifically target the 0 – 5 year olds.

- **Range of charges**

The Queensferry setting charges £3.20 per session, morning or afternoon. The Buckley and Shotton crèche services are free of charge as they receive Welsh Government funding.

6.4.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Welsh Government funded crèche has places to support parents attending training courses
- Collaboratively working with Leisure Services to provide on-site childcare for parents accessing the leisure facilities.

Weaknesses:

- No Crèche services located in Areas 1, 3, 5,6,7, or 8 (CH4, CH6, CH8, LL12, LL18a and LL19)
- A limited range of services especially during school holidays.
- No Welsh medium crèche facilities within the Authority.

6.5 Out of School Care

6.5.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016 with 79.6% of registered Out of School Childcare providers completing. The vast majority of settings in Flintshire are registered however the few unregistered settings failed to return their 'SASS questionnaires for unregistered settings' therefore the following analysis is only based on the registered providers who completed the SASS returns.

- **Range of services provided**

Of the 37 respondents to the SASS form, 24 offer After School care, 14 provide fee paying Breakfast Clubs and 10 provide Holiday Child Care. No provision completed the SASS for the Areas 6,7 and 8 (LL12, LL18 and LL19) however Family Information Service Flintshire (FISF) have details on their database for out of school provision in all of these areas. Three of the breakfast clubs run alongside the free breakfast club initiatives within schools (see Section 9) and another 17 breakfast clubs run independently within schools. Holiday Child Care is only recorded within Area 2, 3, 4 and 5 (CH5, CH6, CH7 and CH8).

- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

Almost three times more after school places are taken as compared with breakfast places. Apart from crèche services the Out of school care providers, by far, experience the greatest mix of part time and ad-hoc places being taken on a regular basis and across the Authority. 63% of places are filled on a part time with 21% accounting for full-time places and the remaining 16% are ad-hoc places.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

There are 80 children reported to have special educational needs and or a disability attending out of school care and they are spread across all areas of the County. The majority of these children have speech, language and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific learning / learning difficulties. A number of these children receive funding from the Local Authority for Extra Hands via the Out of School Childcare grant.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

None of the Welsh medium out of school care providers completed their SASS forms, however, FISF can confirm there are after school clubs in Flint, Mold, Holywell, Treuddyn and Picton operating within Welsh medium primary schools

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

According to the data, there are significantly more vacancies available in after school clubs compared to the before school clubs, across all the authority but specifically in Areas 1, 4 and 5 (CH4, CH7 and CH8). All counties have a similar number of vacancies available for Holiday Care places and this is confirmed by the data collected showing no waiting list recorded by any holiday care providers. Only one setting in Buckley reported having a waiting list for before and after school places during all three terms amounting to 20 children in all.

- **Opening times and range of session lengths**

Seven settings failed to provide any opening times. Of the remaining 30, eleven provided after school and before school care over a five day week. Another 18 provided after school care only from Monday to Friday and one setting in Mynydd Isa provided a Breakfast club only, over five days. Opening times for Breakfast clubs ranged from 7.30am starts to 9.00am finishes with the majority starting at 8.00am. 10 settings recorded providing breakfast club care before 8.00pm. After school clubs ran from between 3.00pm starts and 6.00pm finishes with the average setting opening for 2.5 hours. For holiday care the hours ranged between a start time of 7.30am and a finish time of 6.00pm. The majority of settings were open for all school holidays apart from Christmas with just four catering for the Christmas period.

- **Age range of children**

The majority of settings catered for the 3 to 11 year old range. One setting in Mancot only catered for 5 to 7 year olds with another setting also in Mancot caring for 7- to 11 year olds only.

Range of charges

Assuming the settings did not provide hourly rates, fees for before school sessions range from £2.50 to £4.00 whilst after school care is charging from £2.50 to £7.50 per session. The holiday clubs gave a mixture of hourly rate and session fee responses ranging from £2.00 per hour to £25.00 per full day. Eleven of the settings provided a sibling discount ranging

from 10% to 20% for second child and some sliding scales for fees depending on how many children attend. Only one setting in Connah's Quay had additional charges for nappies, transport, meals, snacks and other services (trips off site).

6.5.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- After school care is available in all areas of the local authority
- Every school in Flintshire has a Breakfast club, either, fee paying, free provision or a combination of both.
- Out of school provision provide the highest rate of childcare places on a part-time and ad-hoc basis thereby accommodating parents rotating shift patters.
- Children with special educational needs and or a disability are supported to enable them to access out of school childcare
- All the Welsh medium primary school within the Authority have After school clubs
- Only one setting in Buckley had a waiting list and all settings across the county had vacancies
- 10 settings provided breakfast club provision starting before 8.00am.
- All term time out of school care settings provided their service from Monday to Friday inclusive.
- The cost of out of school care, particularly holiday, is relatively cheap when compared with other childcare types and, in many case, sibling discounts are also available.

Weaknesses:

- In *Areas 1, 4 and 5 (CH4, CH7 and CH8)* a higher occurrence of vacancies may lead to sustainability concerns for some settings
- Only four holiday clubs cater for the Christmas holidays
- There are no out of school care settings providing a service for over 11 year olds.
- Out of school provision provides the highest rate of childcare places on a part-time and ad-hoc basis, however this could lead to sustainability concerns as setting struggle to manage fluctuating attendance rates

6.6 Open Access Play Provision

6.6.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from forms completed by excepted provision and registered during the week of 1st to 5th August 2016. One playscheme is registered with CSSIW and the remaining are excepted provision.

- **Range of services provided**

62 Open Access Play sessions were available at 59 locations during the Summer holidays operating in all areas across the Authority.

- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

All open access playscheme places are accessed on an ad-hoc basis and 4010 places were filled during the week starting 1st August 2016.

- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

During the Summer playschemes of summer 2016 thirty-four children participated in the buddy scheme where funding from Action for Children enabled them to participate in playscheme sessions across the whole Authority. The majority of these children had emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific learning difficulties such as ADHD.

- **Number of Welsh language places filled**

There are three Welsh medium playschemes operating in Mild, Flint and Carmel and they are funded / ran in conjunction with the Urdd.

- **Vacancies and Waiting lists**

Due to the ad-hoc nature of this type of provision there are no vacancies and no waiting lists.

- **Opening times and range of session lengths**

32 sessions operate from 10.30am to 12.30pm and 30 sessions run from 1.30pm to 3.30pm with all playschemes operating from Monday to Friday inclusive. 14 of the playschemes are ran over five weeks of the Summer holidays, 5 operate for four weeks and the all the remaining settings run for three weeks. No playschemes are available during the other school holidays.

- **Age range of children**

All excepted settings take children from 5 to 17 years of age, however the registered setting accept children from 5 to 11 years old.

Range of charges

All playschemes are free of charge as they are funded through Local Town and Community Councils and Action for Children.

6.6.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Playschemes are available in all 8 Areas of Flintshire with a mix of morning and afternoon sessions.
- Due to the ad-hoc nature of attendance there are no vacancies and no waiting lists therefore there are opportunities for all children to attend
- Strong, community links and support from local town and community councils; 2
- 1 year history of partnership working with the local authority;
- Well trained staff and experienced management and supervision;
- Continuous professional development for the seasonal team;
- Good links to referral partners for disability and vulnerable groups e.g. Action for Children and Children's Integrated Disability services.

- Community led identification of where local services should be delivered from. There is an annual requirement to record, monitor and evaluate the service resulting in the consistent improvement and development of them in compliance with the Children and Families Measure (2010) Wales.
-
- The local authority provides a core budget through the employment of a Play Development Officer who coordinates the summer programme and identifies other funding routes to provide for the delivery of the summer playscheme
- Continued and strong advocacy for the service

Weaknesses:

- Austerity has impacted on the funding available to deliver open access playschemes.
- Although very much in demand the service has had to be reduced in terms of the weeks and locations for summer playscheme. Budgets are under pressure across the board for both the local authority and funding partners, particularly local town and community councils. There is a reliance on external funding which in itself is under ever increasing pressure.
- Financial assistance and grants previously available i.e. Families First are now focused on those most in need, and not available to support universal services. NB For inclusive settings there needs to be a universal service to attach targeted services to.
- There are limited Welsh medium settings with all other settings listed as English only.

6.7 Nanny

6.7.1. Analysis of Supply of Childcare Provision

The following summary is based on data from forms completed by Nannies approved under the Voluntary Approval Scheme during July 2016. Of the five Nannies surveyed two responded giving a 40% response

- **Range of services provided** – One provided the full range of services and the other provided full day care only
- **Number and type of child places filled (full time, part time, ad-hoc)** – Insufficient data collected
- **Number of places filled by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability** – 1 place
- **Number of Welsh language places filled** – No Welsh provision responded
- **Vacancies and Waiting lists** – No vacancies and no waiting lists
- **Opening times, including the number offering flexible childcare hours** – 1 Nanny started before 8am term-time and school holidays the other Nanny worked after 6pm and offered overnight care
- **Range of session lengths** – Insufficient data collected
- **Age range of children** – Both Nannies covered all age ranges in the assessment
- **Range of charges** – 1 Nanny's hourly rate varied from £9.00 to £10.00 per hour and the other Nanny charged a daily rate of £71.95



6.7.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Only two Nannies from the Voluntary Approved Scheme completed and returned their Provider Questionnaires and as a result we are unable to provide meaningful analysis with such a small sample of data.

The Family Information Service Flintshire do not hold information on Nannies from the Voluntary Approved Scheme, however, parents enquiring after Nannies will be sent a current contact list of providers within the Local Authority and encouraged to contact those on the Voluntary Approved Scheme.

7. Understanding the Needs of Parents/ Carers

7.1 Overview of Consultation

Status	Number
Parent/ Carer in work (not expecting a baby)	128
Parent/ Carer in education or training (not expecting a baby)	4
Parent/ Carer seeking work (not expecting a baby)	2
Parent/ Carer seeking education or training (not expecting a baby)	0
Expecting or on maternity/ paternity leave with <u>first</u> child	6
Adopting <u>first</u> child	1
Parent/ Carer expecting or on maternity/ paternity leave with <u>additional children</u>	18
Adopting or on adoption leave with <u>additional children</u>	0
Parent/ Carer not in work	10

Parent/ Carer not in education or training	0
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Respondents by annual household income

Average Annual Household Income	Number
£0-£10,000	7
£10,001-£20,000	14
£20,001-£30,000	11
£30,001-£40,000	20
£40,001-£50,000	18
£50,001-£60,000	11
£60,001-£70,000	13
£70,000+ per annum	4
<u>Prefer not to say</u>	16

Respondents by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number
White	112
Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Groups	0
Asian/ Asian British	0
Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	0
Other Ethnic Group	0

Language of Respondents (primary language spoken at home)

Language	Number
Welsh only	1
English only	65
Bilingual	11
Other languages	1

Respondents' children by age group

Age	Number
Under 12 months	22
12-18 months	20
19-23 months	20
2 years	36
3 years	30
4 years	29
5-7 years	47
8-11 years	42
12-14 years	14
15-17 years	12

Respondents with children who have special educational needs or disability

Special Educational Needs/ Disability	Number
Speech and language	31
Specific learning (dyslexia)	31
Hearing difficulties	29
Learning difficulties	29
Visual difficulties	26
Emotional and behavioural difficulties	29
Physical	30

Medical condition	39
Other (specify)	35

7.2. Current Use of Childcare

7.2.1. Analysis of Current Use of Childcare Provision

With a response rate of 171 parents / carers and obvious lack of understanding of some questions asked, resulting in respondents not answering some sections, means that the information that can be obtained from this analysis is limited and will not necessarily be representative of the entire childcare market in Flintshire

- **Range of services being used**

There were more responses from Area 4 (CH7) than any other area of Flintshire. The most popular types of childcare being used across the county during term time was day care nurseries followed by after school clubs, breakfast clubs and then childminders. There were very few other respondents using sessional care, including Flying Start and Early Years Education places. During the school holidays day care nurseries were again the most popular choice followed by childminders and then holiday clubs. Only six parents responded that they were using playschemes. The responses showed a preference for morning sessions in all types of childcare setting.

- **Number and type of child places used (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

All types of childcare provision across the county reported the majority of their childcare places being taken on a part-time basis. Of all the parents / carers surveyed only 18 children took full-time places with majority of them in full day care settings. Just three parents used friends and family for full-time childcare. Those children accounting for part-time places took significantly more spaces, especially those of school age. Only four children were reported to use childcare on an ad-hoc basis

- **Number of places required for children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

25 of respondents had a child with a disability or additional learning and of those at least eight were using childcare places. Parents were asked why they did not use childcare and encouragingly nobody replied under the question 'There is no childcare that can cater for my child's/children'.

- **Number of places used by language category**

During term time 19% of respondents used Welsh medium childcare and the majority of these used after school and breakfast club places. 45% of respondents used English provision with the remaining 36% accessing bilingual provision. During school holidays only 7% of respondents used Welsh medium childcare and these were all in playschemes. Of the remaining of respondents almost 50% accessed bilingual provisions and 43% used English only provision.

- **Age range of children using/ not using childcare**

Out of all the surveys there were 7 children aged 15 – 17 years and none of these accessed any type of childcare. Also, only seven children under 12 months used childcare and these were all with childminders or full day care provision. The age range of children using childminders was fairly evenly spread. All the children attending full day care ranged between under 12 months to 4 years with the vast majority being 2 or 3 years. There was very low number of respondents who reported using sessional care with most being 2 or 3 years. Of the children not taking up childcare the significant majority were 4 to 11 year old. Only one 3 year old did not access childcare and this could be attributed to the excellent take up of Early Years Education places within the authority.

- **Reasons for using/ not using childcare**

The main reason given for using childcare was for employment. 7 respondents chose 'Social or learning benefits for my child/children' as deciding factor for using childcare. 7% of the respondents chose to use childcare in order to take advantage of entitlements through Early Years Education provision or Flying Start settings. By far the most popular reason for not using childcare was 'My partner/family/friends look after my children'. And the next popular response was that 'Childcare is too expensive' across all areas of the county. Other popular reasons given for not using childcare included 'My children are old enough to look after themselves' and one parent is a stay at home parent. In relation to childcare not being available at the times that I need almost 6% said childcare was not available before 8am and a similar number were

unable to find childcare after 6.00pm. Two respondents said there was no overnight care available and three were unable to find suitable weekend childcare provision.

- **Accessibility/ availability and affordability of childcare provision**

The main reason given in relation to improvements for childcare provision was to make it more affordable both during term time and school holidays. The availability of childcare before 8.00am and after 6.00pm, throughout the year, was another very common response especially in Area 4 (CH7). 26 respondents from all areas reported the need for more before school, 7.30am to 9.00am provision. 20 respondents from across the authority felt a need for more after school provision to be available up until 6pm. Availability of Welsh medium childcare was mainly recorded as an issue in Buckley and Mold both term time and during school holidays. 10 respondents chose availability of bilingual childcare and these were geographically spread across the county. Also, highlighted was the need for more full day care places during the hours of 8am to 6pm with 10% of respondents especially wanting this provision during school holidays.

- **Parental views on the childcare on offer**

Only two parents were not satisfied with the quality of their childcare during term time however, twelve were not satisfied with the quality of their school holiday provision. 55% of respondents agreed that there was a good choice of childcare available however, only 36% felt there was childcare available at the time required. Only 72% of respondents felt childcare was well located. 67% disagreed that there was no childcare available for the age of their child. 85% of respondents agreed childcare met their child's needs. 29% of respondents would like their child/children to attend more registered childcare (increase in hours). 79% believe childcare is too expensive. 36% would prefer to use family/friends for childcare. 14% had problems with childcare arrangements that breakdown or are unreliable. Only 17% said lack of childcare was a barrier to them accessing employments or training. 63% knew where to find information about childcare and just a few percent less knew where to find information about financial assistance for childcare. 30% of respondents believed there was enough Welsh medium childcare and 71% believe there is enough childcare available in the language of their choice. Parental views on the childcare currently available tends to be consistent across all of Flintshire with no obvious issues relating to one geographical area.

7.2.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Of those parents with a child/children with a disability or additional learning need, all who wished to use childcare, were able to access a suitable setting to meet the needs of their child.
- Childcare is well located and meets the needs of the majority of parents.
- Childcare is generally reliable.
- The majority of respondents believed childcare provision is of good quality, particularly during term time.

Weaknesses:

- The small sample of responses to the parental survey makes it difficult to provide any meaningful analysis
- 36% of the respondents agree that childcare is not available at the times they require and this was stated as a reason for not using childcare. Respondents would like more childcare to be available before 8am (especially breakfast clubs) and after pm and for longer hours during the school holidays. A very small minority required overnight care or weekend care.
- Just less than half of the respondents felt that the choice of childcare available was limited.
- 'Childcare is too expensive' was one of the most popular reasons for parents not using childcare and 79% of those responding to improvements required to childcare agreed.
- A third of respondents do not know where to go to access childcare information and find information about financial assistance for childcare.
- There is not adequate Welsh medium provision available.

7.3. Demand for Childcare Provision

7.3.1. Analysis of Demand for Childcare Provision

With a response rate of 171 parents / carers and obvious lack of understanding of some questions asked, resulting in respondents not answering some sections, means that the information that can be obtained from this analysis is limited and will not necessarily be representative of the entire childcare market in Flintshire

- **Range of services required**

74 respondents stated that they had a future demand for childcare places. Across the whole authority the future requirements are for places as follows: 16 Childminders, 30 Full Day Care, 8 Sessional Day Care, 1 Creches, 13 Out of School Care and 6 Open Access Play. The majority of respondents requiring a childminder or Full Day Care wanted Full Day provision; those requesting Sessional Day Care needed morning sessions and those needing Out of School Care wanted an even split of before and after school provision.

- **Number and type of child places required (full time, part time, ad-hoc)**

It appeared that only 24 future places were requested as unfortunately parents failed to complete the survey correctly. The majority only provided the number of places needed and did not specifying what type of childcare and whether the place would be full time, part-time or ad-hoc

- **Number of places required by children who have special educational needs or who require specialist care due to a disability**

Only one child place was required for a child with a disability or additional learning need

- **Number of places required by language category**

Of the 74 respondents requiring additional childcare places no preference was made for Welsh medium provision of any type and only one parent requested an after school club and holiday club place through the medium of another language (not specified). 32 (43%) requested English provision and 40 (54%) requested Welsh & English Medium provision

- **Childcare times, including the number requiring flexible childcare hours and range of session lengths**

The vast majority of childcare places were required from 8am to 6pm. There was no requirement for childcare after 6pm, at the weekend or overnight. A small number requested before and after school hours

- **Age range of children for whom childcare is required**

Once again the parents / carers did not complete this section correctly so only a small sample of parents completed the age range. A few indicated the age of their child with the majority being under twelve months and the remainder pre-school age.

- **Important factors when intending to use childcare**

When choosing childcare 66% of the respondents consider affordability to be an important factor. Other factors taken into consideration by parents are 'Good quality childcare' (59%), 'Close to home' (39%), 'After school/During holidays' (39%), 'Play opportunities' (32%), 'Close to child's school' (30%), 'Flexible hours/Ad-hoc' (24%), 'Flexible payment' (22%), 'Choice of different childcare types' (16%), 'Welsh and English medium' (16%), 'Social opportunities' (16%), 'Welsh medium' (15%), 'Transport/pick up' (15%) and 'Language choice' (13%). Only 3 parents (4%) considered 'Provision for additional learning needs / disability' to be an important factor in their childcare choice.

7.3.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Taking into account the small sample of parents who completed the survey and the inconsistent way in which they have answered some of the questions, it is difficult to draw any meaningful analysis from the data collected. The majority of parents appear to require either full day care or childminder places with a smaller number requiring Sessional Day Care places or Out of School places. Although, some of the respondents currently using childcare stated that they required childcare at different times of day, this did not seem to be reflected in their future requirements for childcare with no requests for early or late provision times or weekend and overnight provision. There was no requirement for Welsh medium provision.

7.4. Barriers to Childcare Provision

7.4.1. Accessibility of Childcare Provision

- *The majority of stakeholders were of the opinion that the quality, range, availability, location and suitability of childcare provision in Flintshire is mostly good and in some cases it is excellent. Good practice and collaborative working is recognised across the authority.*
- *Affordability and flexibility of childcare provision is generally considered satisfactory, although both are referred to by parents and employers as barriers to taking up childcare.*
- *PACEY Cymru believe that Flintshire County Council recognises the importance of childminders in supporting the delivery of sufficient, accessible and quality childcare services for families across the county, including providing unsocial hours for working parents.*
- *The overall opinion is that the provision of Welsh medium childcare provision is satisfactory at best.*
- *In a recent survey conducted across Wales by Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club, 35% of respondents wished to access more holiday care, 30% claimed that suitable holiday care was not available and 17% identified cost as a barrier to them accessing childcare.*
- *All stakeholders highlighted the importance of continued funding to sustain existing childcare provision and to create new provision where required.*
- *Across Wales the occupancy rates of full day nurseries has dropped from 69% in 2015 to 67% in 2016 and sustainability is an issue with rising costs and limited confidence in running a business.*
- *41% of the local employers stated that they have recruitment and retention issues due to childcare and these employers both employed shift workers and expected staff to work weekends.*

7.4.2. Barriers experienced by specific target groups

(i) Working Parents

- A small number of childcare settings are not registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) so parents are unable to access the childcare element of the working tax credits or use childcare voucher schemes (soon to be replaced with the national Tax Free Childcare scheme). Unregistered settings therefore need sufficient training and support to enable them to register with CSSIW.
- This assessment has highlighted the lack of flexibility and affordability of childcare as the main barriers experienced by working parents, particularly for those working atypical hours such as shift workers and those that work at weekends or overnight
- Working parents requiring full day care provision are unable to access any provision through the medium of Welsh
- Affordability of childcare is a key concern for those parents working and those considering a return to work or education. The Welsh Government's childcare Offer for 3 & 4 year olds will assist many of these working families

(ii) Parents seeking work or training opportunities

- Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) provide funding for childcare to support parents/guardians who are seeking work or training opportunities, when childcare is the main barrier.

(iii) Unemployed Households

- No stakeholders referred to this as a barrier as the majority of unemployed households do not use childcare, apart from those entitled to Flying Start childcare or funded Early Years Education.

(iv) Low income families

- Affordability is a barrier for low income families and some stakeholders welcomed Flintshire's continued commitment to providing Assisted Places funding
- The administrative process can sometimes delay or exclude some low income families from applying for funding or tax credits. Support with completing these applications should be available to all.

(v) Lone parent families

- No stake holders referred to this as a barrier to accessing childcare but we could assume that the majority of lone parents would experience the same barriers as low income families, outlined above.

(vi) Families from ethnic minority backgrounds

- The administrative process could delay or exclude some families from ethnic minority backgrounds from applying for funding or tax credits. Support with completing these applications should be available to all.

(vii) Families with children who have special educational needs, or a disability

This was not mentioned by any stakeholders as a barrier as provision for children with special educational needs or a disability is very good in Flintshire. Financial support is available via Extra Hands grants to employ additional staff to integrate these children within the setting.

8. Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase) and Flying Start Provision

8.1. Analysis of Early Years Part Time Education (Foundation Phase)

The following summary is based on data from SASS forms completed by Early Years Part Time Education providers during the week of 1st to 5th August 2016.

- **Number of childcare providers (broken down under Full Day Care/ Nursery, Sessional Day Care, Childminder) funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education**

Flintshire currently has 60 childcare providers funded to provide Early Years education; of these 22 are registered as full day care and 38 are registered as sessional care. We don't currently use childminders to deliver Early Years Education in Flintshire. The Early Years Education Providers are spread throughout all areas of Flintshire. We have 7 providers that operate through the medium of Welsh in Holywell, Picton, Treuddyn, Mold, Flint, Garden City and Shotton.

- **Number of schools funded to provide Early Years Part Time Education**

There are currently 21 maintained settings in LA schools with nursery classes delivering Early Years Education. There are no Welsh medium schools running maintained provision, however, four schools provide Early Education on site through non-maintained provision.

- **Attendance profile of children attending provision (childcare providers and schools)**

The overall take up of places is very good with all children who apply for a place being accommodated. The majority of places are taken in non-maintained settings.

- **Weekly attendance profile of children attending provision funded by childcare providers**

The number of children attending Early Years Education provision is very similar midweek but it is generally lower on a Monday and even lower on a Friday. These start and end of week figures could be attributed to providers operating over a shorter week.

- **Number of childcare places filled, required and available**

In Summer 2016 there were 1105 Early Years Education places available in Flintshire; 985 of these places are in childcare settings, approximately 120 are in LA schools. Take up of these places range from around 45% in the Autumn term to 77% in the Summer term when there are the highest number of eligible children. Take up of places is monitored by geographical area on a termly basis and it has been consistent for a number of years. Additional childcare settings are only approved to provide Early

Years Education when a need has been highlighted in a specific geographical area to ensure there are sufficient spaces, whilst keeping surplus places to a minimum to ensure sustainability of settings and schools.

- **Number of parents not claiming their free entitlement and reasoning**

Just over 5% of respondents to the survey stated they were not claiming their free entitlement to Early Years Education. The main reason given for this was that their child was already in full time education, whilst one parent did not know about the entitlement and two others had children who were not old enough yet to attend.

- **Childcare required by parents to enable them to claim their full entitlement**

Only three parents noted they had additional childcare requirements to enable them to claim their full entitlement. One parent wanted after school provision and two others wanted breakfast club. We are aware that some families are unable to access provision in LA nursery classes unless there is a wraparound provision on site, as they require full day care for longer hours. A number of our childcare providers have extended their hours and some are in the process of registering new after school provision in order to meet this need.

8.2 Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- In Flintshire there is a good range of Early Years Education providers so parents can choose the type that best suits their needs.
- Flintshire has cross border arrangements in place with all four bordering neighbouring authorities (in England and Wales) so parents can access provision across border if this more convenient.
- Provision with childcare providers is very flexible; two would be the minimum number of sessions that must be taken up in order to claim funding and this number is able to increase to meet parental work patterns and the days of the week taken can change to accommodate shift work.
- Take up of Early Years Education places is very good.
- The vast majority of parents had no requirements for additional support to take up their full entitlement

Weaknesses:

- There is no flexibility in LA schools where children must attend for either five morning or five afternoon sessions.
- There is no maintained Early Years Education provision within Welsh primary schools.

8.3. Analysis of Flying Start Provision

The following summary is based on data from SASS forms completed by Flying Start providers during the week of 1st to 5th August 2016. The programme areas include Higher Shotton, Aston, Sealand, Connah's Quay's Central ward, Bryn Gwalia in Mold, Flint, Holywell's Central ward, Greenfield, Queensferry, Mancot and Connah's Quay's Goflytyn ward.

- **Number of childcare providers (broken down under Full Day Care/ Nursery, Sessional Day Care, Childminder) funded to provide Flying Start, including Flying Start only provision**

Flintshire does not have any Flying Start only provision. There are currently 42 childcare providers funded to provide Flying Start across in the designated areas. These providers include 14 childminder settings, 12 Day Nurseries, 1 Crèche and 15 Playgroups. . Four of these setting are Welsh medium provisions and are located in Mold, Flint, Holywell and Garden City. Of these 42 Flying Start providers 40 successfully completed the SASS on-line

- **Weekly attendance profile of children attending Flying Start provision**

The majority of full day care providers and the one crèche operated over five days, whilst the sessional day care providers offered a combination of four to five sessions a week. Of the 14 childminders, one childminder in Sealand chose to provide Flying Start provision over five days with the others delivering the service over a two to four day week.

- **Number of places filled and required**

Morning places are more popular than afternoon places across the whole Authority and in all the different types of provision. The SASS data implies that there are currently only vacancies available in five of the settings, however this is contradicted in the data as only two settings indicating they have a waiting list for Flying start places and they are in Connah's Quay and Holywell. Our Flying Start team can confirm that some Flying Start children are on a waiting list with a provider (for example at Flint) because the families will only accept that provider, despite there being vacancies with other approved providers elsewhere.. Flying Start in Flintshire always ask parents for two choices for Flying Start places and they are usually able to offer a place to everyone, although on some occasions they are asked to make a third choice.

- **Number of parents living in a Flying Start area, who are accessing free childcare**

Take up of places, as per the parental survey, is only 69%, however the reasons given for not accessing free childcare suggests that most of these children are not actually eligible.(Only respondent living in the Flying Start area did not know about the entitlement.) According to data supplied to Welsh Government, the actual take up of places in 2015 / 2016 was 82%. From their own data, Flintshire Flying Start have calculated take up as 76% over the last five terms.

- **Number of parents not accessing free childcare and reasoning**

Of the sample of parents surveyed 13 said they did not use Flying Start provision. The main reason given for not accessing free childcare is that they don't know about the entitlement, however, all bar one of these parents lived outside of the Flying Start area. Locally the main reasons for not accessing free childcare have been recorded as the 'child already attending a non Flying Start provider' or 'families who are reluctant to engage with entitlement'.

8.4. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- Take up of Flying Start places is very good and places are usually taken up on a full time basis following a settling in period.
- Parental choice is wide as settings are geographically spaced out well across Flying Start areas, apart from in Garden City and Bagillt.
- Flintshire offer Flying Start provision in Full Day Care, Sessional Day Care and Childminder settings, giving parents a good variety of provision.
- Some settings offer flexibility with the delivery of hours and deliver the 12.5 hours over fewer days.
- From local data we know that there are vacancies available in most settings and virtually no waiting lists.
- Parental awareness of this entitlement is high within the chosen post coded areas for Flying Start

Weaknesses:

- Welsh medium provision is only available in Mold, Flint, Holywell and Garden City.
- Those Flying Start provisions based in Sessional Day Care settings does not meet the needs of working parents.
- Due to the post coded eligibility criteria for Flying Start places some parents are aggrieved that they are unable to access the entitlement

9 Free Breakfast Club Provision

9.1. Analysis of Free Breakfast Club Provision

Area	Name of Schools	Places Available
Area 1	PENYFFORDD C.P.	43
	PENTROBIN AIDED SCHOOL	34
	SALTNEY (ST.ANTHONY'S R.C.)	48
	SALTNEY FERRY C.P.	26
	SALTNEY WOOD MEMORIAL C.P.	38
	BROUGHTON C.P.	151
	AREA 1 Total	340
Area 2	CONNAH'S QUAY (BRYN DEVA CP.)	71
	CONNAH'S QUAY (GOLFTYN CP.)	90
	EWLOE GREEN C.P.	Opening fee paying Breakfast Club April 2017
	QUEENSFERRY C.P.	57
	SANDYCROFT C.P.	77
	SEALAND C.P.	48
	SHOTTON (ST. ETHELWOLD'S V.P.)	41
	SHOTTON (VEN. EDWARD MORGAN R.C.)	77
	SHOTTON (TY FYNNON - WELL HOUSE C.P.)	38
AREA 2 Total	499	
Area 3	FLINT (CORNIST CP)	82
	FLINT (YSGOL CROES ATTI)	84
	FLINT GWYNEDD C.P.	136
	FLINT R.C. (ST.MARY'S)	25
	BAGILLT (YSGOL GLAN ABER C.P.)	30
	BAGILLT (MERLLYN C.P.)	69
AREA 3 Total	426	

Area 4	BUCKLEY (WESTWOOD C.P.)	25
	CAERWYS V.P.(YSGOL YR ESGOB)	28
	LIXWM C.P.	14
	CILCAIN (YSGOL Y FOEL C.P.)	15
	TREUDDYN (YSGOL PARC Y LLAN)	44
	GWERNAFFIELD C.P. (YSGOL Y WAEN)	25
	MOLD (YSGOL GLANRAFON CP)	59
	MOLD (BRYN GWALIA C.P.)	72
	MOLD (ST. DAVIDS R.C.)	24
	LEESWOOD C.P.	57
	RHOESMOR (RHOS HELYG C.P.)	48
	NERCWYS V.P.	27
	NORTHOP C.P. (YSGOL OWEN JONES)	28
	NORTHOP HALL C.P.	28
	SYCHDYN C.P.	59
	AREA 4 Total	553
Area 5	GREENFIELD (MAES GLAS)	79
	TRELOGAN C.P.	22
	WHITFORD V.P.	42
	GWESPYR PICTON (YSGOL MORNANT)	18
	FFYNNONGROEW (YSGOL BRYN GARTH)	60
	BRYNFORD C.P.	23
	HOLYWELL RC.(ST.WINEFRIDES R.C.)	35
	HOLYWELL (MAES Y FELIN)	38

	MOSTYN (BRYN PENNANT)	63
	AREA 5 Total	380
Area 6	HOPE C.P.	58
Area 6	ABERMORDDU CP	45
	AREA 6 Total	103
Area 7		
	AREA 7 Total	0
Area 8	GRONANT C.P.	14
	AREA 8 Total	14
	TOTAL	2,314

Out of the 64 Primary Schools in Flintshire 47 operate the Free Breakfast club provision. Of those 47, three extend their breakfast club hours by providing a fee paying session beforehand. The remaining 17 schools have all chosen to provide before school provision which is delivered by fee paying Breakfast Clubs.

10. Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare

10.1. Analysis of Working Tax Credit/ Universal Credit and Employer Supported Childcare/ Tax Free Childcare

118 respondents answered the question relating to Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit on the parental survey and 116 respondents answered the question relating to Employer Supported Schemes. The analysis below includes both actual numbers and percentages.

- **Number of respondents claiming per childcare provision and number of children attending**

Only 18 respondents stated that they were claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit and this equates to only 15% of those that answered this question on the parental survey. There was a total of 30 children for whom tax credits were being claimed, of these 3 were cared for by childminders (10%), 14 were attending nursery provision (47%), 1 was attending sessional care (3%), 7 in After school club (23%), 3 in Breakfast club (10%) and 1 attending a holiday playscheme (3%). 39 respondents (33% of overall respondents for this question) stated they were claiming tax free childcare through an Employer Supported Scheme for a total of 69 children; of these 12 were cared for by childminders (17%), 36 were attending nurseries (52%), 2 attending sessional care provisions (3%), 12 after school clubs (17%), 6 breakfast clubs (9%) and 2 holiday playschemes (3%).

- **Number of respondents intending to claim in future and childcare requirements**

Only 16 of the 116 respondents intend to claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; this equates to 14% and 25 are unsure if they will claim in the future (21%). Those who intend to claim require a mixture of full day nursery and after school childcare. 33 of the 116 respondents (26%) intend to claim tax free childcare through an Employer Supported Scheme in the future and 27 (23%) are unsure if they will claim. Of those intending to use such a scheme just over half intend to use childminders or nursery provision and the other half would be using out of school provision.

- **Number of respondents not claiming and reasoning**

90 of the 118 respondents (76%) stated that they were not claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit. The main reasons for not claiming were that they know that they are not eligible (41%), they do not know about these forms of tax credit (12%) and they were unsure whether they were eligible (6%). A minority of applicants gave other reasons for not claiming, including choosing not to (3%) or finding the whole process too complicated (2%) and using

unregistered childcare (e.g. Nannies) (2%) or that their circumstances changed too often to allow them to claim easily (2%). 78 of the 116 respondents (67%) were not claiming tax free childcare through their Employer Supported Scheme. The main reasons for not claiming were that they do not know about these Employer Supported Schemes (20%), they are not whether they are eligible (15%) and they know that they are not eligible (12%). A minority of respondents gave other reasons for not claiming, including not having enough time to claim (4%), not paying for the childcare they use (4%) or using unregistered childcare (3%).

10.2. Summary of key strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

- The availability of tax free childcare reduces the barrier for those wishing to return to work or enter employment

Weaknesses:

- According to the results of this parental survey less than a fifth of parents/guardians are claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit, whilst only a third are claiming from their Employer Supported Schemes.
- A significant proportion of those not claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit or using their Employer Supported Scheme were not eligible or they were not available.
- From all respondents to questions relating to these tax free childcare schemes between 6% and 15% were not aware of the schemes or did not know if they were eligible.

11. Sustainability

Support for providers

Start-up grants are currently available for out of school childcare clubs through the Welsh Government Out of School Childcare Grant; the Childcare Development Officer is also funded through this grant to provide business support and to assist them with the registration process. Unfortunately, the terms and conditions of this grant do not allow for it to be used for pre-school childcare. Full day care, sessional day care and childminders receive support from the Flintshire childcare grant. This support is provided through an arrangement with Wales PPA to provide a Development Worker who supports all Wales PPA settings and they also are able to support unregistered settings to complete their registration with CSSIW. Childminders are supported by PACEY Cymru with the Childcare Development Officer working closely with PACEY Cymru's North Wales Quality and Training Officer to deliver a tailored package for registered childminders and those going through the registration process. Childminders are also entitled to financial support equating to almost £700 in total; this is made up of the cost of the CYPOP5 course, a PACEY business start-up pack including public liability insurance and a grant of £300 towards health and safety equipment.

Sustainability is becoming more of an issue for childcare settings with increases in the minimum wage, rent costs, utilities and business rates. Sustainability grants are available for all childcare settings; however, they have to be able to evidence how they will use this funding to enable them to become sustainable in the future. Over the past 3 years, an average of twelve settings per year have received a sustainability grant and the majority of these have been playgroup settings.

There is a fair amount of mandatory training that must be completed by childcare workers on a regular basis as well as Continuous Professional Development training; although these courses are often facilitated by the Local Authority, they are not usually funded and this places an additional burden on settings. Providing appropriate support for children with Special Educational Needs or a disability is another issue as, although funding is provided to settings to provide additional support, this is restricted to 2 hours per session for a maximum of 5 sessions a week, so there are generally further costs incurred by the setting.

Support for parents / carers

There is financial support available to parents to assist with the cost of childcare such as the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and tax free childcare through an Employer Supported Scheme. This year also sees the roll out of the universal offer of tax free childcare. Parents will be able to set up an online account where they can bank payments for childcare. For each £8 a parent pays in, the Government will add an additional £2 up to a maximum of £2,000 per year per child. Families of disabled

children receive help with their childcare costs to a maximum of £4,000 per year. Flintshire has been chosen as an early implementer of the Childcare offer which offers working parents of 3 and 4 year olds free childcare on top of the Early Entitlement - to provide a total of 30 hours a week of free early education and childcare, for 48 weeks of the year.

Assisted places schemes are funded through the Flintshire Childcare grant and the Welsh Government Out of School Childcare grant. These grants are available to enable low income families to access free childcare. A limited number of grants are also available for settings to provide one to one support for children with additional needs to access suitable childcare provision across the county. The Out of School Childcare grant jointly funds a Childcare Brokerage Officer post with Wrexham County Borough Council and this officer is able to support families, with children with an additional need, to access childcare provision.

CSSIW

CSSIW de-registration is not a major issue in Flintshire; there is a fairly high turnover of childminders but this is mainly due to the nature of the job rather than sustainability issues. The main reason for the closure of other childcare settings within Flintshire has been a lack of demand for places.

12. Cross Border

Within Flintshire there are a number examples of collaboratively working across borders with neighbouring counties. Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) and Flintshire County Council (FCC) jointly fund a Childcare Brokerage officer post which supports parents / carers of children with a disability to access suitable childcare and play provision. Another cross border initiative is the Aspire project which funds a Development officer to support young parents (expectant young parents from 29 weeks pregnant) aged 14 to 25 years old across Flintshire and Wrexham.

The Childcare Development Officer attends quarterly meetings for 'All Wales Area Representatives of EYDCPs' (AWARE) which is attended by counterparts from across all local authorities in Wales. This group promote sharing of information, best practice and a link to Welsh Government who regular are represented at these meetings.

During 2016- 2017 the Childcare Development Officer has joined a training consortium across North Wales. This consortium, including Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey have provided training opportunities and preregistration support sessions for childminders wishing to register in their respective local authority. This pooling of training resources has enable Flintshire to provide four opportunities, during the year, for potential childminders to access the required training course to become registered. On two occasions places on these courses have been made available for candidates to attend from Wrexham and Denbighshire

We consulted with colleagues in neighbouring local authorities in relation to any contact that they have had with Flintshire residents accessing childcare within their local authority or making enquiries and the responses are as follows:

- Wrexham Family Information Service had recorded two enquiries from parents seeking childcare In Flintshire.
- Denbighshire Family Information Service – no response
- West Cheshire and Chester Family Information Service had no cross border enquiries regarding childcare for this period.
- Flintshire Family Information Service have received the following enquiries 1. A social worker from Liverpool supporting a family moving to Flintshire and looking for mirroring services. 2. A grandmother from Kent calling on behalf of her pregnant daughter who is moving to Flintshire and seeking family support service 3. Various calls relating to parents accessing grants and Early Years Education places from neighbouring local authorities.

Flintshire County Council has cross border arrangements in place for Early Years Education with all three neighbouring authorities, in Wales and England.

The number of Flintshire children that we are aware of that accessed their early Years Education outside of the local authority during the Summer term 2016 was as follows:

Local Authority	Number of Flintshire Children
Wrexham	3
Denbighshire	3
Cheshire West and Chester	0

The breakdown of children from outside the Local Authority that accessed their Early Years Education within Flintshire during the summer term 2016 was as follows:

Local Authority	Number of children attending Flintshire Early Years Education settings
Wrexham	12
Denbighshire	1
Cheshire West and Chester	3

The parental survey didn't provide sufficient information in relation to cross border arrangements for childcare as only two respondents stated that they were using childcare outside of the Local Authority.

The information above regarding the cross border use of Early Years Education provision and levels of enquiries suggests that the vast majority of Flintshire residents are able to access suitable childcare or Early Years Education provision within the local authority.

13. Workforce Development

The following summary is based on data from the SASS forms completed on-line during July and August 2016. The CWLWM Childcare and Early Years Workforce Survey 2016, from a survey sample of 116, concluded that 25% of responses had no qualifications in childcare or playwork.

- According to the SASS data, just over 5% of childminders have unqualified staff. The minimum requirement for qualifications for a registered childminder is the CYPOP5 course, so this 5% of unqualified childminder staff will be accounted for by Assistants who are currently not required to be qualified to any level. 49% of childminders have a Level 3 qualification and 26% are qualified to Level 4 or higher. 25% of childminders are currently working towards a higher qualification.
- Less than 0.03% of the childcare workers within full day care settings are unqualified with 25% of these currently working towards a Level 3 qualification. 13% of the full day care workforce are qualified to level 2, 62% are qualified to level 3 and 18% are qualified to level 4 or higher. 23% of childcare workers in full day care are working towards a higher level qualification.
- 7% of childcare workers in sessional day care settings are unqualified and 11% of these are currently working towards a level 3 qualification. 9% of sessional care workers are qualified to level 2. 60% are qualified to level 3 and 13% are qualified to level 4 or higher. 22% of childcare workers are currently working towards a higher qualification.
- Only 5% of crèche workers are unqualified. 16% have a level 2 qualification whilst 72% have a level 3 qualification. However, only 7% are qualified to level 4 or higher.
- Only 3% of workers in out of school clubs are unqualified according to the SASS data and 43% of these are working towards a level 3. 16% are qualified to level 2, 52% are qualified to levels and 11% are qualified to level 4 or higher. 31 out of school childcare workers (13%) are currently working towards a higher level.
- Of the two nannies to complete the survey only one had a relevant level 3 qualification and neither were completing any further training at the time of the survey.

- The only registered open access play provision in Flintshire has two registered persons in charge and both have level 3 qualifications and one is working towards a level 5 qualification in playwork. CSSIW's inspection have, to date, allowed the setting to operate outside of the normal qualified staffing ratios for a registered childcare setting due to the seasonal nature of the work (the setting is only open for five weeks a year during the Summer holidays. The play team deliver a comprehensive training programme for a week leading up to the start of the summer holidays in order to cover mandatory training requirements and other areas of continuous professional development.
- The most popular response in relation to additional training was manual handling, closely followed by Foundation phase modules, then Flying Start training, Fire Awareness and First Aid at Work. The majority of other training related to additional / medical needs or health and safety.
- There are approximately 150 childcare workers who will require Basic Paediatric First Aid training in 2017 as their existing certificates will expire during the next 12 months. For those needing a Food Hygiene course the requirement is 130 training places. The figure for Child Protection training is 130 childcare workers. Looking forward to 2018 the requirement for places on First Aid and Food Safety remain similar to those in 2017, however, almost double the amount of places will be required for Child Protection training places.
- Although mandatory training is no longer directly funded by the Local Authority, a subsidised training schedule is available to all childcare workers across Flintshire to ensure that settings are meeting these statutory required training modules. There are also a number of non-mandatory training courses that are being offered free of charge to enable childcare workers to continue their professional development

14. Results of Consultation with Stakeholders (as outlined in section 2)

The key findings from consultation undertaken with key stakeholders are summarised below:

Umbrella/ Partner Organisations

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club (CPCKC) were unable to provide a response specific to Flintshire but general comments were:

- Continued funding is required to sustain current out of school childcare provision and to create new provision, where required
- In a recent survey conducted across Wales, 35% of respondents wished to access more holiday care, 30% claimed that suitable holiday childcare was not available and 17% identified cost as a barrier to them accessing childcare.
- Sufficient training should be provided to enable settings to register with CSSIW so that parents can access tax credits.
- Assisted places are required to enable low income families to access childcare provision.
- 1:1 support is essential to support children with a disability and to integrate them within the childcare settings.
- A national marketing campaign is needed to promote childcare and inform parents of the benefits.

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)

- Quality, range, availability, location and suitability of childcare in Flintshire is good; affordability and flexibility is satisfactory but there is no Welsh provision within the Authority.
- Across Wales, occupancy rates have dropped from 69% in 2015 to 67% in 2016 and sustainability is an issue with rising costs and limited confidence in business.
- The Welsh Government free early years and childcare offer for 3 & 4 year olds would assist working families and low income families.

Mudiad Meithrin

- There are only 7 Cylch Meithrin in Flintshire (Holywell, Mold, Flint, Treuddyn, Picton, Shotton and Garden City at present, with 12 Ti a Fi sessions per week and 1 mobile Ti a Fi am dro session per week in different areas of Flintshire.

- There needs to be a competent Welsh speaking workforce in readiness for the free childcare offer
- Even though Flintshire is on the border with England, this shouldn't prevent access to Welsh medium childcare and education.
- The Eisteddfod had a positive response and it is important to continue to raise awareness of the benefits of bilingualism.

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)

- PACEY Cymru believe that Flintshire recognises the importance of Childminders in supporting the delivery of sufficient, accessible and quality childcare services for families across Monmouthshire, including providing unsocial hours for working parents and for families in need.
- Support provided for Childminders going through registration includes childminder briefing sessions, funding for Preregistration support workshop; individual advice surgery sessions and telephone and email support, business start-up packs and a £300 start up grant for health & safety equipment
- Flintshire's Childcare Development has participated in partner webinars with counterparts from other Authorities
- Information is shared with Childminders via email or posted newsletters. PACEY recognise and support the promotion of the local authorities childcare Training schedule.
- Changes to criteria have restricted the ability for Childminders to qualify for Sustainability grants.
- PACEY Cymru would welcome the opportunity to explore viable options for childminders to provide funded Foundation phase provision in Flintshire.
- Childminders, as with other childcare providers, are able to include information about their service for parents in the FIS Childcare Directory. There does not appear to be information of approved nannies within the FIS Childcare Directory.
- Flintshire Family Information Services has a website, but does not appear to be on social media such as Twitter and Facebook - a commonly used form of social media by childminders in particular. This could be considered for future to support engagement and promotion of services and indirectly promote the professionalism of childcare providers and sustainability of services.

Welsh Medium Education Forum

The lead officer for the Welsh Medium Education Forum chairs the forum as it regularly discusses issues related to childcare and early years education. These matters are also discussed at the Early Entitlement Partnership meetings which the Childcare Development Officer attends. And conversely the Welsh Medium Education Forum Chair, alongside

the Mudiad Meithrin's Deputy Manager for North and Mid Wales region regularly attend the FEYDCP where there is assured co-ordination of issues related to local childcare in the Welsh medium sector.

Family Information Services

Family Information Service Flintshire (FISF) currently supplies information and advice about childcare, Early Years provision and local services for children and young people. FISF continue to promote new and existing childcare providers and places through the telephone, email, website, and outreach with the majority of enquiries being received through the website.

Feedback is received through monitoring forms issued at the end of every month. The results of these enquiries are as follows:

- 100% of enquirers are satisfied with the information they have received through the FIS.
- 100% of enquirers have been able to make an informed choice about childcare and activities because of the information they have received through the FIS.
- 67% of enquirers opted to access suitable childcare after contacting FISF. N.B. Not all enquirers are searching for childcare

Primary Schools

35 Flintshire Primary schools completed a survey to inform the CSA.

- 31 schools provided an after school club on-site; 8 school provided a wraparound care provision; 11 schools facilitated a playgroup provision on site; 8 schools had a holiday club; 13 schools provided an extended breakfast club via free and fee paying provision; 11 schools provided free breakfast provision only; 6 schools provided a fee paying Breakfast club only; 5 school hosted a Flying Start provision
- 7 schools were unaware of any local childcare providers collecting children from school and the remaining 28 were aware that either childminders or day nurseries or both were providing this service.
- 20 schools felt there was sufficient childcare locally to meet the needs of families attending the school. Ysgol Bryn Garth, Penyffordd, Holywell has extended its playgroup to mornings to add to its afternoon sessions and one survey returned anonymously suggested the need for more childminders with flexible times.

- 5 schools did not feel the local childcare market met the needs of the family, with one school suggesting more childminders should register locally and the other considering extending their nursery provision
- 10 schools were not aware if childcare needs were being met locally
- In 17 of the schools surveyed parents had approached the school enquiring about childcare. The majority of these enquiries were about provision on-site or close at hand. Following a survey of their parents, Wood Memorial School, Saltney is currently registering a playgroup and after school provision, whilst in Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn parents have requested more spaces to be made available in the after school club. Also, at Saltney Ferry CP School some parents would like childcare for under 2 years and 4 months to attended courses. Sandycroft CP school has expanded their older care to meet parents' needs.
- 9 schools had space available to provide childcare on-site and of these five are interested in providing a service - Ysgol Y Waun in Gwernaffield would consider opening the school up for a holiday club if a private company wanted to deliver the service, whilst Westwood Primary school, Buckley would consider expanding its current playgroup provision and three other schools in Penyffordd (Holywell), Shotton and Bagillt were able to identify space in school for a new or expanded childcare provision.
- Of the 31 schools currently with childcare services on-site, 50% would anticipate a demand for more spaces and longer hours with the most common concern being the cost of expanding the service.
- According to the survey results four schools currently do not have an after school club. One of these is in Saltney and is currently submitting an application to CSSIW for an after school club and playgroup provision. Another school in Mostyn recently surveyed parents and only 2% expressed an interest in the school opening an after school club.
- The Childcare Development officer continues to support schools in Abermorddu, Whitford, Broughton and Mold as they seek to register out of school childcare provision in term time and school holidays.
- Local Employers – FISF support local employers by providing information to employees, attending jobs fairs, providing outreach support and surveying employers for the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. Local employers were contacted a

several completed a postal survey and this provided an insight into barriers that are faced by parents returning to work and the range of childcare services that are required to meet their needs.

- Other stakeholders consulted included schools and other local authority departments such as Planning, Healthy Preschools and Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. This consultation took the form of emails and face to face discussions.

Relevant Local Authority Departments

- **Flintshire Planning Department** are currently processing two applications to convert commercial premises for two new Day Nursery provisions, one in Queensferry and the other in Greenfield. Planning permission is generally not required for childminders who mind six children or less, however, they are required to provide proof of this in writing to CSSIW. This usually comes in the form of a letter or email which incurs a charge
- **Clwyd Alyn Housing Association** did not respond to a request for feedback regarding the CSA.
- **Healthy Preschools**

The scheme are currently working with 40 pre-school settings with the majority being Flying Start providers. Healthy preschools have commented that sessional day care settings are struggling to maintain numbers at the start of school year but attendance rates tend to be improving after Christmas. Full Day Care providers and Childminders have also noted an increase in the amount of childcare being covered by friend and family as parents use their provision more so on a part time or ad-hoc basis.

Flintshire Employers

109 employers were posted Employer Surveys for the CSA between August 2016 and October 2016. They ranged from small and medium enterprises to large multinational employers employing in excess of 5,000 staff and they were located across the county. The survey results, based on 46 returned surveys (42% return rate) are as follows:

- Responses received were from employers ranging in size from 10 to 2,500+ employees

- Responses received included businesses categorised as – Construction, Manufacturing, Tourism Related, Distribution, Public Admin, Health and education, transport and Communication.
- 74% of the employers had a workforce of 50% or more female workers and 9% of the employers did not employ any female staff
- 7 of the respondents employed staff with no children and all the remaining employed staff with between 1% and 80% of staff who have parental responsibility for children under the age of 14 years.
- 46% of the employers operated outside the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm. The majority covered a variety shift patterns with three of the respondents operating over 24 hours.
- 35% of the respondents operated working hours which included shift patterns, overnight, evening or weekend work or 24 hour rolling shifts.
- 61 % of respondents offer a combination of the following flexible arrangements for working – part-time, annualised working, compressed working, job share, flexi-time, phased return to work, voluntary reduced hours, term-time only, homeworking and careers breaks and temporarily reduced hours.
- 41% of the employers reported that having children has been a factor in preventing parents from taking up employment or continuing their employment
- 43% of respondents had incidents of staff absence caused by childcare issues. However, the majority of these were occasional.
- When asked ‘What improvements to childcare are needed to improve recruitment and retention of workforce?’ the responses were as follows – 15% want childcare available at different times, 10% want more flexible childcare sessions, 39% more affordable childcare, 4% childcare in a different location, 6% childcare that is better at meeting the child’s additional needs, 6% better quality childcare provision, 2% more Welsh language / bilingual provision, 9% access to different types of childcare provision and 2% breakfast/after school provision.
- 43% of respondents say they support a form of childcare provision for their workforce.
- 50% of respondents’ process childcare vouchers for their workforce whilst 9% offer some form of financial assistance with the cost of childcare.
- 6 employers had on-site nurseries
- Only 39% of the employers were aware that FISF can provide free advice and guidance around childcare and work-life balance

15. Gap Analysis & Areas for Improvement

This assessment finds that providers, parents and stakeholders believe that the quality of childcare provision in Flintshire is considered good and there is sufficient provision to meet the needs of most families; however, there are some gaps in provision that have been identified and need to be addressed:

- **Types of childcare available**

Within Area 4 (CH7) less than 50% of childminders provided a Wraparound service. 35% of childminders surveyed choose not to provide Half Day Care (AM or PM). There are no registered childminders within Area 7 (LL18) with a number of small villages across all areas of the county with no registered childminder provision.

Less than 50% of Full Day Care providers deliver half day nursery sessions, before and after school, lunch or holiday care provision.

There are only seven holiday clubs registered within Flintshire with only one setting providing Christmas holiday cover in Buckley. However, childminders and full day care settings, including private nurseries and out of school providers are also providing holiday care.

As is expected with sessional care none of the settings deliver sessions during school holidays, however a significant number of settings provide only morning or only afternoon sessions. Also, only a limited number provide wraparound care or a lunch club and in these situations childminders and full day care providers are meeting some of the demand.

There are only five registered crèche provisions in Flintshire with one providing childcare alongside leisure facilities and the other supporting parents as they access training courses.

Out of school provision is well apportioned across the Authority. There are free breakfast clubs at more than 70% of primary schools with the remaining schools providing a fee paying breakfast club on-site.

Open access play provision is available in every Area (1-8) and all for the summer holidays only. However, only one setting is registered with CSSIW so all remaining settings are limited to operating under two hours.

There are only five nannies registered on the voluntary approval scheme operating in Flintshire.

Areas for improvement

- *Recruitment of more childminders, particularly in rural areas*
- *The registration of open access playschemes should be supported.*
- *Improve awareness, amongst agencies and training providers, of the availability of crèche facilities in Flintshire*
- *More information relating to nannies on the voluntary approval scheme to be made available through FISF*

- **Age of children for whom childcare is available**

Childminders are able to accommodate the widest age range of children, however, relatively few look after children under 12 months old or over 12 years old.

Full day care settings in Flintshire offer places across the 0 – 12 age range, however, there is no full day care in Area 5 (CH8) for 5 to 11 year olds.

The majority of crèches in Flintshire cater for 0 – 5 year olds only.

There is virtually no out of school provision for children from 12 to 17 years old.

There are relatively few children under five accessing holiday clubs, however, many within this age range are catered for by childminders and full day care nurseries during the school holidays.

Areas for Improvement

- *All childcare providers to be encouraged to widen the age range they cater for in line with the recent amendments to registration regulations from under eights to under twelves.*
- **Affordability of childcare**

Affordability is highlighted by parents as the most important factor in their consideration of childcare choice and employers chose affordable childcare as the most popular improvement to childcare in order to improve recruitment and retention of staff.

A very small minority of settings in Flintshire are unregistered therefore parents are able access tax credits and use childcare vouchers in most childcare settings.

Take up of the childcare element of the Working Tax credit and Employers Supported Schemes is very low in Flintshire. Approximately 48% of respondents to the parent / carer survey didn't know where to go to access information relating to financial assistance for childcare.

Areas for Improvement

- *The wider promotion of the availability of Working Tax Credits or Universal Credits and Employer Supported Schemes (including the new, nationwide Tax Free Childcare scheme).*
- *Unregistered providers of all types of childcare should be encouraged and supported to register with CSSIW.*

- **Times at which childcare is available**

Many settings offer a range of session lengths in order to meet the needs of families during their typical working day.

There are very few providers offering childcare before 8am or after 6pm and most of these are childminders. There is no childcare available after 7pm. There are only four registered providers offering weekend sessions. We are only aware of two childminders who provide overnight care.

Only 36% of respondents to the childcare survey felt there was enough childcare available at the time required. This low number could be viewed as a barrier to accessing employment opportunities. This is backed up by the employer survey where 15% of respondents wanted childcare available at different times to meet the needs of their workforce.

Areas for Improvement

- *In order to meet the childcare needs of those working atypical hours more childcare is needed before 8am, after 6pm, overnight and at weekends.*
- *Sessional day care providers and out of school care providers should be encouraged to extend their hours to meet childcare requirements of working families.*
- **Location of childcare**

The geographical distribution of childcare provision in Flintshire is good and is relative to the population, transport links and characteristics of each area; this conclusion is reinforced by the opinions of stakeholders who assessed the location of childcare in Flintshire as good.

Where there are gaps, these tend to be in relation to the type of childcare, as referred to above, rather than the location of the childcare. In some areas there may appear to be a lack of a particular type of childcare, but generally these services are provided in the area by another childcare type so the demand is still being met.

The only exception to this is the lack of holiday care places in a variety of locations but most notably in Mold and Holywell.

Area for Improvement:

- The development of holiday care provision in Mold and Holywell.

- **Welsh medium childcare provision**

There is clearly unmet demand alongside a limited supply of Welsh medium children in Flintshire and this is backed up by stakeholder feedback. Also, only 30% of parents completing the parental survey believed there was enough Welsh medium childcare available in the county.

At this point in time Flintshire do not have any registered childminders, holiday clubs, creches, nannies or day care nurseries delivering their services through the medium of Welsh. There are no Welsh medium playgroups operating in Areas 1, 6,7 and 8 (CH4, LL12, LL18 and LL19) however, all Welsh medium primary schools in Flintshire have an after school clubs and these operate in Flint, Mold, Holywell, Treuddyn and Picton.

Areas for Improvement:

- *More Welsh medium childcare of all types is required in all areas of Flintshire, particularly those providing full day care during term time and school holidays*
- *All childcare settings should be encouraged to provide at least some bilingual elements*

- **Childcare provision for different language categories**

Provision of childcare in languages other than English or Welsh is not available in Flintshire and demand for it is very low. Despite targeting a variety of minority networks only one respondent, with another language, completed the parental survey so we are unable to draw any meaningful conclusions from this survey relating to language choice at childcare settings. As a result, it would be difficult to develop sustainable childcare provision in different languages.

Areas for improvement:

- *Settings should be supported to encourage families with other languages to use established childcare settings*

This gap analysis will be used to inform future work, to identify priorities and to allocate funding by including key findings within the Action Plan (Section 16)

Information Sources

The most recent data available has been used throughout this assessment and we acknowledge that this may not be as current as we would wish. However data collected will be revisited and updated annually as appropriate to be included in the annual review and refresh of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2017 - 2021).

Information sources used as primary data references for this report include:

- Reports and opinions resulting from:
 - Parents Consultation
 - Childcare Provider's Consultation (SASS returns to CSSIW)
 - Employer's Consultation
- Info-Base Flintshire
- Family Information Service Flintshire
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Child Index 2008
- Census 2011
- North Wales Public Health Directory
- Daffodil (Institute of Public Care) (IPC)
- Welsh Health Survey
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Local Government Data Unit Wales: Info-base Cymru

- Job Centre Plus
- Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW)
- HM Revenue and Customs: Child and Working Tax Credit
- Statistics and data from the Family Information Service Flintshire (FISF)
- Department for Work and Pensions

Acknowledgements

Flintshire County Council would like to thank the parents, carers, childcare providers and employers who responded to the 2017 consultation process by taking part in various postal, telephone and face to face surveys.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – Progress Report 2019

The current level of supply of childcare in Flintshire is displayed in the table below based on CIW's FIS Weekly Report (25.03.19) and VAS Report (10.09.18)

Childcare Type	Registered	Suspended	Unregistered or Approved
Childminder	112	6	-
Full Day Care	47	-	-
Sessional Day Care	26	-	-
Crèches	4	-	-
Out Of School Care	43	-	7
Open Access Play Provision	1	-	57
Nanny	-	-	3
Total	233	6	67

This Progress Report follows the Action Plan which details the actions, priorities and milestones to maintain strengths and address shortcomings as identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017 – 2021.

Assessment of Demand

Strengths	Weaknesses	Actioned by	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare is well located and meets the needs of the majority of parents. Childcare is generally reliable. The majority of respondents believed childcare is of good quality. 		CDO, FISF, AWARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the next full CSA improve promotion of the parents survey as a very small sample of Flintshire parents completed the survey for 2016 Ensure Welsh Government receive recommendations for improvements to the parents survey

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- CDO to expand distribution list for parent survey in 2021.
- AWARE group have fed back to Welsh Government recommendations for improvements to the parent survey (2017).

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- As above
- FISF have launched the FISF Facebook this year and this can be utilised to promote surveys (such as the CSA), consultations and announcements amongst parents across Flintshire. The Family Information Service Manager has put in a development request via the FIS network March 2019 to develop a DEWIS based survey system

Assessment of Supply

Strengths	Weaknesses	Actioned by	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Areas of Flintshire host some type of childcare provision. 77.1% return of all SASS1 paperwork within Flintshire which was above the national average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timing of the SASS1 survey at the end of term and so early into the school holidays. 	CDO, FISF, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA, PACEY Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To obtain more valid data we need to support the completion of the SASS Part 1 as 22.9% of Flintshire childcare providers failed to complete the on-line CIW SASS Part 1 survey To provide technical support wherever possible to support settings as they complete CIW on-line SASS 1 and 2

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- Support available from Umbrella organisations to complete SASS1 and 2 -**

Mudiad Meithrin arranged workshops to go through both the SASS1 and 2. Additional support was also given by the Support officer for any groups experiencing difficulties.

Wales PPA held an information session with laptops available for members to use for SASS1, Development workers helped settings during their routine visits, and all members were invited to attend the Wales PPA office for 1:1 or group support using their technology if needed.

PACEY Cymru offered telephone and email support for all registered childminders in Wales on completion of SASS. In Flintshire workshops on the Inspection Framework were delivered in May and June in preparation for SASS part 2 – attended by a total of 23 with 100% rating the course as good or excellent. Feedback included comments on how this will support SASS completion, including *"How I'll show evidence that I'm doing a good job and can fill in SASS2" [was most useful]*.

NDNA Cymru shared information about SASS 1 and 2 with members and provided telephone support on the completion of the SASS.

The CDO has supported OSC providers during routine visits to complete SASS1 and 2.

- FISF have purchased six laptops which are free to loan out to childcare settings to assist in completing SASS 1 and 2**

All cylchoedd Meithrin are able to apply for a grant through Mudiad Meithrin to purchase IT equipment.

Two Digital Confidence workshops in May 2017 were promoted to all childcare settings and only one childminder attended the first workshop with the second workshop cancelled because no bookings received.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Support and advice provided to childcare providers around SASS1 and 2 requirements**

On 7th September 2018 CIW announced 'Childcare and play providers: Not required to complete a Self-Assessment of Service (SASS) for 2018-19'. CIW plan to issue a SASS in the latter part of 2019 meanwhile childcare providers are instructed to update their Quality of Care Review and for it to be available should it be requested by CIW.

Quality of Care report workshop included on FIS Additional Training Schedule (February 2019 – 14 candidates attended).

The CDO and all umbrella organisations continues to provide support to OSC providers during routine visits around producing a Quality of Care Review and working to its Action Plan.

- **Provision of technical support to help childcare providers meet SASS1 and 2, Childcare Offer, Early Entitlement and DEWIS website requirements.**

FISF have laptops available to loan to settings to support them in completing their SASS and Quality of Care review paperwork, Childcare Offer and Early Entitlement claims and to register on the DEWIS website.

All umbrella organisations supporting settings to have combined document (Quality of Care Review & SEfI) in line with Joint Inspection. Also encouraging settings to purchase their own laptop/tablets and internet package.

Analysis of supply and demand of overall childcare provision

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actioned by	Priorities
Type of available childcare e.g. full day care, sessional care, after school care, childminder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The full range of services are catered for across the majority of Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited number of childminders in rural locations Only one open access playscheme is registered with CIW. Underutilisation of registered crèche facilities A limited number of Nannies on the Voluntary Approval Scheme 	PACEY Cymru, Play Development Team, FISF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Recruitment of more childminders, particularly in rural areas</i> <i>The registration of open access playschemes should be supported.</i> <i>Improve awareness, amongst agencies and training providers, of the availability of crèche facilities in Flintshire</i> <i>More information relating to nannies on the voluntary approval scheme to be made available through FISF</i>

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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- Details of PACEY and FISF promotional work.**

During the period October 2017 – February 2018 a total of 8 x 3 hour blocks of promotional engagement were delivered by PACEY Cymru to raise awareness of becoming a registered childminder in target areas of Mold and Holywell, this included attendance at 9 events or groups, and visiting a range of additional venues and organisations to discuss childminding locally during these hours.

The CDO has attended 2 P & T sessions, a Rhyme time session and a DWP Parent Event in Flint from December 2017 to March 2018 raising awareness of childminding as a career option

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

- **Play Development Officer report on setting numbers**

4,107 children and young people attended Summer Playschemes during summer holidays 2017 with 37 of these children and young people supported by the Buddy system.

Flintshire will be running the same number of playschemes this year as last year. With no plans at present to register anymore with CIW but will aspire to in the near future.

- **Promotion of Flintshire Crèche Services during 2017 – 2018**

Flintshire Crèche Services have delivered the following crèches from April 1st 2017 – March 31st 2018

One off Crèches = 15	6 week Crèches = 1	11 week Crèches = 6
4 week Crèches = 5	7 week Crèches = 4	12 week Crèches = 1
5 week Crèches = 6	8 week Crèches = 7	14 week Crèches = 1

During the last six months Flintshire Crèche Services staff have delivered promotional leaflets to schools, hotels, doctors surgeries and placed on FISF website.

- **How FISF promote Nannies.**

Currently there are no Nanny details on the FISF website but plans to include them on the new DEWIS website. Parents enquiring for Nannies will be referred to those currently on CIW's Voluntary Approval Scheme

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

• **Details of PACEY and FISF promotional work.**

During the period May to September 2018, a total of 8 x 3 hour blocks of promotional engagement were delivered to raise awareness of becoming a registered childminder. This included display stands at 2 large community events, attendance at 10 parent and toddler groups, 2 library story time sessions and other community facilities and activities. In total at least 95 individuals were at the group sessions that were attended in this period, which resulted in more detailed discussions with 27 individuals showing sufficient level of interest in childminding to either share their contact details or take away additional information and another 3 took flyers for friends or colleagues. Individuals from the target areas have completed the October CYPOP5 pre-registration training course; including 3 from Mold, 1 from Northop Hall, and 1 from Holywell.

During the period January – February 2019, a total of 4 x 3 hour blocks of promotional engagement were delivered in the target areas of Mold and Holywell to raise awareness of becoming a registered childminder. This included attendance at 6 parent and toddler group sessions (including 1 health visitor led parent and baby session), 1 library story/rhyme time session, along with other community facilities and activities. In total at least 66 individuals were in attendance at the sessions visited, which resulted in more detailed discussions with some, of these 9 took additional information. The March CYPOP5 course candidates include 1 person from Mold, 1 person from this round of engagement work is currently awaiting the next local briefing session.

The CDO has attended Mold Jobcentreplus for a Lone Parent event in July 2018 and three Lone Parent pathway Sessions in November 2018 to promote FISF, DEWIS, childcare options and funding and to promote childminding as a career option. FISF outreach work has improved and expanded in this field following the recruitment of two new Information Officers this year.

• **Play Development Officer report on setting numbers**

3,906 children and young people aged 5 to 12 years (5 to 15 for children with disabilities) attended Summer Playschemes during summer holidays 2018 with 41 of these children and young people supported by the Flintshire Buddy scheme.

These were held at 58 site locations in partnership with local town and community councils. The local authority worked in partnership with Urdd Gobaith Cymru to deliver 4 Welsh medium summer playschemes. For 2018, the Local Authority Benefits Service, also worked in partnership to deliver hot lunches to all children in identified hotspots for food poverty, via the local playschemes –The food went to where children were and all children were welcome.

FISF are working with the Play Development Team to look at developing an open play areas in Flintshire booklet. The play Development Team will be funding the booklet and developing it with Education. FISF will be involved in its promotion to encourage take up of free open play opportunities in the county.

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Flintshire will be running the same number of playschemes this year as last year. With no plans at present to register anymore with CIW but will aspire to in the near future. Early indications are that a number of town and community councils have identified additional funding to support extra weeks in their communities. With 10 town and communities to date opting for the entire 6 weeks.

- **Promotion of Flintshire Crèche Services during 2018 – 2019**

Flintshire Crèche Services have delivered the following crèches from April 1st 2018 – March 31st 2019

One off Crèches = 8	2 week Crèches = 2	3 week Crèche = 1	4 week Crèche = 1
5 week Crèches = 2	6 week Crèche = 1	7 week Crèches = 3	8 week Crèches = 4
10 week Crèches = 2	11 week Crèches = 6	12 week Crèches = 7	14 week Crèches = 1
35 week Crèche = 1			

During the last year Flintshire Crèche staff have continued to promote use of the service. Demand has decreased this year due to a reduction in programmes offered under grant funding although the actual number of sessions provided seems to be at the same level as last year. The team will continue to work to promote and raise the profile of the service during the coming year.

- **How FISF promote Nannies.**

The FCC Childcare budget subsidises training and start up support for Nannies that are looking to join the voluntary approval scheme. However, there have been no new nannies registering on the Voluntary Approval scheme this year. This could be attributed to the changes in registering requirements as Nannies must now have a Level 3 Childcare qualification or the CYPOP5 qualification in order to register on the scheme. In May 2018 the FISF website was replaced by DEWIS the website where parents can look for Childcare providers in the county. DEWIS do not provide a facility to register Nannies at present however, they have been requested to add this to the choice of childcare providers and this should be actioned in the near future. On 25th February 2019 a change in legislation has meant that nannies are currently unable to register on the Voluntary Approval Scheme therefore going forward this will impact on numbers of nannies able to enter their details on the DEWIS website.

<p>Childcare catering for children of a specific age, e.g. from birth, from 2 years or over 8 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminders and Full Day Care providers catering for children from 0 – 12 years old. • Relatively constant and sufficient supply of childcare for children attending Sessional Day Care provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtually no after school provision for 12 – 17 year olds. • A minimal number of under fives are catered for by holiday clubs 	<p>MM, PACEY Cymru, NDNA, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), CPCKC, CDO, CO team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All relevant childcare providers to be encouraged to widen the age range they cater for, in line with the recent amendments to registration regulations, from under eights to under twelves.</i> • <i>All childcare relevant providers to be encouraged to widen the age range they cater for to meet the requirements of the Childcare Offer</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- **Umbrella Orgs supplying examples of settings who have widened their age range.**

Since Flintshire has started delivering the CO we now have 12 out of our 30 Holiday playschemes providing care for children from three years old.

Out of the 24 After School clubs registered to care for 3 year olds 8 of them have recently extended their registration to this lower age range.

Woodies Wraparound (Saltney) are now catering for before and after school club and therefore cater for the older school age children (8- 11).

NDNA member day nurseries in Flintshire cater for children from Birth.

Childminders wishing to increase their numbers from 6 under 8 years old to 10 under 12 years old have incurred costs following consultation with FCC planning department. And this has deterred some from expanding their age range

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

New After School club set up at Northop Hall Primary school catering for children from 4 – 11. They are in the process of registering with CIW.

Caban Cae’r Nant have opened a new playgroup plus to support parents of children accessing school at Ysgol Cae’r Nant.

NEW Full Day Care (under registration) Clwb Bwthyn Bach, Caerwys. Planning to open April 2019

NEW Sessional Care (under registration) Kinnerton Little Acorns.

NEW Full Day Care (under registration) Abermorddu School through collaborative working with a local Day Nursery.

Following on from the SHEP programme being delivered at school during the summer holidays 2018 St. Davids High School, Saltney have started a Breakfast club to encourage healthy eating options.

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Affordable childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very small minority of settings in Flintshire are unregistered therefore parents are able to access tax credits and use childcare vouchers in most childcare settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability is highlighted by parents as the most important factor in their consideration of childcare choice. Take up of the childcare element of the Working Tax credit and Employers Supported Schemes is very low in Flintshire. 	Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), CPCKC, CDO, Play Development Team, FISF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The wider promotion of the availability of Working Tax Credits or Universal Credits and Employer Supported Schemes (including the new, nationwide Tax Free Childcare scheme).</i> <i>Unregistered providers of all types of childcare should be encouraged and supported to register with CIW.</i>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 48% of respondents to the parent / carer survey didn’t know where to go to access information relating to financial assistance for childcare. 		
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- Work carried out by the Umbrella Organisations to promote tax credits / universal credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare.**

Flintshire are Early Implementers for the 3-4 funded childcare offer – up to 30 hours combined childcare and education. Take up has been good and has widened knowledge of the website ‘Childcare Choices’.

PACEY has been promoting and discussing the childcare offer through PACEY news, e-news, magazine, also discussed at PACEY local meetings. Also, by answering individual enquiries and signposting to the Childcare Offer team.

Mudiad Meithrin nationally promote tax credits / universal credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare through their facebook and twitter page. Settings also receive regular updates in a termly newsletter and through the local support officer.

Wales PPA & CWLWM advertise and promote tax credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare through their social media and on their websites.

A new ‘Childcare Choices’ Welsh Government booklet has been published in 2017 and is available from the FISF.

CDO has regularly included articles in the FISF newsletter regarding Working Tax credits, Employers Supported Schemes and the new Tax Free childcare scheme.

The FISF ‘Help with childcare costs’ leaflet has been updated in August and October 2017.

Five FISF staff members attended Universal Credit training on 15th March 2018 in Wrexham.

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NDNA Cymru have publicised the child care choices website and shared information about tax free childcare via e-bulletins and on the NDNA website.

CWLWM shared information about tax free childcare: <http://www.cwlwm.org.uk/tax-free-childcare-opens-to-all-eligible-families/>

- **Support given to unregistered childcare settings to become registered with CIW**

The CDO and Wales PPA have supported Whitford school, St. Mary's school, Flint and Abermorddu school as they are moving towards registering their currently unregistered After School Clubs.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Work carried out by the Umbrella Organisations to promote tax credits / universal credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare.**

CWLWM advertise and promote tax credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare through their social media and on their websites.

Early Years Wales advertise and promote tax credits, employer supported schemes and tax free childcare through their social media and on their websites.

Flintshire's Childcare Offer team support parents who receive the CO and tax credits for those hours outside of funded hours.

FISF staff have attended a variety of training regarding childcare benefits and payment schemes for example in-house training on Direct Payments. Two new FISF Information Officers have been recruited this year with experience of working in FIS and Family first teams.

CDO has included articles in the FISF newsletter regarding Working Tax credits, Employers Supported Schemes, the Tax Free childcare scheme and developments around the delivery of the Childcare Offer in Flintshire and the surrounding counties.

Flintshire's Anti-poverty Group through the Citizens Advice Bureau are keen to work with FISF on local briefings looking at the theme of childcare costs and affordability.

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

- **Support given to unregistered childcare settings to become registered with CIW**

The CDO and Early Years Wales staff are supporting a number of settings to become registered with CIW – including Whitford ASC, Northop Hall ASC, Trelogan ASC, Queensferry ASC, St. Mary's ASC (Flint) and Gronant ASC.

<p>Times at which childcare is available, including the need for flexible childcare catering for irregular patterns of usage across the day, the week and the year;</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 201</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 50% of full day care providers and childminders offer half day care sessions. • Sessional care providers tend to deliver morning only or afternoon only sessions and relatively few wraparound care or a lunch club. • Very few providers offer childcare before 8.00am or after 6.00pm. • Virtually no weekend or overnight childcare. 	<p>CDO, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), NDNA, PACEY Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In order to meet the childcare needs of those working atypical hours more childcare is needed before 8am, after 6pm, overnight and at weekends.</i> • <i>Sessional day care providers and out of school care providers should be encouraged to extend their hours to meet childcare requirements of working families.</i> • <i>All childcare providers should be encouraged to work collaboratively to ensure that working parents are able to access suitable provision to meet the Childcare Offer</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- **Umbrella orgs providing examples of settings expanding their hours to meet the needs of working families**

Squib and Squidge Childminders have extended their daily hours and also now cover Saturdays and overnight care.

Emma Williams a newly registered childminder has registered to provide childcare places at the weekend and her weekday sessions extend to as late as 9.00pm.

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Flexible hours is discussed during the CYPOP5 and pre-registration process to encourage thinking of this from the offset.

Woodland Imps (Mynydd Isa), Oaktree Playgroup (Buckley), Sandycroft Playgroup, Kelsterton Playgroup (Connah's Quay) and Glan Aber (New) Playgroup (Bagillt) have all expanded their hours to meet the needs of working parents.

Wales PPA are also working with new providers setting up provisions with the aim of supporting the CO in Flintshire e.g. Caerwys, Abermorddu and Whitford

The CDO has supported a number of Out of school clubs who have recently reported expanding their hours – including R.A.S.C.A.L.S. (Penyffordd, Chester), Cool Kidz Club (Brynford), LAFS Club (Lixwm) and St, Winefride's (Holywell).

Teigrod Terrig (Treuddyn) have expanded their OSC registration to include a bilingual holiday club.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Umbrella orgs providing examples of settings expanding their hours to meet the needs of working.**

New After School club set up at Northop Hall Primary school catering for children from 4 – 11. They are in the process of registering with CIW.

Saltney Small Steps extended their registration to include a Holiday Club to meet the needs of working parents.

Woody Wraparound have extended their registration to include a Holiday Club to meet the needs of working parents.

Caban Cae'r Nant have opened a new playgroup plus to support parents of children accessing school at Ysgol Cae'r Nant.

Cylch Terrig expanded hours to earlier start time of 8am

Hawkesbury Playgroup extended hours to meet the needs of working parents

Treuddyn under 5s extended hours to meet the needs of working parents

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NEW Full Day Care (under registration) Clwb Bwthyn Bach, Caerwys. Planning to open April 2019

NEW Sessional Care (under registration) Kinnerton Little Acorns.

NEW Full Day Care (under registration) Abermorddu School through collaborative work with a local Day Nursery

Bryn Coch Childcare Club (formally Playmates Playgroup) - have extended hours

Oaktree Playgroup have extended hours to meet the needs of working parents

Gwernaffield Playgroup have extended hours to accommodate CO

Sandycroft have extended to offer wrap around for school nursery

Active Kids Club after prior consultation with parents during autumn term will open up Holiday Club over Christmas holidays

As part of childminder start up support all childminders are encouraged to provide flexible hours

FCC Direct Care team have reported that when recruiting domiciliary care workers they are finding potential staff are struggling to access childcare for early starts. The CDO has recommended that such applicants are referred to the FISF who will be able to provide a list of local childcare providers who offer flexible hours or who may be willing to extend their hours if they receive sufficient requests to do so.

- **Examples of collaborative working to provide places for the Childcare Offer**

Flintshire have been successful in receiving £4.8 m to support some gaps in the childcare sector for 3-4 year olds through the CO and support from partners including School Improvement Team.

Collaborative working has seen a Day Nursery from WCBC take over the After School Club at Ysgol Estyn Hope and also start delivering a holiday club at the same site. The same day nursery is in negotiation with Abermorddu school to provide a similar wraparound service.

Ysgol Sychdyn is working with Sychdyn playgroup to integrate the playgroup on school grounds so that they are able to provide wraparound care in a safe environment.

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Treuddyn Under Fives have moved onto school premises and they have expanded their hours to support parents wishing to access the Childcare Offer.

Holywell Childcare pick-up children from local schools to bridge the gap in Bagillt.

There are a number of examples of childminders and sessional settings working together to support parents with the CO and EE.

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Location of childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The geographical distribution of childcare provision in Flintshire is good and is relative to the population, transport links and characteristics of each area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of holiday care places in a variety of locations but most notably in Mold and Holywell 	CDO, CPCKC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The development of holiday care provision in Mold and Holywell.</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

A new holiday club has registered in Treuddyn (bilingual provision) and is marketed in Ysgol Glanrafon's newsletter. The CDO has held discussions with the Urdd and Ysgol Glanrafon regarding provision of a Welsh Medium holiday club in Mold.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- Saltney Small Steps extended their registration to include a Holiday Club to meet the needs of working parents

Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

- Woody Wraparound have extended their registration to include a Holiday Club to meet the needs of working parents
- The new childcare registration at Ysgol Estyn, Hope includes a Holiday club which is managed by a local Day Nursery
- Ysgol Glanrafon have confirmed that they will be including a holiday club as part of their new build as funded through the Welsh Government Capital grant fund. The Management structure of the holiday club is under discussion.

Welsh medium childcare provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Welsh medium primary schools in Flintshire have an after school clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 30% of parents completing the parental survey believed there was enough Welsh medium childcare available in the county. • Flintshire do not have any registered childminders, holiday clubs, crèches, nannies or day care nurseries delivering their services through the medium of Welsh 	Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), PACEY Cymru, CDO, CPCKC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More Welsh medium childcare of all types is required in all areas of Flintshire, particularly those providing full day care during term time and school holidays</i> • <i>All childcare settings should be encouraged to provide at least some bilingual elements</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- **Umbrella orgs detailing work carried out to encourage development of Welsh medium provision. Also providing details of training courses / resources which encourage settings to be bilingual.**

CDO has been in discussion with the Urdd and the Governing body of Ysgol Glanrafon with a view to opening a Welsh medium Holiday club in Mold.

FISF’s Additional training schedule has included two free ‘Fun with Welsh’ workshops.

Mudiad Meithrin as part of the Welsh Government’s strategy to create a million Welsh Speakers by 2050 will be opening new settings across Wales. Flintshire has been earmarked for a new setting to be opened within the next 12-18 months.

Wales PPA have met all their EDI targets providing contacts for the project from member settings, Un Dau Tri courses have been promoted, a Welsh Language co-ordinator has been visiting those who participated in the Un Dau Tri courses – she provides a Welsh taster session and also provides Welsh resources for settings to use. There are 10 Welsh activities available via a toolkit on the Wales PPA website.

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<https://www.pacey.org.uk/news-and-views/news/archive/2017-news/september-2017/welsh-language-tool/>

PACEY Cymru have a range of Welsh Language resources available to support members, including supporting introduction of more Welsh for those less confident. New resources are added each month to this area.

Fun with Welsh workshops delivered on FISF's additional funded training schedule February 2018. 100% rated the course as good/excellent and 100% rated the tutor as excellent. Comments included "really enjoyed this, the resources are very helpful", "fantastic really enjoyed tonight session".

Childminder development work – has included targeting Welsh Ti a Fi sessions seeking to recruit Welsh speakers to consider childminding.

4 day nurseries in Flintshire have attended the Un Dau Tri - hwyl a sbri Welsh Language training funded by the Welsh Government and have received support from NDNA's Welsh Language support worker within the last year.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Umbrella orgs detailing work carried out to encourage development of Welsh medium provision. Also providing details of training courses / resources which encourage settings to be bilingual**

GWIRIWR – Early Years Wales providing support for those settings completing GWIRIWR the target for Flintshire was 12 members of staff to complete all 4 sections, this was exceeded with 17 completing. Early Years Wales along with NDNA provided support and guidance on the pilot training courses in preparation for the new Welsh Language suite of training courses to be made available in 2019. There are various Welsh resources available on Early Years Wales website.

Mudiad Meithrin receive funding from FISF & Early Education to provide and promote Welsh medium childcare across the County.

- New developments include a new Ti a Fi in Halkyn
- Plans are in place for a new Cylch Meithrin to open in Buckley after Easter 2019 joining Ti a Fi Buckley who have recently moved to the same site.
- A capital bid has been successful for an extension to Ysgol Glanrafon which will include a new building to accommodate childcare and early years.
- A capital bid has also been successful to extend/improve the provision at Shotton
- Cylch Meithrin Terrig have extended their hours and are now open from 8.00am to 3.00pm each day and they are currently researching the feasibility of even longer hours.

PACEY Cymru support -

- PACEY Cymru held an event on the 17th November at Porth Eirias with funding from Welsh Government which was open to all childcare providers. The aim of the event was to look for ideas on how to introduce more Welsh vocabulary throughout practices to support children's learning. The training was suitable for individuals who have a little Welsh language skills, a Welsh learner or a fluent Welsh speaker and was designed to enable attendees to utilise the learning within their settings.
- PACEY Cymru along with CWLWM partners continue to promote and recruit participants for Gwiriwr, the learn welsh level checker which is a diagnostic tool specifically designed to help the Childcare, Early Years and Playwork workforce to help accurately identify their current level of welsh competency. Based on completing activities on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. There is some information at <http://www.cwlwm.org.uk/wheres-your-welsh-at/>
- PACEY Cymru are hosting webinars to support Gwiriwr participant childminders, which has been well received including by participants from Flintshire.
- Cymraeg Gwaith – The aim of this scheme is that CWLWM partners work together and make individual use (according to their expertise) to further develop the Welsh language skills of the workforce. The scheme is funded by the Welsh Government through the National Welsh Learning Centre. The main aim of the plan is to ensure that the workforce receives diverse opportunities to learn and develop their ability in Welsh, in order to be able to use the language confidently in the workplace and beyond. Pilot courses included a 10 week course held in Flintshire, which was attended by a local registered childminder (alongside other settings).
- PACEY Cymru have further developed online resources to support childminders with Welsh Language Development, these have been brought together into a Spotlight on Welsh Language Development at <https://www.pacey.org.uk/welsh-language-development/>

<p><i>Childcare provision for different language categories</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of childcare in languages other than English or Welsh is not available in Flintshire and demand for it is very low according to FISF data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one parent with another language completed the parental survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Settings should be supported to encourage families with other languages to use established childcare settings</i> • <i>Improve support to parents completing the on-line parent survey</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- The CO team have reported families of other languages have taken up the childcare offer including Russian and Polish. The FISF team also received a number of Assisted places Grant Applications from families of other languages. FISF staff will support all parents with the parent on-line survey or any FISF grant application forms regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or language.
- CDO promoted the CSA Parent survey through a number of minority support networks with assistance from Fiona Mocko, (FCC Policy Development Officer - Equalities)

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Settings should be supported to encourage families with other languages to use established childcare settings**
The CO team and FISF team continue to support families with other languages to enable them to access their services.

Issues facing specific categories of parents in relation to availability of childcare provision

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actioned by	Priorities
Working parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability of childcare is a key concern for those parents working and those considering a return to work or education. The Welsh Government's Childcare Offer for 3 & 4 year olds will assist many of these working families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small number of childcare settings are not registered with CIW so parents are unable to access the childcare element of the working tax credits or use childcare voucher schemes (soon to be replaced with the national Tax Free Childcare scheme). Lack of flexibility and affordability of childcare are the main barriers experienced by working parents, particularly those working atypical hours i.e. shift workers and those working weekends or overnight Working parents requiring full day care provision are unable to access any provision through the medium of Welsh 	Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), Mudiad Meithrin, NDNA, PACEY Cymru,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Unregistered settings need sufficient training and support to enable them to register with CIW.</i> <i>In order to meet the childcare needs of those working atypical hours more childcare is needed before 8am, after 6pm, overnight and at weekends.</i> <i>More Welsh medium childcare of all types is required in all areas of Flintshire, particularly those providing full day care during term time and school holidays</i>

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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- CDO and umbrella orgs detailing training and support available to those looking to register with CIW**

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Contact is made with Wales PPA who then send the Development worker to visit and assist with the registration forms.

Mudiad Meithrin have a dedicated Flintshire Support officer who will work with committees to register with CIW. In particular work is being undertaken to register all settings as CIO and to re- register with CIW with a Responsible individual as opposed to a registered person.

PACEY Cymru are funded by the local authority to deliver a range of pre-registration services, including briefing sessions / CYPOP5 courses / pre-registration support workshops, telephone/email support, and individual advice surgery sessions, along with sharing start-up grant information.

NDNA provide support and guidance to those enquiring about wanting to start a day nursery.

NDNA offer a number of free factsheets providing advice and guidance to parents – e.g. choosing your day nursery, a guide to bilingualism: http://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Stakeholders/Parents_resources/Parents_Factsheets.aspx

- **How CDO and the umbrella orgs are actively encouraging settings to expand their hours / be more flexible**

CDO is working with Urdd and Ysgol Glanrafon regarding a possible Welsh medium holiday club in Mold.

All umbrella organisations attend the CO Advisory group meetings and are aware of the importance of promoting flexible provision for working parents across the County.

- **Umbrella orgs detailing how they are able to support those interested in providing a Welsh medium childcare service**

All settings registered with Mudiad Meithrin are supported by a Support officer who offers support and guidance on all aspects of running the Cylch Meithrin. Particular emphasis is put on language development through a language scheme Croesi'r Bont which tracks each child's progress in the Welsh language since starting at Cylch.

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

Wales PPA encourages the use of the Welsh language and provides some useful resources.

PACEY Cymru offer bilingual resources and training. Childminder development work has included targeting Welsh activities such as Ti a Fi, also engaged with Menter in Flintshire to help promote childminding as a career.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **CDO and umbrella orgs detailing training and support available to those looking to register with CIW**

PACEY Cymru deliver childminder development work and pre-registration support in order to encourage new childminders. Two CYPOP5 course ran during this year – one in October 2018 and the other in March 2019

Early Years Wales provides support to settings with CIW registration either with a visit from the development officer or office support. Due to the setting up of new provision and changes providers are making to their legal status **14** providers have had support with CIW registration. Currently support is being provided to Abermorddu School and Ysgol Yr Esgob, Caerwys who are opening new provision shortly.

The CDO is currently supporting St. Anthony's RC School, Saltney to become registered with CIW

- **How CDO and the umbrella orgs are actively encouraging settings to expand their hours / be more flexible**

At the Briefing session and throughout the registration process PACEY Cymru encourage new childminders to look at offering flexible working hours to meet the needs of parents working atypical hours.

Across the board all childcare umbrella organisations are supporting settings to consider expanding their hours in a sustainable manner

- **Umbrella orgs detailing how they are able to support those interested in providing a Welsh medium childcare service**

PACEY Cymru offer bilingual resources and training. Childminder development work in 2018-19 has continued to target Welsh activities such as Ti a Fi to encourage Welsh speakers and learners to consider a childminding career.

Early Years Wales

- Early Years Wales visited settings that had completed the Un, Dau Tri courses to provide additional support with reading Welsh confidently, Welsh play activities and provided them with additional Welsh resources
- Promoted the Active Offer, shared information on the benefits of nominating a Welsh speaker to wear the lanyard and badge so as to be recognised should anyone want to speak Welsh
- Shared Bookstart’s bilingual books for settings to use with their families
- Visited settings to support them to complete the Gwiriwr language checker (17 completed)

Mudiad Meithrin have a local Support Officer who will advise and assist in all aspects of running a Cylch by providing regular telephone, email and support visits. Mudiad Meithrin also employ a support officer for the Ti a Fi groups and another Croesi’r Bont Officer through educational funding. This year sees the launch of their new updated management guidelines – Llyfr Mawr Piws – a hands on guide to help staff and committees in the day to day running of the cylch.

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<p>Parents seeking work or training opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) provide funding for childcare to support parents/guardians who are seeking work or training opportunities, when childcare is the main barrier 		<p>FISF, PaCE, NDNA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continued promotion of the PaCE project</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

FISF continue to work with PaCE promoting the service to parents when they enquire about childcare if they wish to return to work. We are currently aware that in Flintshire PaCE are actively engaged with / supporting 94 participants across three advisors.

Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

NDNA Cymru are running a supported employment project ‘Childcare Works’ for unemployed individuals aged 50 plus living in Flintshire providing 16 weeks paid supported employment for 16 hours per week to include childcare specific training workshops and placements within childcare settings.

ASPIRE is a project funded by the Big Lottery Fund to support young parents or expectant young parents* (*who are at least 29 weeks into their pregnancy) aged 14 to 25 years across Flintshire and Wrexham.

During 2017 – 2018 it has supported 116 participants. The project is concerned at the lack of funding for childcare to allow school age parents to return to studying. Also, young parents who receive funding for college based childcare are not allowed to use college transport for their children.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Continued promotion of the PaCE project**

The Aspire project finished earlier this year in line with its’ funding schedule.

The FISF Manager has met with PaCE in February 219 to look at revamping the programme by identifying a number of areas for improvement, specifically around promotion and feedback. One suggestion is for FISF Information Officers to carry out outreach work, especially around rural North Flintshire and the outlying villages of Mold, to complement the work carried out by the PaCE team. Also, PaCE are aware of the CSA and that they are able to feed back to us any observations they may have on childcare provision to build up evidence.

Unemployed households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No stakeholders referred to this as a barrier as the majority of unemployed households do not use childcare, apart from those entitled to Flying Start childcare or funded Early Years Education 	FISF, PaCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continued promotion of the PaCE project</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

FISF continue to work with Flying Start, Early Entitlement and PaCE promoting these services to parents when they enquire about childcare.

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The CDO has attended a number of Jobcentreplus comms meetings across Flintshire to promote the services of FISF, the CO and childminding as a career option.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Continued promotion of the PaCE project**

FISF continue to work with PaCE, Flying Start and Early Entitlement promoting these services to parents when they enquire about childcare.

The CDO has attended four Lone Parent sessions at Mold Jobcentreplus promoting FISF, DEWIS, the Childcare Offer and careers in childcare.

Low income families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability is a barrier for low income families and some stakeholders welcomed Flintshire’s continued commitment to providing Assisted places funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrative process can sometimes delay or exclude some low income families from applying for funding or tax credits. 	FISF, Jobcentreplus,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

FISF will refer parents to Welfare Rights and Jobcentreplus if they have questions regarding tax credits and other benefits.

FISF staff and the CDO support parents over the phone or via email or invite them to Connects, Flint to support them in completing Assisted Places grant forms.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all**

Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

FISF attend training related to benefits and funding for low income families and are able to signpost and support them to apply for funding.

The CDO administers payment of the Assisted Places grant from the FCC Childcare budget and the Welsh Government Out of School Childcare grant with both grants funding places for 125 children during term time and 40 children during school holidays for 2018 /19.

Early Years Wales continues to support the administration of the Assisted Places Scheme in Flintshire with 63 children in receipt of support for 2018/19

Lone parent families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability is a barrier for lone parent families and some stakeholders welcomed Flintshire’s continued commitment to providing Assisted places funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administrative process can sometimes delay or exclude some lone parent families from applying for funding or tax credits. 	FISF, Jobcentreplus,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

FISF will refer lone parents to Welfare Rights and JCP if they have questions regarding tax credits and other benefits.

FISF staff and the CDO support parents over the phone or via email or invite them to Connects, Flint to support them in completing Assisted Places grant forms.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all**

FISF attend training related to benefits and funding for low income families and are able to signpost and support them to apply for funding.

The CDO administers payment of the Assisted Places grant from the FCC Childcare budget and the Welsh Government Out of School Childcare grant with both grants funding places for 106 children during term time and 37 children during school holidays for 2018. In January

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

2019 there were no more funds available from the Out of School grant fund for assisted places grant and the CDO asked Welsh Government if there was a possibility to apply for additional funding. We wish to thank Welsh Government for their prompt response as they were able to release an additional £5,000 grant funding which enabled the CDO to support an additional 19 children in attending term time childcare and a further 7 children to access holiday care during the Spring term.

The CDO has attended four Lone Parent sessions at Mold Jobcentreplus promoting FISF, DEWIS, the Childcare Offer and careers in childcare

Early Years Wales continues to support the administration of the Assisted Places Scheme in Flintshire with 63 children in receipt of support for 2018/19

Families from ethnic minority backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administrative process can sometimes delay or exclude some families from ethnic minority backgrounds from applying for funding or tax credits. 	FISF, Jobcentreplus,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

FISF work with and make referrals to BAWSO, Save the Family, DASU, Daffodils and other agencies

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- Support with completing applications for assisted Places funding and tax credits should be available to all**

FISF continue to work with a variety of agencies across Flintshire to ensure that families from ethnic minority groups receive support with applying for Assisted Places funding and other family benefits.

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

<p>Families with children who have special educational needs or a disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was not mentioned by any stakeholders as a barrier, as provision for children with special educational needs or a disability is very good in Flintshire. • Financial support is available via the Extra Hands grants to employ additional staff to integrate these children within the setting. 	<p>FISF, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), Childcare Brokerage Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continued promotion of the Extra Hands grant amongst parents and childcare settings</i> • <i>Use of the SEN grant for funded childcare offer.</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

Lynne Mort from FISF and Jackie Dines from Wales PPA support parents and settings to access the Extra Hands grants.

37 children have received one to one support from April 2017 to March 2018 with 11 funded from the OOSC grant, 23 funded from the FCC Childcare grant and 3 from the CO SEN grant.

One childminder received an Inclusion Grant, funded by the OOSC grant, to provide a ramp for her setting.

PACEY local North East Regional meeting in February 2017 focussed on inclusion with Lynne Mort as guest speaker to raise awareness of the inclusion toolkit and Lynne's support, and to share good practice with peers

37 of the 4,107 children and young people attending Summer Playschemes during summer holidays 2017 were supported by the Buddy system.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

• Continued promotion of the Extra Hands grant amongst parents and childcare settings

Lynne Mort from FISF and Jackie Dines from Early Years Wales have continued to support parents and settings to access the Extra Hands grants up until the end of December 2018 when Lynne Mort left her position with FCC as Childcare Brokerage Officer. From January to March 2019 Jackie Dines has been commissioned through Early Years Wales to provide elements of the Childcare Brokerage Officer role which has included supporting parents and settings with Extra Hands grant applications.

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

The CDO administers payment of the Extra Hands grant from the FCC Childcare budget for non-Early Years Wales members and the Welsh Government Out of School Childcare grant with both grants funding places for 19 children during 2018 /19. Additional support from Welsh Government towards the end of the funding period enabled the CDO to process a further 3 grants to support children during the Spring term. Once again many thanks, on behalf of these Flintshire families, to Welsh Government for this additional financial support.

THE CDO also processes the CO SEN payments. During this financial year 14 families have benefitted from Extra Hands grant payments and two settings have received an Equipment / resources grant to support a CO child in their setting.

Early Years Wales supported 11 children with one to one support from April 2018 to March 2019 funded from the FCC Childcare grant.

- **Use of the SEN grant for funded childcare offer.**

There has been joint working between agencies (EE and FISF) to encourage consistent approach to allocation of ALN support funding between schemes, particularly as the same children may be accessing funding from two sources. EE and FISF have reviewed their funding application forms for the ALN grants in order to strengthen consistency and meet best needs of the child.

Other issues to be reflected in action plan

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Actioned by	Priorities
Sustainability of childcare sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OOSC Grant funds development worker hours, sustainability grants and a training schedule. • FCC Childcare grant funding umbrella organisations to support childcare settings • Parents can access financial assistance such 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased financial strain on settings, for example the living wage, rent costs, pension requirements, utilities and business rates. • An increased requirement on settings to digitally complete regulatory required documentation e.g. SASS 1 & 2. 	CDO, FISF, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), Mudiad Meithrin, CPCKC NDNA, PACEY Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Securing continued funding for the sector.</i> • <i>Consistent promotion of the grants available to settings and parents.</i> • <i>Continued investment in IT support for</i>

Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

	as tax credits, employer supported schemes and assisted places grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The large number of settings operating under voluntary management committees, with annual membership changes. 		<i>settings completing SASS Part 1 and 2</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

During 2017 – 2018 the OOSC grant awarded 4 sustainability grants and the FCC Childcare grant awarded 12 sustainability grants to support. Both of these grant streams will be available during 2018 – 2019 to support childcare settings across Flintshire.

PACEY Cymru de-registration report Feb 17 identified that some childminders felt they should have been more business minded. As a result of these finding, PACEY Cymru have established routine calls for newly registered childminders and introduced and a short intro to new registration support webinar. Further to this the local authority funds PACEY Cymru to deliver a local ‘Newly Registered support workshop’ (within FISF additional training programme) to help new childminders with business sustainability through a focus on marketing and running their new business as well as preparing for their first inspection.

All umbrella organisations have consistently promoted the sustainability grants and assisted places grants with increased take up of both of these grants during this financial year.

NDNA Cymru has worked closely with the Welsh Government on the small business rates relief scheme, which will support the sustainability of private day nurseries.

CPCKC have secured funding from the Moonlight foundation to fund a Peripatetic Childcare Business Development Officer to support OSC settings in Flintshire one day per week.

FISF have purchased six laptops which are free to loan out to childcare settings to assist in completing SASS 1 and 2

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- Securing continued funding for the sector.**
 During 2018 – 2019 the OOSC grant awarded 8 sustainability grants and the FCC Childcare grant awarded 9 sustainability grants to support. Both of these grant streams will be available during 2019 – 2020 to support childcare settings across Flintshire.

PACEY Cymru published an update to the childminder de-registration report which shows the work undertaken to against the recommendations to the 2017 childminder de-registration report. As a result of these finding, PACEY Cymru have established routine calls for newly registered childminders and introduced and a short intro to new registration support webinar. Further to this the local authority funds PACEY Cymru to deliver local Newly Registered support for childminders, which has moved to an advice surgery model as opposed to workshop in order to offer tailored business sustainability support, which includes marketing and running their new business, as well as preparing for their first inspection.

CPCKC secured funding from the Moonlight foundation to fund a Peripatetic Childcare Business Development Officer to support OSC settings in Flintshire one day per week up until 31st December 2018.

Sustainability continues to remain a concern as we find we have some small playgroups who cannot open more than they currently do and because of this they could now be at a disadvantage in terms of being sustainable because they can't compete with the settings which open extended hours to take the CO children.

NDNA report that business rates in Wales have now been waived for all nurseries (for three years initially). This is in response to calls from the NDNA to the Government to help nurseries to meet rising wages pension auto enrolment and sick pay costs. The request for the rate for early entitlement to rise £4.50 an hour in line with the 30 hour offer was also met .Flintshire are now piloting the scheme. This has been welcomed and will also help nurseries to continue to deliver the Foundation Phase as the rate paid beforehand was £2.91 an hour.

- **Consistent promotion of the grants available to settings and parents.**

Early Years Wales supports providers with sustainability related issues, providing business plan templates and useful grant information, we also send a representative to sustainability panel meetings.

The FISF newsletter continually promotes the availability of grants to all settings

All umbrella organisations have consistently promoted the sustainability grants and assisted places grants with increased take up of both of these grants during this financial year yet again.

- **Continued investment in IT support for settings completing SASS Part 1 and 2**

FISF have six laptops which are free to loan out to childcare settings to assist in completing SASS 1 and 2, DEWIS registration and Childcare Offer administration

Cross Border arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Entitlement cross border agreement. • Cross border funding of the Childcare Brokerage officer and Aspire Information Outreach Officer posts. • Collaborative working across five counties in North Wales to fund childminder preregistration training package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cross border agreements for the processing of Assisted Places or One to One grants. 	CDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establishing cross border agreements for the processing of Assisted Places or One to One grants.</i> • <i>Consistency with other programmes e.g. Early Entitlement / Foundation Phase</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

Cross border funding continues for children accessing early entitlement settings.

The Childcare Brokerage Officer post and Aspire Information Outreach Officer post continue to be funded by a Flintshire and Wrexham agreement.

CDO has not been able to arrange any reciprocate funding arrangements regarding assisted places funding as neighbouring Local Authorities have different grant processing procedures.

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The CO team continue to work with neighbouring authorities to discuss the reciprocation of the offer when it rolls out nationally.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- **Establishing cross border agreements for the processing of Assisted Places or One to One grants.**

The Childcare Brokerage Officer post was funded by a Flintshire and Wrexham agreement up until 31st December 2018

The Childcare Offer Extra Hands Grant can be processed for Flintshire children attending settings in other Local Authorities.

- **Consistency with other programmes e.g. Early Entitlement / Foundation Phase**

The CO team continue to work with neighbouring authorities to discuss the reciprocation of the offer as it rolls out nationally For example cross border arrangements between Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West & Chester Council were formalised in November 2018.

EE and FISF have met to facilitate the streamlining of the Extra Hands grant application process as much as possible. However, as the funding is sourced separately it is not possible to use duplicate paperwork.

Workforce Development and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the SASS 1 survey results at least 96% of the childcare workforce have relevant qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on Welsh Government Out of School childcare grant to fund mandatory training schedule. 	CDO, Early Years Wales (previously Wales PPA), NDNA, PACEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Securing funding for mandatory training schedule and other training opportunities for CPD</i>
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Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare settings understanding of ‘appropriate’ qualifications as required in the National Minimum Standards (13.6 and 13.7) 	Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promotion of level 2 and Level 3 courses amongst all settings</i>
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

- The CDO promotes the training schedule and additional funded training schedule as funded from the OOSC grant. The training schedule refers childcare providers to Coleg Cambria and Plato Training as local providers of Level 2, 3 and 5 courses in Childcare and Play and the Transition Award in Playwork.**
- Umbrella organisations detailing Level 2, 3 or 5 and Transition Award in Playwork qualifications available and any funding.**

Mudiad Meithrin are able to offer CPD training through Academi to all staff. Mudiad Meithrin are also able to train staff to level 3 through the national training programme.

NDNA Cymru offer a wide range of face to face and online training to support workforce development.

The FCC Childcare grant have funded two rounds of CYPOP5 courses for potential new childminders during 2017 – 2018. Some of the workshops and training funded by FCC and delivered by PACEY Cymru have been mentioned above such as newly registered support workshop for childminders and Fun with Welsh in February. PACEY Cymru have also delivered New Inspection Framework in May and June 2017, Digital Inclusion May 2017, Planning for Learning September 2017, Introduction to Food Allergens and Infection Prevention and Control Guidance October 2017 and Preparing for your Inspection March 2018.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

- Securing funding for mandatory training schedule and other training opportunities for CPD**

The CDO continues to provide a Training Schedule and Additional Training Schedule funded through the OOSC grant. Income generated by the training schedule enables settings to benefit from a range of training opportunities through the Additional Training Schedule

PACEY Cymru - The FCC Childcare Grant has funded two rounds of childminder pre-registration training and support (October 2018 and March 2019). FCC funded training delivered by PACEY Cymru included a Completing your Quality of Care Report workshop in February 2019 (mentioned earlier). PACEY Cymru has also offered some regional training events which have been open to childminders from Flintshire, which include 'using Welsh in your setting' in Colwyn Bay (November 2018), a Foundation Phase event in Llandudno (March 2019), and a storytelling session in Wepre Park (March 2019).

The **Healthy Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (HSPSS)** is a national scheme managed by Public Health Wales and coordinated in Flintshire as an extension to the Healthy Schools Scheme. Pre-school settings actively work to promote and protect all aspects of health including: physical activity, nutrition & oral, emotional & social, safety, hygiene and the wellbeing of their staff. Between April 2018 and March 2019 4 settings joined the scheme including 1 playgroup, 2 Childminder's, 1 Cylch Meithrin, 3 settings have fully completed the Scheme bringing the total to complete the scheme to date to 15.

A further X 5 settings have been reassessed this year.

In addition to providing support to settings to complete the themes the HSPSS officer works in partnership with Design 2 Smile and the dieticians from Betsicadwalder as well as other agencies to offer relevant training and workshops to settings participating in the scheme.

Early Entitlement workforce development 2018 – 2019 has included: Foundation Phase 2-day training; Physical Literacy; Improving Outcomes; Safeguarding (Aftathought); Solihull Approach update; Communication Friendly Spaces. A number of these course were funded through the Early Years Pupil Development Grant.

Mudiad Meithrin have delivered training on Behaviour management, Using mathematics in the outdoor environment, 5 steps to healthy living, GDPR and Language immersion.

- **Promotion of level 2 and Level 3 courses amongst all settings**

Progress Report for Flintshire’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

Early Years Wales has been working closely with Social Care Wales, Qualifications Wales, WJEC/City and Guilds in developing and promoting qualifications for the childcare sector.

Income from the FISF Training schedule 2017 – 2018 has been used to fund 19 candidates on the Transition to Playwork Award through Coleg Cambria.

Partnership Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working involving consultation with the Public Service Board Flintshire, North Wales Safeguarding Board, Umbrella / Partner Organisations, the Welsh Medium Education Forum, the Strategic Play Forum, Jobcentreplus, Family Information Service Flintshire, AWARE, Healthy Preschools, Neighbouring Local Authorities, Local Employers and other stakeholders 			
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Milestones reviewed 31st March 2018

The Local Authority value the work carried out by a variety of organisations, and especially the members of the FEYDCP, in support of completing the CSA and meeting the requirements of this Action Plan.

This collaborative approach is evident in the range of partnership meetings - FEYDCP, Childcare Offer Working Group, Early Education partnership etc.

Milestones reviewed 31st March 2019

The Local Authority continue to value the work carried out by a variety of organisations, and particularly those represented at EYDCP, in support of meeting the requirements of the Action Plan and producing the annual CSA Progress report.

Glossary

Progress Report for Flintshire's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment March 2019

AWARE	-	All Wales Area Representatives of EYDCPs	EDI	-	Erfyn Diagnostig Iaith (Language Diagnostic Tool)
BAWSO	-	Information, Advice and Support for Black & Minority Ethnic people in Wales	FCC	-	Flintshire County Council
CO	-	Childcare Offer	FEYDCP		-Flintshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
CDO	-	Childcare Development Officer (Flintshire County Council)	FISF	-	Family Information Service Flintshire
CIO	-	Charitable Incorporated Organisation	NDNA	-	National Day Nurseries Association
CIW	-	Care Inspectorate Wales	OOSC	-	Out of School Childcare
CPCKC	-	Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Club	OSC	-	Out of School Club
CPD	-	Continuous Professional Development	PaCE	-	Parents, Childcare and Employment
CSA	-	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	PACEY Cymru	-	Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years
CWLWM Working Mutually	-	Childcare Wales Learning and	SASS	-	Self Assessment of Service Statement
CYPOP5	-	Children and Young People Option 5	SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
DASU (Flintshire)	-	Domestic Abuse Safety Unit	Wales PPA	-	Wales Preschool Providers Association (now Early Years Wales)



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Social Services Annual Report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statutory Director of Social Services is required to produce an annual report summarising their view of the local authority's social care functions and priorities for improvement as legislated in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulations and Inspections Act (Wales) 2015.

The purpose of the Social Services Annual Report is to set out the improvement journey and evaluate Social Services' performance in providing services to people that promote their wellbeing and support them to achieve their personal outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To approve following review, the draft report, ensuring it provides an accurate and clear account of Social Services for Adults and Children in Flintshire.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT
1.01	This is the third year of a new format for the Social Services Annual Report which is prepared under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA).
1.02	The format is closely aligned to the National Outcomes Framework and demonstrates our performance in meeting the wellbeing outcomes of the people of Flintshire.
1.03	<p>All improvement priorities set sit under one of the six National Quality Standards (NQS) and everyone's personal wellbeing outcomes will relate to one of these, they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQS 1 Working with people to define & co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve • NQS 2 Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being • NQS 3 Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm • NQS 4 Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society • NQS 5 Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships <p>NQS 6 Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs</p>
1.04	The draft Social Services Annual Report for 2018/2019 is attached as Appendix 1. The report is intended to provide the public, the regulator and wider stakeholders with an honest picture of services in Flintshire and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced.
1.05	The report will form an integral part of Care Inspectorate Wales' (CIW) performance evaluation of Flintshire Social Services. The evaluation also informs the Wales Audit Office's assessment of Flintshire County Council as part of the annual improvement report.
1.06	The Social Services Annual Report has been prepared following an in-depth review of current performance by the Social Services Senior Management Team, Service Managers and Performance Officers. The improvement priorities contained within the report are aligned to the priorities contained within our Portfolio Business Plan, the Council's Improvement Plan and associated efficiency plans.
1.07	Members of the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee have been given a prior opportunity to provide comments and feedback on the progress and priorities which has shaped the key messages and priorities contained within this final draft.
1.08	The style of previous reports will be adopted again this year, and the report will be produced in an electronic friendly style by Double Click. The report

	will also be translated into Welsh and be made available on the Flintshire website by the 31 st July, 2019.
1.09	During 2018/19 we have been streamlining services and achieving the best outcomes within the budget constraints that we as a Council have to work to. Processes and service delivery methods have been reviewed to ensure they are as efficient and effective as possible, whilst continuing to deliver good quality outcomes and support to the people of Flintshire. An example of this is the award winning progress for providers programme improving person centred care and quality of care services in Flintshire.
1.10	<p>The draft Annual Report also outlines the improvement priorities identified for 2019/2020 which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the Progress for Providers Programme to include older people who are living at home with domiciliary care services • Implement objectives set out in the Digital Strategy and explore new technology and assistive technology solutions to support improvements in services • Support the delivery of the Children’s Transformation Programme - integrated early intervention and intensive support for children and young people • Work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Council supporting intergenerational work and alternative therapies • Host the Regional Learning Disability Service to transform services for people with learning disabilities, ensuring smart technology is maximised to support them • Support the building of resilient communities by developing the social prescriber role within SPOA • Ensure that all children who are reported as having run away or go missing from home or care have a return interview • Embed the new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures for Adults and Children • Ensure social value is included in the commissioning process • Support the development of micro-care organisations within the domiciliary care sector • Support families to access free childcare and extend the provision through the use of a capital grant • Ensure that our commissioning practices are SMART, including digital mapping of domiciliary care needs • Implement to Mockingbird Foster Care Model in Flintshire • Reduce the need for children to enter care and improve outcomes for children • Continue to improve local placement options for children • Work with Education and Youth to deliver the Additional Learning Needs reforms and support individuals through Transition • Develop a Pathfinder Role to guide individuals through the Early Years Services • Implement the recommendations contained within the North Wales Carers Strategy • Develop the Extra Care Strategy with the completion of Plas Yr Ywen in Holywell and the exploration of options for a 5th extra care scheme in the south of the county

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Council run care home provision through an extension to Marleyfield House in Buckley • Work to transition the HFT commissioned day and work opportunities service to the new Hwb Cyfle site • Address housing needs for vulnerable people, with a particular focus on people with a learning or physical disability • Support the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and support the roles of Responsible Individuals. • Ensure delivery of the national training programme to support VAWDASV (Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence) • Continue to meet the annual inflationary costs of care <p>Continue to look at other methods of delivering care for traditional high cost/low volume placements, focussing on local services that provide quality outcomes and value for money.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The priorities identified within the report are aimed at delivering service improvements, improving outcomes and meeting local needs within the context of achieving challenging financial efficiencies and value for money. The improvement priorities contained within the report have been identified for delivery within existing resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The views of Scrutiny Members were sought at a workshop where the proposed content of the report was discussed. Members also gave feedback on the key developments over during 2018/19 which should be included together with priorities for 2019/20.
3.02	The draft Social Services Annual Report has now been discussed at Social Services Programme Board, COT and Informal Cabinet.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The Social Services Annual Report is required to be published by the authority no later than the 31st July, 2019.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Social Services Annual Report 2018/19

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Dawn Holt Telephone: 01352 702128 E-mail: dawn.holt@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>CIW - Care Inspectorate Wales ensure that services meet the standards the public expect. They register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales. The regulator was formally known as CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales).</p>

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Social Services Annual Report 2018/19 and 2019/20 Priorities



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If you are reading this report online there are links in the last section that give you further information about our services, initiatives and key documents. There is also a glossary at the back that may help explain unfamiliar words and terms.

The report sets out our improvement journey in 2018/19 and demonstrates how we have promoted well-being through our services. If you receive a service from us please let us know if you think this report is a fair reflection of your experiences over the past 12 months.

We welcome any comments you have and your views are crucial if we are to continue to improve services to achieve your outcomes.

You can contact us as follows:

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Executive Suite, Phase 1
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Flintshire
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Email: neil.j.ayling@flintshire.gov.uk



Section 1: Introduction



This is our third Social Services Annual Report as prepared under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, both of which place a statutory requirement on the Council to report annually on its social services functions.

The focus of this legislation is on well-being, and our report summarises the key things that we are doing in Flintshire to support our most vulnerable residents. It describes our challenges, provides our stakeholders with a picture of how we have performed and improved over the last year, and sets out our priorities for the coming year. Stakeholders include the people using our services, our staff, elected members, the general public, our partners, regulators and Welsh Government. Engagement with stakeholders is fundamental to what we do, and informs the development of our services and future plans.

In the report we evaluate our performance against last year's improvement priorities and set out our priorities for next year. These focus on well-being and are linked to the six National Outcomes Standards, which are:

Page 235	NQS 1	Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
	NQS 2	Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being
	NQS 3	Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm
	NQS 4	Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
	NQS 5	Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships
	NQS 6	Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

Section 2: Director's Summary of Performance

Welcome to the eighth annual report for social services in Flintshire and our third under both the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. The purpose of the report is to reflect on how we have performed during 2018/19, and to highlight our priorities and intentions for 2019/20.

Increased life expectancy and complexity of need have a huge impact on demand for social care services and are much-talked-about. Economic austerity is likely to continue indefinitely, and the challenge we face is to provide **high quality services that are both cost-effective and sustainable. Across all council portfolios, and through our elected governance, there is wholehearted support for these objectives.** 2018 saw the launch of our **Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2018-2023**, which sets out how we will work together to ensure that looked after children and care leavers get the support they need and deserve. Early achievements for care leavers include the offer of a work-place mentoring scheme and a landmark discount in council tax. Working smarter is key to our work across all service areas, and our new **Digital Strategy captures our corporate objective to use digital technologies to improve services.**

Last year we had many notable successes. In September, we were delighted to win a prestigious **Social Care Wales Accolade** for our work in improving quality of life for older people living in care homes. Awarded for **'excellent outcomes for people of all ages by investing in the training and development of staff'**, the accolade recognized our innovative and partnership approach to service development. We are equally proud of our involvement in the development of the **North Wales Safeguarding Board's self-neglect protocol**, which was **highly commended** at the accolades ceremony in Cardiff, and for the award that our **Early Help Hub** received at the North Wales Police Problem Orientated Partnerships (POP) awards in August. Our **corporate commitment to building resilient, age-friendly communities** was also acknowledged in the spring when the Older People's Commissioner officially recognized Leeswood and Pontblyddyn as the **first age-friendly community in North Wales.**

Other highlights include the introduction of the **Community Support Initiative** for people living with disabilities, a flagship new service that demonstrates our focus on **prevention and early intervention.** 2018 also saw the launch of the **North**

Wales Integrated Autism Service. Offering advice and support that was previously unavailable to people with autism, this service also gives guidance across council services and partner agencies, **helping us all work together** to support those affected. To achieve greater structural capacity in meeting the demand for social care services, we have **continued to invest in our capital programme.** Llys Raddington Extra Care Scheme opened its doors in Flint in October and plans for the development of a further scheme in Holywell, to be named Plas Yr Ywen, are underway. We have invested in a new 32-bed residential facility adjacent to Marleyfield House residential care home for older people in Buckley, and in Hwb Cyfle, a new day centre in Queensferry for people with learning disabilities. Addressing the housing needs of vulnerable groups in our communities will be a continued focus for us next year.

None of these improvements would be possible without a **hard-working, dedicated and loyal workforce.** Teams across our services have striven to improve their outcomes-based practice, and their personal well-being has been supported corporately through the introduction of an employee assistance programme **Care First.** Guidance for managers on supporting social care staff through traumatic events has recently been published, and the **Council's Working & Caring Policy** helps staff balance caring, home and work life responsibilities.

Next year, **our innovation and desire to improve services** will see us take the lead in a **regional programme to transform learning disability services** across North Wales, giving us the opportunity to pool resources to meet demand. Recognising that our fostering service needs investment, **we will be the first Council in Wales to introduce the internationally-endorsed Mockingbird model.** Across Council services, we will continue to build **resilience within our communities**, and will work to embed a social value approach into our work to bring additional community benefits. Inclusion is endorsed at a corporate level, and our goal is to become the **first Dementia-Friendly Council** in North Wales.

The year ahead will present significant challenges, not least in our commitment to ensure that residential placements for our looked after children are closer to home. We fully endorse the First Minister's emphasis on safely reducing the need for children to enter care and will continue to expand our preventative and early intervention services to support families and children to stay together. In facing this challenge and others, **we will look for innovative and creative solutions.** We see the **funding flexibilities** extended to us by the consolidation of Welsh Government programme grants as an exciting opportunity to be more strategic in **developing services that are preventative, integrated, cost-effective and sustainable.** Working to take this forward in early help and prevention services will help us manage demand for services and be more responsive to the needs of local people.

The priority of our Senior Management Team is to continue to safeguard and provide support to the most vulnerable members of our community, ensuring that ongoing budget pressures do not place people at risk. Reporting annually on our improvement journey gives us the opportunity to reflect on the challenges we face in doing so, and to acknowledge the hard work that makes our achievements possible. We look forward to further success in the year ahead, and sincerely thank all of our staff and partners for their contribution in improving the outcomes and well-being of adults, children, carers and families across Flintshire. Our thanks also go to the individuals who have allowed us to share their stories to help bring to life the difference that our work is making.



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Neil Ayling
Chief Officer Social Services



Councillor Christine Jones
Cabinet Member for Social Services

“None of these improvements would be possible without a **hard-working, dedicated and loyal workforce.**”

Section 3: How are people shaping our services?

In the spirit of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 we want to develop our services by involving the people who use them, and here we give you a flavor of how we are doing this.

Helping young people participate

Corporate Parenting is the phrase we use to describe our responsibility for children who become looked after. This corporate commitment is shared between Council staff, elected members and other people who provide support to children in our care. 2018 saw the launch of our **Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2018-2023**, which outlines what we will do to ensure that looked after children and care leavers get the support they need and deserve. **The Strategy was informed by the views and experiences of our young people**, and focusses on the importance of stable home placements, education and learning opportunities, promoting health and well-being, and leisure and employment opportunities. Knowing and understanding what children and young people need is crucial if we are to improve their outcomes, and here are some of the ways we go about this.

Bright Spots

We support a programme called **Bright Spots**, which is funded by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Early in 2018 all of our looked after children aged 4-18 years were asked to participate in an online survey. We wanted to find out how they feel about their support, relationships and opportunities. 61 (36%) responded, and here are some of the key findings:

What we are doing well:

- The majority feel safe and settled in their placements and trust their carers
- More young people (96%) in Flintshire feel they are being taught life skills compared with young people (86%) in other local authorities.
- School is working well for all the youngest children aged 4-7 years.

What we need to improve:

- Making sure that reviews of contact arrangements consider the views of all children.
- Providing opportunities for young people aged 11-18yrs to build self-esteem and positive self-image.
- Considering how young people might be reassured about the support they can expect to receive in the future.

Young Voices Out Loud

Members of our Participation Group for looked after children and care leavers were amongst those who took part in the **Bright Spots** survey. This group meets regularly with our Participation Officer and in 2018/19 changed its name to **Young Voices Out Loud**. It has participated at various forums, including the regional Voices from Care, and met with notable people and bodies including Care Inspectorate Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The group assists with the planning and hosting of our annual **Pride of Flintshire awards**, an event that celebrates the achievements of our looked after children and care leavers and recognises the contribution of their carers. The Group has also created a 'do's and don'ts list' concerning the treatment of children in foster care, and is working with TGP Cymru, a leading children's rights charity, offering ideas about how children and young people in care can be reached with advocacy support.

We are developing a **Corporate Parenting Action Plan** with our colleagues in health and education so that we can be specific about how we will deliver the commitments outlined in our Corporate Parenting Strategy. In doing so, we will continue to engage with children and young people and will use the key findings from Bright Spots when developing the Plan. The experience of one member of Young Voices Out Loud is captured in the Strategy:

"I've had a positive experience in care and I have felt supported and listened to." (Young person)



Engaging with local people: from service design to delivery

Designing new services

In section 4 we tell you about our **new community services that support people living with disabilities**. Having reviewed our existing commissioned services, we met with local groups and users representing young and older people to find out what they needed going forwards. Key themes emerged, included integration with others, transport, community facilities, services for deaf people and support for people with autism. During the commissioning process, these views were represented on the scoring panel, and they informed the development of the service specifications for the new contracts that were awarded. Some of the things that people told us were:

“We should get out to our community and mix, it would stop us being lonely.” *(Older person)*

“I’m fed up of being asked to bring a member of my family.”

(Person with a hearing impairment speaking about access to interpreters)

“I had to google what my child had.”

(Parent talking about support for children with autism)

Reviewing service delivery

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act (2016) came into operation in April 2018. It focusses on quality and the impact that services are having on the people using them. The Act has prompted us to consider how we can better involve the people who use our care and support services and how we review how well these services are performing. We have asked Taith, an independent organization, to help us with this. By meeting with users of our services, staff and others, we hope to find out how positive outcomes for people are being achieved, and to identify barriers we must overcome. Starting in April 2019 within in-house services, quality review meetings will be held, and our engagement feedback will help us make judgements about how well our services are operating. We will report on our progress next year.

Future plans

Engagement with users and other stakeholders will be key in the development of our new regional programme **‘North Wales Together: Seamless Service for People with Learning Disabilities**. This will further enhance learning disability services across the region, and we will tell you more about this in Section 4. We will also tell you about **our goal to become the first Dementia-Friendly Council in North Wales**. This will involve significant co-production and engagement work with local people and third sector partners, and across all council services. The process will be led by a multi-representative **Dementia-Friendly Steering Group** and will be a key focus for us in 2019/20.

Section 4: Promoting and Improving the well-being of those we help

NQS 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

Continuing to meet the requirements of The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act (2016)

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act (2016) (RISCA) puts people receiving care and support at the heart of the inspection process. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) now assesses how well services are meeting people's well-being outcomes, and the Act enhanced the role and reporting functions of the Responsible Individual (RI) within provider organisations. In both in-house services and the independent sector, our workforce development team is supporting both the registration of the domiciliary workforce and the improved knowledge required for the enhanced role of Responsible Individual. In Section 3 we told you about our engagement strategy for the development of our services, and we will continue to focus on ensuring that users' voices are at the heart of how we progress and support the successful delivery of RISCA.

Developing outcomes-focussed practice

Across our social work teams, we have continued to develop our processes and practices to make them outcomes-focussed. In adult services, peer group supervision sessions consider good examples of outcomes and how the person can be supported to meet them, and creative practice groups meet to examine innovative and bespoke ways of meeting identified outcomes. Our quality panel considers social work applications for funding of services, ensuring that all paperwork is person-centred and written where possible in the persons own words, and small changes made to the format of our assessments and care plans have assisted our practitioners to focus on the person rather than the process. This example demonstrates the benefit of outcomes-based practice:

Following a lengthy hospital stay, a gentleman and his social worker agreed that a period of rehabilitation in a residential home would be beneficial. Being wheelchair dependent, the gentleman took a keen interest in tending to the home's raised plants, and soon became known as the unofficial gardener.



His work, which was valued by others, gave him a sense of purpose and contributed to his physical recovery. Now living independently, the gentleman has plans to transform his own garden into a co-produced fruit and vegetable growing area, explaining "I want to get the community together and give a chance to people like me who are stuck in the house all day to get out there."

Improving quality of life for older people

We continue to support residential care staff to use person-centred practices that promote the well-being of older people. Our programme introduces an accreditation scheme within care homes and uses the self-assessment tool **Progress for Providers** to evidence change. This partnership approach doesn't demand more money, but simply requires everyone involved to do things differently.

One manager told us about a gentleman with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's who had left the residential home several times without informing staff, causing significant concern for his safety. Using the one-page profile, communication chart and learning log, it soon became apparent that this gentleman had always been very practical. He was matched with the home's handyman and supported to assist with weekly maintenance checks. The manager reported that staff are now working together to support this gentleman to make some sense of what is happening to him, seeing him as a person in need of purpose, and not someone they have to stop leaving the building unaccompanied.

In September 2018, we were delighted when the programme **won a prestigious Social Care Wales Accolade** and was a finalist at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) awards. The Social Care Wales Accolades recognize excellence within social care in Wales, and the award won was specifically for **excellent outcomes for people of all ages by investing in the training and development of staff**. Reflections from people involved certainly concur with this:

“Staff have an increase in confidence as they recognise and adapt their support based on what matters to people. As a manager I have seen the programme give real empowerment to the individuals living here, ensuring that their thoughts and wishes are at the forefront of all we do.” *(Clare Roberts, Manager of Haulfryn Care Home in Cymau),*

Progress for Providers has been invaluable in raising awareness amongst managers, owners and staff of care services about what person-centred care is and how it should be delivered. This has resulted in an improved quality of life for people using care services.” *(Officer from Care Inspectorate Wales)*

[Click here to find out more about Progress for Providers.](#)

Promoting the Welsh Language

It's essential that our services take into account the language and cultural needs of local people. We recognize that language is a key factor in building positive relationships and have made changes such as developing our IT systems to record language choice. Welsh language use amongst Council staff is a corporate commitment and work is ongoing towards fulfilling all of our Welsh Language Standards (WLS), which replaced our Welsh Language Scheme in 2016. Completion of the Welsh language skills assessment is now high at 87% and we are working towards this becoming 100%. We continue to work hard to ensure that all employees have completed basic Welsh language skills awareness training, and that public-facing staff receive more specialist training when required.

Improving services with digital technologies

Improving on-line services

Helping local people find the right information to improve their well-being is a corporate objective, and our new **Digital Strategy** sets out how we will use digital technologies to improve our services. Early work has focused on the availability of on-line information and services, including the development of a simple online eligibility checker allowing people to determine whether they are eligible to pay for social care services. We plan to invest in digital apprentices, who will update and improve web content across all Council services. To support the local care sector, we have developed [Care@Flintshire](#), an online resource hub which provides a portal for providers of residential and domiciliary care for older people to share knowledge, access resources and keep up to date with local developments.

Although we are committed to using digital technologies to improve our services, we are equally committed to ensuring that we do not exclude people who do not have technological access or skill. Continued support for these people will be available from frontline officers and via our **Flintshire Connects** offices located across the County.

Improving our data

Working smarter by improving our data is another corporate commitment captured in our Digital Strategy, and one way we are achieving this is by using Graphical Information Systems (GIS). The social services brokerage team, responsible for recording domiciliary care allocations and providers, has historically used a manual mapping process to do this. Our new digital mapping process is helping us support our domiciliary providers by creating more efficient routes and increasing the availability of care.

[Click here to find out more about how the modernisation of this process has resulted in other benefits.](#)

Exploring assistive technologies

Another early objective of the Digital Strategy is the exploration of assistive technologies as an alternative method of support to the traditional model of home care visits. This might, for example, involve using Alexa to remind a person to take medications, or the embedding of sensors in kettles and doorways to sense movement and give safety assurances.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- Expand the Progress for Providers Programme to include older people who are living at home with domiciliary care services
- Implement objectives set out in the Digital Strategy and explore new technology and assistive technology solutions to support improvements in services
- Support the delivery of the Children's Transformation Programme - integrated early intervention and intensive support for children and young people

MS2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental and emotional well-being.

Additional services for people with autism

It's estimated that Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) affect 1 in 100 people, with many falling into a gap between services. In Section 3, we told you how local people have raised this issue. Welsh Government has committed £13 million up to 2021 to the development of an Integrated Autism Service across Wales, and in June 2018 the **North Wales Integrated Autism Service (IAS)** was launched. This is jointly hosted by Flintshire Council and the Health Board on behalf of the North Wales region and offers advice and support that has historically been unavailable for people affected by autism. This includes new adult diagnostic services, support in meeting personal outcomes for adults who do not receive statutory mental health or disability services, and advice and support for families and carers of children with autism. The IAS also offers training, consultation and advice to other Council services and partner agencies, **helping us all work together to support people with autism**. One person told us:

“There is some very valuable work being done with this service in terms of helping those who have fallen through the gaps in services in the past. Diagnosis is being speeded up, sign-posting, awareness raising and so on.” *(Person using the IAS)*

Community support for people with disabilities

In Section 3 we described how we consulted with local groups in the development of integrated community support services for children and adults living with disabilities. From October 2018 four organizations became collectively known as the **Community Support Initiative**, a new service that demonstrates our continued focus on **prevention and early intervention**. Leonard Cheshire Disability, KeyRing Living Support Networks, Deafness Support Network, and Centre of Sight, Sign and Sound are the organizations that make up the Initiative. They provide advice and support relating to sensory loss, community enrichment and transport, and technology and equipment. Support is focused on children and adults who do not currently meet the threshold for Council services, including those without a formal diagnosis. The Community Support Initiative has strong links with our **Single Point of Access (SPOA)** service and works closely with other third sector organizations and support groups in supporting people to meet their personal outcomes. The Partnership Coordinator is Leonard Cheshire Disability which can be contacted via csi@leonardcheshire.org.



Transforming services for people with learning disabilities

Flintshire Council is to host a regional programme that will transform learning disability services across North Wales. By sharing regional resources and best practice, the aim of **North Wales Together: Seamless Services for People with Learning Disabilities** is to provide integrated support for people with learning disabilities, engaging fully with them and other stakeholders from design to delivery. The project will focus on five key work-streams, including developing integrated assessments and records, and supporting the regional workforce with value-based skills. Regionally, we want to use our resources effectively by working together to produce services and meet future demand, and to develop inclusive communities in which people with learning disabilities can make friends, build relationships and



develop social and work opportunities. The use of **assistive technology** will be integral to this work, and we want to develop skills, knowledge and training about the potential of technologies such as smart phones and voice-controlled personal assistants to support people with learning disabilities.

Developing age-friendly communities

Flintshire has the largest elderly population in North Wales, and we are committed to developing communities that are 'age-friendly'. This commitment was recognized last spring when **Leeswood and Pontblyddyn became the first community in North Wales to gain accreditation from the Older People's Commissioner as part of the 'Ageing Well in Wales' programme**. Here, local people have driven actions that support participation in community life, including developing a "what's on" newsletter and a community café. Similar work is now underway in two further Flintshire communities, Holywell and District and the Alyn Villages of Hope, Caergwrle and Abermorddu. Given that many activities now rely on **digital connectivity**, poor service in some rural areas and community buildings is an issue, but **opportunities for improvement are being explored through the Council's Enterprise and Regeneration Team**. Access to learning and employment opportunities for older people presents another challenge. Informal learning and volunteering opportunities are shared regularly through our older people's network, but funding for education is focused primarily on statutory and further education, and national employment and training programmes target the 16-25 age group. Tackling ageism and discrimination needs to be driven at a national level in order to achieve real equality of opportunity for older people.

Tackling loneliness and social isolation

Loneliness and social isolation are issues that affect people of all ages and are linked to a string of psychological and physical problems. People who need care and support are particularly vulnerable, and **we can't address these issues in isolation**. Across all Council services we have responded to the Welsh Government consultation on **Connected Communities - Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation**. Locally we have set up a focus group to help identify older people who might be at risk and to consider how we might improve their 'connectedness' within local communities. Together with our housing colleagues, community groups and partners organizations (including Age Connects, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Public Health Wales and North Wales Fire & Rescue Service), we have developed a **Creating Connections** referral tool for use in **home fire safety checks**, helping people to access local activities, community transport and specialist support.

Building resilient communities

Some communities require particular support to help prevent loneliness, social isolation and other challenges. **Community resilience** is a term which broadly refers to the ability of communities to withstand and recover from adverse situations, and here are some of the ways we are strengthening resilience in Flintshire:

Community regeneration

The challenges facing some Flintshire residents, including those who live on the Holway housing estate in Holywell, include poverty, substance abuse, crime and anti-social behavior. Together with our third sector partners, we want to make sustainable improvements that are driven by community members and leaders. In Holywell, these include arranging weekly play sessions for children, and providing nutritious hot meals during school holidays. We are investing in the maintenance of properties, gardens and communal areas, and want to redesign the way we deliver some of our advice and support services so that people can access these in the hub of their communities. In doing so, we will use what we have learnt from the development of our successful Early Help Hub, which we tell you about later.

Let's Get Moving Flintshire

Through its **Let's Get Moving** initiative, Public Health Wales is encouraging communities and workforces to be more active. The Council has taken this on board and is supporting its workforce to incorporate physical activity into the working day. One example is the publication of walking maps for office locations. A community-based project targeting schoolchildren in Flint is another initiative being progressed, with an emphasis on walking routes to school and use of green spaces during the school day.

Social prescribing

In partnership with Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and funded through the Integrated Care Fund, we have embedded a **Third Sector Coordinator within our Single Point of Access (SPOA) service**. This role focusses on supporting people to identify what matters to them and on achieving these outcomes with support available within the third sector. In March 2019, a second post holder was appointed to the team as a **Social Prescriber** with a specific remit to make links with community GP Practices, encouraging them to signpost patients presenting with non-clinical issues to SPOA. **SPOA can be contacted on 01352 804443**



Developing our dementia-friendly communities

With dementia prevalence increasing, our **Dementia Action Plan** continues to help us target the issues impacting most on those affected. Stigma, isolation and participation are among these issues, and our Plan is directing actions that promote **community, corporate & social responsibility** in tackling them.

Our **seven dementia-friendly communities**, representing the whole of Flintshire, host a number of activities and initiatives that have been made possible due to partnerships between organizations and local people. Examples are film screenings at Theatre Clwyd and Flint Cinema, and our **eight community Memory Cafes**. Other developments include intergenerational projects that have funded dementia awareness sessions for local schools, and the provision of alternative therapies such as animal-based activities. Links with care homes ensure that their residents are able to participate in these activities, and the valuable contribution of volunteers is recognized via the Tempo Time Credits rewards scheme.

For one lady we know, participation in dementia-friendly activities with her husband helped sustain her caring role prior to his deteriorating cognition and admission to a care home. She remains involved and is an active member of her dementia-friendly community steering group, giving her purpose as she adjusts to living alone.

Our challenge is to give our dementia-friendly communities a structure that will help them share resources, sustain what's been accomplished and achieve much more. Promoting inclusion through understanding extends to staff across all Council services, many of whom regularly come into contact with people affected by dementia. To seal our commitment to supporting people affected by dementia, **we propose to work with our partners and local people to become a Dementia-Friendly Council.**

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Work towards becoming a Dementia-Friendly Council supporting intergenerational work and alternative therapies**
- **Host the Regional Learning Disability Service to transform services for people with learning disabilities and play a leading role in the Regional Transformation Programme for mental health, children's services and community support**
- **Support the building of resilient communities by developing the social prescriber role within SPOA**

NQS3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.

Improving our safeguarding processes

Our Safeguarding Unit continues to give information, advice, guidance and support to independent and public sector organizations, internal teams and the public, and provides regular training on child protection case conferences, adult safeguarding, mental capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). We have improved our referral pathway for adults from our Single Point of Access (SPOA) through to the Unit, helping robust and consistent action to be taken to protect and safeguard individuals.

Regional developments include the successful implementation of hoarding and self-neglect protocols, developed by the **North Wales Safeguarding Board**. The Hoarding Protocol sets out a framework for social care and other relevant agencies to work in partnership using an outcomes-focused, solutions-based model, offering clear guidance to staff working with people who hoard. The **North Wales Regional Self-Neglect Protocol** was developed to assess risks and agree co-ordinated action between partner agencies in cases where people neglect themselves. It has given a common template for assessing levels of neglect and ensures agencies work together and share information in such cases. The protocol was one of three projects shortlisted for the award **effective approaches to safeguarding** at the

prestigious **Social Care Wales Accolades in September 2018**, where it was **highly commended**. We are proud that our Adult Safeguarding Manager was interviewed as part of the presentation video for the ceremony.

[Click here to find out more about the North Wales Regional Self-Neglect Protocol](#)

Improving our safeguarding practices

Reflecting on our professional practice has been a key focus for us, and in December 2018 the Regional Safeguarding Board held its first multi-agency event to share learning from adult, child and domestic homicide reviews. This allowed practitioners to share key lessons learned from local, regional and national cases, and to make improvements to working practices. The Regional Safeguarding Board ensures that all recommendations that arise from reviews are progressed, and its website holds information on child and adult practice review key themes.

One child practice review highlighted that GPs don't always contribute to information sharing in child protection case conferences. This is of particular significance when considering medications prescribed for children and is extremely relevant in cases of neglect. As a result of this review's recommendations, the Health Board amended the GP report format presented at child protection conferences and added a specific question about medication. This report template has since been embedded into Flintshire practice.

Developing advocacy support

Making important decisions is only achievable for some people with the support of an independent advocate, and this support is particularly important within safeguarding. Here, advocacy services are used as Relevant Person's Representatives (RPRs) when undertaking DOLS assessments, and in child protection case conferences for parents who may have no other means of support. When adult safeguarding reports are received, consideration is always given to whether or not the subject of the referral needs an independent advocate to ensure their voice is heard.

The importance of advocacy is reflected in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which considers that wider groups of people should have access to advocacy support than has previously been the case. The Act developed the idea of an **Independent Professional Advocate (IPA)**, and we have worked with Age Cymru to embed the statutory IPA service into our commissioning arrangements. In doing so, we listened to the people who use our advocacy services, who told us they need better quality advocacy information. Providing good information is a requirement of the Act, and we incorporated this into our contract service

specifications. Whilst we previously had numerous advocacy contracts in place, we now have three, and each provider is invited to our practice team meetings, a development that is contributing further to the provision and sharing of good advocacy information.

Working to prevent child sexual exploitation

Praise for our Victim Contact Team

The professionalism and commitment of our Victim Contact Team has been praised by both North Wales Police and Cheshire Police. The Team has played a key part in ensuring the conviction of people involved in trafficking children for the purpose of sexual exploitation and has supported victims to maintain the care of their children and to access suitable housing.

Missing Exploited Trafficked

The Missing Exploited Trafficked (MET) Strategic Group was set up in Flintshire and Wrexham in February 2018 in recognition of the need to broaden the discussion around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The Group is supported by two operational groups and brings together partners from statutory agencies and the third sector to share data and analysis on patterns and trends. This has given us a broader understanding of the specific issues affecting us regionally and enables us to identify hot spot areas for targeting by North Wales Police. Another key development is the creation of a **Flintshire Missing Coordinator** post. Introduced in January 2019, the Coordinator carries out all **return home** interviews for missing children, alongside gathering data and reporting missing episodes through to North Wales Police and the MET Strategic Group.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Ensure that all children who are reported as having run away or go missing from home or care have a return interview.**
- **Embed the new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures for Adults and Children**

NQS4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society.

Reviewing how we commission and purchase

North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement

In response to the new legislative framework in Wales, we envisaged local providers of domiciliary care contributing to outcomes-focussed assessment and care planning, supporting enablement and helping to reduce reliance on managed care and support wherever possible. We wanted to help them to achieve these aims by clustering packages of care, reducing travel time and offering some degree of business certainty. Together with the six other North Wales health and commissioning authorities, we have contributed to a project that has established a **North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement**.

When one of our domiciliary providers faced difficulties, use of the Agreement enabled us to swiftly and safely recommission packages of care with alternative providers, with the outcomes for individuals being minimal disruption and stress.

We are working hard to make other contractual arrangements more robust and have completed a **residential pre-placement agreement for children and young people**. Next year we will examine our contractual arrangements for **adults living in supported living settings**, part of our commitment to enhancing learning disability services in Flintshire.

Direct payments

April 2019 saw the launch of our **new Direct Payment Support Service**. This is being delivered by a new in-house team which is supporting people to look at creative and innovative ways of using their direct payments. The new service will provide a digital platform, connecting people with personal assistants and carers and providing 24-hour access to legal advice and support.

New models of care

To help meet the demands of our ageing population, we have been considering new and innovative ways of developing the local care sector. This includes exploring the feasibility of **micro-care support services**, small organisations that provide person-centred care and support. Next year, we will work to develop an environment in which micro-care enterprises can thrive.

Social value

Social value is a concept that asks us to think about the things outside of financial value that are important to us. It involves looking beyond the price of each individual contract that we award and considering the collective benefit to our communities in choosing to award it. We have developed a cross departmental **Social Value Implementation Group** to assist in meeting our social value legislative duties and understand the importance of considering and measuring social value from the perspectives of those affected by our work. Our **Social Value Strategy** will help us do this and will also enhance our efforts to build community resilience in Flintshire.

Supporting families with free childcare

Our **Early Years and Family Support Service** has continued to lead the way in ensuring that working parents are able to benefit from the Welsh Government funded free childcare offer for 3- and 4-year-olds. The Service has been funded to implement the scheme in Denbighshire and Wrexham, and has had a busy year ensuring full roll-out across the counties. Over 3000 applications have been received, and the initiative is supporting families to participate in the workplace across the region.

Providing day and work opportunities for people with learning disabilities

In February 2018 Hft, a national learning disability charity, began delivering our day and work opportunities for people with learning disabilities, and providing job coach support for more than 100 people in work placements across Flintshire. Through engagement with local businesses and charities, eleven people have been supported into paid work and others have secured new volunteer placements in local hospitals, shops and businesses. Hft is developing partnerships with public, private and voluntary sector organizations to create new work, education and leisure opportunities for people with learning disabilities, and has generated more than £30,000 in additional fundraising income for reinvestment in services. Plans are underway to establish an employment support programme known as **Project Search**, which will run in partnership with Pennaf Housing Group, Coleg Cambria and other partners. With a proven track record, this will support a group of young people aged 18-24 year with learning disabilities to become interns and train in work placement roles for twelve months, with the aim of finding paid employment.

[Click here to find out more about the work of Hft](#)

Helping care leavers

Boosting career prospects

Looked after children and children leaving care remain one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. We have been working hard to improve the experiences of young people leaving care with a particular focus on promoting work opportunities. BOOST is an acronym for **'Be Optimistic about Opportunities for Support and Training'** and was introduced in April 2018. A corporate mentoring scheme for care leavers aged 16 and over, it offers them work experience of one day a week over a twelve-week period. This gives the young people a taste of working in an area of interest, and provides them with mentor support. After completion, the young person has experience for their CV, a reference and an opportunity to practice interview skills, all of which boost their chances of gaining employment. To date we have secured five placements with support from Aura Leisure, Streetscene, Marleyfield Care Home and County Hall, and one young person has gained paid employment. Four placements broke down through non-attendance, though we are still working with the young people to secure further work experience through the BOOST scheme. We now know that pre-placement support work would be beneficial to the young people to increase their chances of success.

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Council tax discounts

Managing budgets can be very challenging for most people, but particularly so for care leavers who are typically characterized by limited family support networks and who are faced with paying bills at a young age. The Children's Commissioner has highlighted this issue, and we are leading the way in responding to it by agreeing **a landmark policy to secure council tax discounts for young people who have left care to live independently**. Most care leavers are entitled to some level of reduction on their council tax, and awards have totaled £1,900 to date.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Ensure social value is included in the commissioning process**
- **Support the development of micro-care organisations within the domiciliary care sector**
- **Support families to access free childcare and extend the provision through the use of a capital grant**
- **Ensure that our commissioning practices are SMART, including digital mapping of domiciliary care needs**

NQS5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

Intensive support for families

Children can enter the care system at different points in their lives and for a variety of reasons. These can range from family breakdown, abuse or neglect, to voluntary arrangements to support children's welfare whilst work is undertaken to rebuild relationships or parenting capacity. There are over 200 looked after children in Flintshire. Whilst the majority live with their parents, foster parents or kinship carers, a small proportion of around 10% have more complex needs and need supportive residential placements. We are committed to delivering safe, high quality, local placements for these children and young people, but there are significant challenges in doing so. Our **Children's Services Placement Strategy** sets out how we will overcome these challenges and **improve outcomes for our looked after children**. As with many other areas of our work, the Strategy focusses on **prevention and early intervention**. We want to reduce and manage the demand for residential placements, and one way we are doing this is through providing **intensive family support services**.

Early Help Hub

Research shows that investment in early help services can prevent children entering the social care system and help manage needs within families to avoid them escalating. Established in July 2017, the **Early Help Hub** is a partnership between the Council, North Wales Police, the Health Board and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, and is a key initiative in our investment in **preventative family services**. The Hub aims to give families of children who exhibit **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** access to the right information and advice at the right time, enhancing their resilience and reducing demand on statutory services. The agencies that make up the Early Help Hub share information and co-ordinate an early response, supporting families without the need for statutory intervention. **We are delighted that the work of the Hub was recognized when it won an award at the North Wales Police Problem Orientated Partnerships (POP) awards in August.**

[Click here to find out more about our Early Help Hub](#)

Therapeutic support for mental and emotional health

The help available for children who need support with mental and emotional health is consistently being raised as a concern. Across North Wales there is high demand for specialist Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), with the volume of referrals exceeding the service's capacity to respond. The situation is compounded by the high proportion of referrals relating to young people who have emotional, behavioral and mental health issues, with a particular increase in children experiencing issues with attachment and self-harm. These needs fall outside the threshold for specialist mental health support from CAMHS and, regionally, there is a clear recognition that there should be appropriate **therapeutic support** for these children and their families. North Wales Councils and the Health Board have secured funding from the Welsh Government to develop integrated services in registered settings, termed as 'assessment and support hubs'. These will support those young people who have emotional, behavioural and mental health issues but do not have a diagnosable mental health disorder. These young people are at high risk of entering statutory care services, residential schools or the criminal justice system, and the new service will give them and their families intensive, targeted support. The service will be established in 2019/20.

Short residential breaks

Families and carers of children who have complex physical needs are often under great physical and emotional stress. Offering short residential breaks for children can help prevent the breakdown of family situations and the need for emergency or long-term residential placements. **Arosfa offers respite care for children with profound disabilities** in a safe and secure environment, enabling them to build

independent skills, mix with peers and maximize their opportunities for the future. Work is underway to develop the services delivered at Arosfa and we hope to expand the service in the near future with the addition of two additional bedrooms.

Parenting programmes

The **Flintshire Parenting Framework (2018)** outlines a structure for the further development of our parenting programmes, and forms part of our wider strategy for **early intervention and prevention**. The programmes aim to work with parents and carers to support the development of parenting techniques, strengthening family relationships and resilience, and preventing the breakdown of family units. These interventions involve input from the Team Around the Family, Family Group Meetings and the Family Information Service.



Developing an 'Edge of Care' service

Within statutory services the work of the **Targeted Support Team** is invaluable in supporting families whose needs cannot be met by early support services. The team stabilises family relationships and prevents escalation to higher level services, and this year will progress the development of an **Edge of Care Service**. The aim of this will be to provide structured, evidence-based interventions that develop problem-solving skills within families, build resilience and achieve positive, sustainable behaviour change. The prevention of further escalation and referral to care proceedings will give positive outcomes, enabling children to remain safely living within the family home on a sustainable basis.

Strengthening foster care

We recognise the value of our fostering service in **reducing and managing the demand for residential placements**, and our Children's Services Placement Strategy's underpinning analysis highlights that we need to invest in new fostering models to improve placement stability and carer retention.

The Mockingbird model

There are particular challenges in finding foster placements for older children and sibling groups. In September 2018, our fostering service secured funding to help us research and develop a model of foster care known as the **Mockingbird Model**. This model creates a community of foster carers whose members provide support to each other as well as to the children in their care. **We will be the first Council in Wales to introduce this innovative and internationally-endorsed fostering model.**

The Repatriation and Prevention Service (RAP)

We continue to support a small number of looked after children through the work of our **Repatriation and Prevention Service (RAP)**, which is **funded by the Integrated Care Fund (ICF)**. A partnership between the Council, Health Board, CAMHS and Action for Children, and supported by experienced foster carers, the RAP provides an **early intervention and preventative therapy service** for young people and their carers. It aims to stabilize placements that are at risk of breakdown, repatriate young people to Flintshire's care and reduce demand for out of county residential placements. Solutions focus on enhancing the emotional well-being and resilience of young people, and developing their social and communication skills.

Working to provide residential placements for children close to home

Despite our commitment to preventative services, there will always be a small proportion of looked after children who need residential placements, and we want to make sure that these children and young people can remain **close to home**.

The challenge

Last year we said that **providing high quality, stable local placements** was a key priority for us, but this is a commitment that **presents us with significant challenges**. Increased demand and insufficient supply locally has resulted in a providers market in which residential care providers are able to be selective of the young people they accept. This often results in young people with higher levels of complex needs and behavioural challenges being more difficult to place. When scarce beds do become available, a number of local services may be seeking to secure them, resulting in intense competition. Such high demand puts pressure on the Council's finances, with providers able to dictate the cost of the provision. Flintshire Council's budget for looked after children in 2017/18 was approximately £7.8 million, with 65% of this having been spent on residential placements outside of Flintshire.

Our response

We are responding to this challenge in several ways. Placement sourcing, previously the responsibility of Social Workers, is now centralized within our brokerage team, offering consistent and experienced practice. Our research tells us that the current level of placements is heavily reliant on the independent sector, and we are mapping the local market and establishing a co-productive approach to working with stakeholders. We will investigate the feasibility of establishing new, Council-run children's residential home provision, as well as looking to where existing providers have plans to expand, an approach that we anticipate will increase our control over

the type and quality of provision. We will also seek to work with the existing local housing provision to develop an 'assessment and support hub' to support children and young people who become looked after and do not want to move out of their local area due to their strong friendship networks and links to education, leisure and other local facilities and services. We have now joined the 4C's consortium and will be working at a local, regional and national level to develop placement choice and enhance quality of provision for looked after children.



Funding flexibilities: facilitating a strategic approach for early help, prevention and support services

Welsh Government has announced that, from 2019/20, several Local Authority programme grants will consolidate into two overarching grants encompassing children and communities, and housing support. The intent is for Councils to have better scope and flexibility in the design of services that are integrated, sustainable and cost-effective, and that enhance a preventative approach in supporting vulnerable people. In Flintshire, we view this change as an opportunity to be more

strategic in how we plan, commission and review the impact of our services, and work is already underway to streamline processes to manage the extended flexibilities for early help, prevention and support grants. A Chief Officers Group will be operational from April 2019, and from April 2020 there will be a single budget approach to the two grants that is supported by a single delivery plan.

The benefits of bringing together key funding streams and having greater funding flexibilities include a reduction in overlapping areas of work, the pooling of knowledge and resources, greater transparency in resourcing decisions, better understanding of emerging need, more integrated support pathways, and an opportunity to address funding inequalities (where applicable). This new strategic governance will also give us an **opportunity to develop an Early Help and Prevention Strategy**, which will direct us on what is needed from our workforce and from wider council and partner initiatives if we are to achieve our objectives.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- Implement the Mockingbird foster care model in Flintshire
- Reduce the need for children to enter care and improve outcomes for children
- Continue to improve local placement options for children
- Work with Education and Youth to deliver the Additional Learning Needs reforms and support individuals through Transition
- Develop a Pathfinder Role to guide individuals through the Early Years Services
- Implement the recommendations contained within the North Wales Carers Strategy

NQS6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Developing Extra Care



Supporting independent living is a key priority for us, and following on from the success of **Llys Eleanor** in Shotton and **Llys Jasmine** in Mold, **Llys Raddington** extra care scheme opened its doors to tenants in Flint in October 2018. A partnership initiative between the Council, Welsh Government, and Pennaf housing group, the scheme offers 73 purpose-built one-or two-bedroom apartments for local people aged 60 and over. The Council provides the care and support to tenants, whilst Pennaf manages the building and delivers the catering. As with our other extra care schemes, Llys Raddington gives people a safe, social and supportive home environment that promotes independence, and includes apartments that have been adapted specifically to meet the needs of people living with dementia.

Construction work continues on the new extra care scheme in Holywell, which is being developed in partnership with Wales & West housing association. Located near the town centre and close to the local hospital and health centre, this scheme will offer 55 apartments for people aged 50 and over. It will be named **Plas Yr Ywen** in reference to the large yew tree and ancient woodland on site, and is scheduled to be open to tenants in spring 2020.

Expanding the Council-owned Marleyfield House residential care home

To achieve **greater structural capacity in meeting the demand social care services**, we have committed to investing in a new 32-bed residential facility adjacent to Marleyfield House residential care home in Buckley. Construction on the building is scheduled to begin in November this year and it is anticipated that the new facility will be fully operational by early 2021. A partnership between the Council and Health Board, it will offer additional residential care beds for older people, some short-term stay options and centralised intermediate care/discharge to assess beds. An innovative design is being developed in collaboration with our construction partner and in consultation with existing residents and members of the local community, and we hope the details will be finalised in the next few months.

Investing in a new day centre for people with learning disabilities

Despite significant financial challenges, the Council has invested £4m from its capital programme in an exciting development that will provide a state-of-the-art day centre for people with learning disabilities. The building will replace the nearby existing day centre at Glanrafon, Queensferry, and will be named **Hwb Cyfle**, which translates to Hub for Opportunities. This name encapsulates the centre's ethos to provide equal opportunities for people with learning disabilities to work, learn and build social relationships in an inclusive environment. The new building is due to open in July 2019 and has been designed with input from service staff and from people supported in the service and their families. Accessibility has been a key focus for the design, and people with additional needs have played a significant role in this. Personal care facilities, accessible to all members of the community, have been included to meet the 'Gold Standard' defined by the Changing Places campaign, meaning that they will be suitable for use by people with disabilities for whom standard accessible toilets are unsuitable. The result will be a modern and highly efficient building for use by learning disability services, health colleagues and the wider community.



Developing suitable accommodation for adults with disabilities

We have been full partners in the development of the **Council's Housing Strategy** and recognise the need to develop suitable accommodation for adults living with disabilities in Flintshire. A shortage of appropriate, temporary accommodation has been a particular concern for people who have had an acute illness or injury resulting in a lengthy hospital admission. Often in such instances, the person in question has been unable to return to their own home until significant adaptations have been made, limiting them to either an extended hospital stay or a short-term residential placement. Neither of these options are appropriate. As part of our main capital programme in 2018/19 we have begun to work on the development of a new transition house at **Glan Y Morfa**, Connah's Quay. Funded through the Integrated Care Fund, this ex-warden's accommodation will be converted into a three bedroom, fully accessible property for short-term use.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Develop the Extra Care Strategy with the completion of Plas Yr Ywen in Holywell and the exploration of options for a 5th extra care scheme in the south of the county**
- **Expand Council-run care home provision through an extension to Marleyfield House in Buckley**
- **Work to transition the Hft commissioned day and work opportunities service to the new Hwb Cyfle site**
- **Address housing needs for vulnerable people, with a particular focus on people with a learning or physical disability**

Section 5: How we do what we do

Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

Working regionally

Our Workforce Development Team continues to strive to make sure that the local workforce has the skill, knowledge and competence to meet the requirements of social care legislation in Wales. We remain committed to the North Wales Workforce Strategy, which is aligned to the priorities of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board and continues to focus on embedding the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. From this work, strong relationships have developed between workforce development managers across North Wales, encouraging an integrated approach when addressing challenges and opportunities.

Sharing outcomes-based practice

With the focus of our work being on supporting people receiving care and support to achieve their personal outcomes, we know that this approach must be reflected within our own organizational culture. Across both adults' and children's services, we are developing working practices that support staff to identify and achieve what matters to them at work. Working with other Councils, we are sharing experiences and ideas about how best to embed this outcomes-focused approach.

We are also providing **outcomes-focussed training** for social workers and the residential provider managers who are participating in our Progress for Providers programme. This will take place between May 2019 and February 2020 and is being supported by the development of a good practice guide. 'Quality matters' meetings and quality panels take place regularly and give professionals the opportunity to develop, share and reflect on their outcomes-based practice.

Values-based recruitment: a new approach

Across the care sector there are difficulties in recruiting care and support staff and we have made changes in response to this. Our new **values-based approach** to recruitment involves using a range of techniques to help us recruit staff who have the right attitudes and values for the job, attributes that are especially important in social care. We are also supporting Social Care Wales' national recruitment



campaign **We Care Wales** by working closely with Job Centre Plus to promote and publicize opportunities in our growing local care sector.

Nurturing our leaders: programmes for manager

We continue to develop and support our managers along with staff who have leadership potential. These programmes include Step Up to Management, Social Services Practitioner, Middle Manager Development and Team Manager Development. Succession plans are key to our improvement journey, and our senior managers, along with colleagues in Human Resources, have identified business-critical roles and undertaken an analysis of staff in those roles to create a risk assessment. Work continues to match the information contained within our appraisal process to develop our existing staff to meet those succession plans.

Consistency for Social Workers

To support our social workers, we are using **The first three years in practice. A framework for social workers induction into qualified practice and continuing professional education & learning**. This was published in 2017 by Social Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales. To promote consistency across North Wales, regional workforce development teams have agreed learning outcomes for all the training proposed in the framework. This will help when social workers transfer to

work across Councils in North Wales, supporting consistency of skill, knowledge and competence. The workforce development team will also be providing a mentoring programme for senior social workers to ensure there is effective support for newly qualified social workers during this first three years. The Council has committed to a support plan for all new social workers to ensure that they receive adequate support and training particularly during their first year after qualifying.

Supporting frontline staff

For staff who provide direct care and support, our priority has been the launch of the **All-Wales Induction Framework**. Whilst developments on the content of Framework's core modules have been delayed, in partnership with Social Care Wales we have delivered **Getting it Right** sub-regional workshops to support care providers with the potential challenges. We have also delivered briefing workshops for in-house and independent sector providers. The changes within the induction have impacted on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and our assessors have been working regionally and locally to support providers with this. We have also worked sub-regionally in partnership with Llandrillo College to offer a social care level two award to new staff so they have the required qualification to register with Social Care Wales. These will continue into 2019-20, as will supporting staff in achieving levels 2, 3 and 5 in dementia care and autism.

Complying with the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act

Our role remains crucial in providing support for the registration of Flintshire domiciliary care workers and managers as required by RISCA. We have delivered registration workshops in partnership with Social Care Wales, and intend to continue this support both locally and regionally. To support improving the knowledge required for the role of the Responsible Individual and the expectations within it we have delivered both regional and local workshops. A key focus from these sessions will be to support the training and development needs of Responsible Individuals to ensure they are equipped and competent to deliver the role effectively.

Promoting the well-being of our workforce

The well-being of our workforce is fundamental if we are to improve our services. In conjunction with the recognised local trade unions, we are pleased to have reached an agreement on an **updated pay model** which ensures that **all directly employed Council employees are paid a Minimum Foundation Living Wage** with effect from April 2019. The recently introduced Employee Assistance Programme **Care First**, gives staff and their family members emotional and practical support for issues at home or in work, signposting to outside agencies when additional specialist advice and support is needed. Guidance for managers on supporting social care staff through traumatic events has recently been published, and the **Council's Working**

& Caring Policy helps staff balance caring, home and work life responsibilities, allowing for paid and unpaid time away from work in such situations. An **Employee Well-Being Strategy** is under development, aiming to provide staff with a safe and healthy working environment, improve physical and emotional wellbeing, encourage and support employees to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles, and improve employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Support the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and support the roles of Responsible Individuals.**
- **Ensure delivery of the national training programme to support VAWDASV (Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence)**

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For The Future

The importance of scrutiny

This year we began the roll-out of our self-service finance monitoring software (Collaborative Planning), allowing managers to view and monitor their service budgets in real-time. Running alongside this is the detailed financial monitoring undertaken by individual service managers together with their designated finance officers, senior managers reviewing their service areas with designated finance managers and the social services accountant producing and presenting detailed finance monitoring reports for the Social Services Management and the Social Services Programme Board.

In addition, Social Services held two Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Workshops in October. These provided Elected Members (otherwise known as Councillors) with detailed information about the social services portfolio budget, how it is constructed, how it meets its duties and the demands placed on the budget. The workshop also presented to Elected Members the cost pressures which remain on the Authority and how services are regularly reviewed for their resilience during this period of continuing austerity.

Giving value for money

Flintshire continues to be an active member in the **North Wales Pooled Budget Group**, and to work with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board colleagues to deliver the revenue costs for the expansion of residential care at Marleyfield House in Buckley through a pooled budget agreement.

We are developing a process of aligning budget monitoring information with performance data to better predict in-year financial outturn as well as contributing to our forecasting information. We are continuing to revisit existing contracts and service level agreements to ensure we are receiving value for money whilst delivering against outcomes. An example of this is the newly tendered community disability services contracts, the service specifications and outcomes for which have been co-produced with service users and their families. Providers were encouraged to work together to deliver a central point of access for people with disabilities helping them increase their independence. The contract delivers enhanced value for money with service delivery focused on the needs identified by the users of services and those involved in their care.

In children's services the local care market continues to be developed by fostering close working relationships with independent sector providers in North Wales to deliver care and support for local children. We will continue to ensure we have cost-effective ways of meeting identified needs using commissioned contracts. We will also continue to build on our existing close working relationship with our independent care providers, working with them to understand their cost pressures and acknowledging their demands through our care fee structure.

Whilst budgets remain challenging across public services with year-on-year reductions in funding for local government, we in Flintshire have continued to work hard to protect social services and to deliver quality statutory service requirements. In addition to these statutory requirements we have worked to innovate and shape the future of our service provision, as well as investing in our in-house care provision through capital projects such as Hwb Cyfle and Marleyfield House Care Home expansion.

Our priorities for 2019/20 will be to:

- **Continue to meet the annual inflationary costs of care**
- **Continue to look at other methods of delivering care for traditional high cost/low volume placements, focussing on local services that provide quality outcomes and value for money**

Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Who we are

Elected Members represent the residents of Flintshire and play an important part in the governance of the Council. They agree the Council's priorities and approve policies to deliver its continuous improvement. Flintshire Council has 70 elected members who represent their ward interests and participate in full Council meetings to oversee the performance of all aspects of the Council. One Member is elected by their peers to represent each portfolio area. These are known as Cabinet Members and together with the Leader and Deputy Leader, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Officers, they form the Council's Cabinet.

How we make decisions

Each Cabinet Member is supported by Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and for Social Services this is the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Because of the close working relationship with the Education and Youth Portfolio, the Council also holds joint Health and Social Care and Education and Youth Scrutiny Committee meetings, to discuss services for children and young people that cut across both social services and education. The Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services are also involved in the social services work programme through the Social Services Programme Board and the Cabinet Member also attends the Social Services Management Team meetings every month.

The officers of the Council are led by the Chief Executive Officer who is supported by Chief Officers responsible for each of the portfolio areas. The Chief Officer for Social Services has the statutory "Director of Social Services" role. The Council's structural arrangements for both members and officers are clearly laid out. The constitution details how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to make sure that these decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Council also has its own internal governance through a system of internal audit. The outcomes of audits are monitored by the Audit Committee and officers can be called to give evidence to the committee should concerns be raised regarding their service areas.

Our partnership working

Flintshire has a strong record of partnership working, and in Section 4 we describe some of the services and initiatives that we have developed with other bodies and agencies. These include our Early Help Hub, and the work we are doing to promote resilience within our communities. At the heart of our collaborative culture is the **Flintshire Public Services Board**. Established in April 2016, this statutory body

is made up of senior leaders from public and voluntary sector organizations. It aims to ensure that statutory and third sector partners work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration, and these priorities are set out in the [Well-being Plan for Flintshire 2017- 2023](#).

One of these five priorities is “Healthy and Independent Living” within which are a number of partnership initiatives including the Early Help Hub.

The **North Wales Regional Partnership Board** was also established in 2016 and has a membership representing statutory bodies, third sector partners, carers and users of services. The Board works to enhance the integration, efficiency and effectiveness of outcomes-focused care and support services in North Wales, and has been successful in its bid for a new Welsh Government fund made available to transform health and social care services in Wales. In 2019/20, Flintshire will host the Regional Learning Disability Transformation Service, and will play a leading role in the regional transformation programmes for mental health services, children’s services and community support. We are also an active member of the **North Wales Social Care and Well-being Improvement Collaborative**, which includes the six councils in North Wales, the Health Board and other partners. This works to maximise resources, reduce duplication and create greater consistency in services across North Wales. Details about the regional projects and events being run as part of this collaborative programme can be found on www.northwalescollaboartive.wales.

The Council and Health Board continue to work closely together, with strategic meetings between the chief executives and leaders taking place bi-annually. Many joint operational meetings happen throughout the year, including a six-monthly special scrutiny meeting where health colleagues are invited to attend and take questions from elected members. Our relationship with the voluntary sector continues to be strengthened by our involvement with the **Voluntary Sector Compact**. This three-way partnership between the Council, Health Board and voluntary sector facilitates mutual understanding in respect of roles and responsibilities, and enables opportunities for partnership working to be fully utilised. Membership comprises the Chief Officer and Chair of Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, other voluntary sector members, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and a senior manager from the Health Board.

Section 6: Accessing further information and key documents

Social Care Legislation & Information

Links:

[National Outcomes Framework](#)

[Regulation and Inspection of Social Care \(Wales\) Act 2016](#)

[The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

[Well-being of Future Generation \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

Flintshire County Council's Key Strategic Documents

Links:

[Council Plan 2018/19](#)

[Annual Performance Report 2017/18](#)

[Medium Term Financial Plan](#)

[Corporate Parenting Strategy](#)

[Regional Learning Disability Strategy](#)

[Transformation Services Link](#)

Glossary of Terms

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - a term used to describe a wide range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to when growing up. ACEs range from experiences that directly harm a child to those that affect the environment in which a child grows up.

Advocacy - the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards - provide a legal framework that protects people living in care homes or hospitals who are vulnerable because of mental disorder and who lack the mental capacity to make decisions about their own accommodation and care needs.

Direct Payments - give users money directly to pay for their own care, rather than the traditional route of a Local Government Authority providing care for them.

Integrated Care Fund (ICF) - a Welsh Government fund that “aims to drive and enable integrated working between Social Services, Health, Housing, the third and independent sectors.

Looked After Children - a child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council’s children’s services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

Outcomes-focused - the definition of outcomes is the impact or end results of services on a person’s life. Outcome-focused services and support therefore aim to achieve the aspirations, goals and priorities identified by service users (and carers) – in contrast to services whose content and/or form of delivery are standardised or determined solely by those who deliver them.

Glossary continued

Person-centred Care - an approach that moves away from professionals deciding what is best for a patient or service user, and places the person at the centre, as an expert in their own experience. The person, and their family where appropriate, becomes an equal partner in the planning of their care and support, ensuring it meets their needs, goals and outcomes.

Responsible Individual - someone in charge of providing the service at an organisation or local authority. This may be the owner or someone with a senior role.

Safeguarding - a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people to live free from abuse, harm and neglect

Social Enterprise - an organisation that applies commercial strategies to maximise improvements in human and environmental well-being - this may include maximising social impact alongside profits for external stakeholders.

Third Sector - the part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit making organisations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, co-operations etc.

Well-being - the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXTUAL DATA AND NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Adult Services

Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, we delivered services for 4615 adults. 3327 people received advice or assistance from our adults' Information, Advice and Assistance service, and 521 people commissioned their own services through a direct payment.

56% of individuals left the reablement service having achieved their personal outcomes and requiring no ongoing social services support. A further 16% completed a period of reablement with a maintained or reduced support package.

On the last day of this year we were helping 1246 people over the age of 65 to live at home, and a further 461 older people in care homes. 86% of people with a package of support had their care plan reviewed within timescales.

40 people over the age of 75 had a delayed transfer from hospital this year for social care reasons, giving a rate of 2.94 per 1,000 population over 75.

1370 adult carers were identified and referred to our carers' service providers.

642 adult safeguarding reports were received last year, and 95% of those which progressed to enquiries under Section 126 were completed within 7 days.

At present there are 261 cases waiting to be allocated for a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessment in Flintshire.

Children's Services

Demand at the front door in Flintshire Children's Services is increasing in line with the rest of Wales. Referrals have increased from 1789 in 2016/17 to 2334 in 2017/18, an increase of 30% over 12 months. Figures for the first 9 months of this year are showing a further increase, with 2146 referrals.

To compound the rise in demand, we are also seeing an increase in complexity; whereas in 2016/17 37% of referrals went on to have care and support or child protection services, this rose to 43% in 2017/18.

Our rate of referrals which result in no action being taken has reduced, following the implementation of the Early Help Hub in July 2017, as more families are referred for advice and support from non-statutory services.

The percentage of assessments for children completed within statutory timescales (42 working days) was 95%; this measure includes those “What Matters?” conversations carried out at our front door. The All Wales Average in 17/18 was 88% which places Flintshire above the upper quartile for Wales.

There were 111 children on the Flintshire Child Protection Register on the 31st March 2019. 89% of initial child protection conferences and 99% of review conferences were carried out within timescales. 5 children from 3 families (3.2%) were re-registered within 12 months of deregistration, and the average time that children remained on the Register was 256 days.

241 children were looked after in Flintshire on 31 March 2019. This represents a rate of children looked after that is lower than the average in Wales. We have a pool of committed and enthusiastic foster carers, with 80 foster carers (excluding kinship carers), offering 159 placements. 135 placements are currently occupied. Where the need cannot be met in-house, children are placed with agency carers or in residential care. Placement stability for children with complex needs is challenging; last year 9.5% of children moved more than twice (the All Wales average was 9.6%), although some of these moves were planned as part of their care package.

We are also supporting 161 children and young people through edge of care services, and 98 young people up to the age of twenty five who have left care. 63% of children with a care & support plan are being supported to live at home with their family.

83 young carers were identified this year and referred to our young carers service providers.

National Key Performance Measures

(latest available data has been supplied)

NQS1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

65% of adults who have received support from the Information, Advice and Assistance services (IAA) have not contacted the service again during the year.

95% of assessments completed for children were completed within statutory timescales.

NQS2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental and emotional well-being.

The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 of the population aged 75 or over was 2.94.

The percentage of adults who completed a period of re-ablement and had a) a reduced package of care and support six months later was 16%, and b) no package of care six months later was 56%

The average age of adults entering residential care homes was 85 yrs

71% of looked after children were seen by a registered dentist within three months of becoming looked after

97% of looked after children were registered with a GP

NQS3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.

95% of adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales.

3.2% of children on the local authority child protection registers were re-registrations.

Children were on the child protection register during the year for an average of 217 days.

NQS4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society.

61.5% of looked after children achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 2 and 12.5% of looked after children achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 4

6% of looked after children experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements.

NQS5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.

63% of children were supported to remain living with their family

9.6% of looked after children returned home from care during the year.

9.5% of looked after children on 31st March had three or more placements during the year.

NQS6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

71.4% of care leavers were in education, training or employment at 12 months and 73.7% of care leavers were in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care.

6.1% of care leavers experienced homelessness during the year

71.4% of care leavers were in education, training or employment at 12 months and
73.7% of care leavers were in education, training or employment at 24 months after
leaving care.

6.1% of care leavers experienced homelessness during the year

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Authors	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, Cabinet approved the introduction of a new Corporate Debt Recovery Policy that formalised into a single policy document, well established procedures and regulations for the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debt, Housing Rents and overpayments of Housing Benefit.

There is now a need to re-fresh and re-approve the Policy to take account of changes in regulations since 2012 and to incorporate the latest working practices associated with the collection of debt owed to the Council. The revised policy takes into account changes mainly associated with:

- Bailiff reform and the introduction of new Regulations
- The removal of committal as a sanction for the non-payment of Council Tax.
- Revised internal working practices for the collection of sundry debt involving the development of a more robust escalation process for disputed invoices.
- Changes to the minimum monetary threshold when taking Bankruptcy action
- Revised working practices for the recovery of unpaid housing rent

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To re-approve the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy, as amended, for the collection of Sundry Debt, Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Rents and overpayments of Housing Benefit.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CORPORATE DEBT RECOVERY POLICY
1.01	The Council is required to collect all income that is due and ensure that debts owed to the Council are kept to a minimum.
1.02	Having an agreed and transparent policy of how the Council manages and collect debts owed to it, is an important document to deliver a consistency of approach and ensure best practice is being followed.
1.03	The revised policy as set out, builds upon a policy that was first adopted by cabinet in 2012. It provides services with a clear set of latest standards that must be maintained and which follow the latest regulations when officers recover income that is due to the Council. Underpinning this policy are processes critical to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as every pound of income that is not collected or takes extra effort to collect, ultimately leads to additional financial pressures on the Councils budget or the budget for the Housing Revenue Account.
1.04	<p>Since the introduction in 2012, the policy has really helped speed-up the collection of all debt, especially in the area of Sundry Debt collection by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cultural shift to ensure payments are made up-front where possible • Invoices are issued quickly and more accurately • Debts are collected more quickly • Invoice disputes are resolved • Accurate records are retained by portfolios to aid the recovery of debt
1.05	As an example of this, the debt levels of aged corporate debts of 60+ days which are owed to the Council, reduced by 12.4% during 2018/19, equating to a reduction in debt levels of £323k
1.06	In the area of Council Tax collection, the latest audited figures published by the Welsh Government for 2017/18 and 2018/19, it shows the Council, with the support of local residents, collected 98.2% of Council Tax in the year it fell due. This is well above the national average of 97.4% and continues to place Flintshire as one of the highest performing Councils in Wales. Although the 0.8% difference in collections between Flintshire and the Welsh average during 2017/18 might appear to be insignificant in percentage terms in monetary terms it equates to the recovery of an additional £700k of critical income.
1.07	In the area of Business Rates collection, the Council collected 99.2% 'in-year' during 2017/18 and 2018/19 and collections are considerably higher compared to other local authorities in Wales.
1.08	In the area of Rent Collection, the year-end position for 2018/19 is reflective of yet another difficult year for the collection of rent in the context of an

	<p>increasing number of tenants migrating from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit. However, the early intervention measures and investment in additional resources that were implemented in mid 2018/19 are now helping to stabilise collections. Total Accumulated Rent Arrears of £1.88m were recorded at year-end for all years but measures are in place to recover most of this debt through ongoing payment agreements, court orders or DWP managed payments.</p>
1.09	<p>The revised policy that is set out within section 5 of this report contains a number of key changes mainly associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bailiff reform and the introduction of new Regulations • The removal of committal as a sanction for the non-payment of Council Tax. • Revised internal working practices for the collection of sundry debt involving the development of a more robust escalation process for disputed invoices and better corporate monitoring of debt levels • Changes to the minimum monetary threshold when taking Bankruptcy action • Revised working practices for the recovery of unpaid housing rent
1.10	<p>Bailiff reform and the introduction of new Regulations</p> <p>Reform of the bailiff regulations was introduced in 2014 through the abolition of previous regulation and the re-introduction of a new set of regulations as set out in the Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2014.</p> <p>The 2014 reforms introduced a revised set of rules which set-out what goods an enforcement agent can and cannot take, how and when they can enter premises and what fees they can charge. The Government also introduced mandatory training and an enhanced court-based certification process for enforcement agents. The new Regulations also provided safeguards for vulnerable people so that they are able to get assistance and advice, and requiring enforcement agents be trained to recognise vulnerable people.</p>
1.11	<p>The removal of committal for the non-payment of Council Tax</p> <p>Welsh Government issued a consultation document in June 2018 on proposals to remove the sanction of imprisonment for the non-payment of council tax. Following the consultation and despite a submission from the Council raising concerns about the withdrawal of committal as a recovery tool, Welsh Government introduced new legislation from April 2019.</p> <p>This means that from 2019/20, local authorities in Wales are no longer permitted to start proceedings in the Magistrates Court which could ultimately result in a period of imprisonment for those taxpayers who ‘wilfully refuse’ or ‘culpably neglect’ to pay council tax, even though the Council only sought to use such measures after all reasonable efforts had been exhausted to recover the unpaid sums that are due following the issue of a Liability Order.</p> <p>The Corporate Debt Recovery Policy has been updated to reflect these changes.</p>

1.12	The decision of Welsh Government to remove of committal action, could lead to increased losses in Council Tax in the future. As justification for the removal of committal, Welsh Government also referenced that the Scottish Government had removed committal and despite this the collection rates in Scotland were still 'similar' to those in Wales. The average Council Tax collection rates in Scotland for 2017/18 were 96.0%, compared to an average of 97.4% for Wales and 98.2% for Flintshire
1.13	The financial implications for the Council are significant. If, for example, Flintshire's 98.23% 'in-year' collection level fell to the Welsh average of 97.4% the annual loss of income would be £700k. If Flintshire's collection levels fell to the 96.0% Scottish average (i.e. a reduction of 2.2%), the annual loss of income would be £1.8m.
1.14	Collection rates will continue to be closely monitored by senior managers and Chief Officers to identify any trends in non-payment, especially as a direct result of the withdrawal of committal as a recovery tool for Council Tax.
1.15	<p>Development of revised processes for the collection of sundry debt</p> <p>The development of more robust operating procedures for the collection of sundry debt were introduced in 2012 and the new procedures are working well and helping to reduce debt levels.</p> <p>To ensure those procedures are refined even further, the revised policy now incorporates an escalation process for disputed invoices. This includes escalation to the corporate debt team manager and any disputes that remain unresolved by portfolios are now escalated to the relevant Chief Officer.</p> <p>Monthly statistical reporting to Chief Officers has also been introduced to provide each Chief Officer with a statistical analysis of outstanding aged debts within their area to ensure appropriate monitoring of debt levels is carried out by senior managers.</p>
1.16	<p>Bankruptcy thresholds</p> <p>In 2015, the UK Government made the decision to amend the minimum monetary threshold for bankruptcy proceedings.</p> <p>Previously, if an individual or organisation was owed more than £750, they could apply to make that person bankrupt using a bankruptcy petition. The minimum threshold for bankruptcy has now increased to £5,000. In other words, from October 2015, the Council cannot consider undertaking bankruptcy action unless an individual owes £5,001 or more.</p>
1.17	<p>Revised working practices for the recovery of unpaid housing rent</p> <p>To mitigate the increase in rent arrears as a direct result of welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), senior managers across the Housing service have been working together to tackle the increase in rent arrears since in the introduction of UC full service.</p> <p>New working procedures have been piloted and introduced to deal with the</p>

	<p>challenges of increased caseloads and numbers of tenants who fall into arrears when they migrate to UC from the Housing Benefit system.</p> <p>The changes in working practices are reflected in the revised policy and these primarily focus on early intervention and detection of lower levels of debt to ensure preventative action and support is taken quickly to prevent arrear levels escalating.</p> <p>Other key changes include contacting tenants by telephone where possible, as opposed to posting out rent reminders, to discuss arrears and also identify the reasons for non-payment. Early support is then quickly provided to those tenants that are in need of help, even if the arrears are at low levels. Decisions are also taken quickly to fast track cases to court when a tenant is refusing to pay or engage with the Council.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Taking a pro-active approach to the collection of debt ensures that income due to the Council is maximised and bad debt is minimised.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Officers continue to develop the latest best practice and working techniques into the revised policy attached to this report to ensure collections across all areas are maximised and which take account of the latest regulations.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Taking a commercial and pro-active approach to the collection of all debts owed to the Council ensures that income is maximised and bad debt is minimised.
4.02	The policy will continue to ensure that recovery action is taken against those non-payers that deliberately set out to withhold or delay payment without genuine reason. At the same time, the policy promotes early intervention and encourages customers, tenants and taxpayers who fall into arrears to get in touch with the Council at an early stage.
4.03	In circumstances where people have fallen or are likely to fall into arrears, the Council provides a commitment to work with them, and their representatives, to set reasonable and affordable repayments, ensuring that payment agreements strike the right balance of the ability to pay as well as the level of debt owed to the Council.

5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	The revised Corporate Debt Recovery policy that requires cabinet to re-endorse is attached.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Procedure Rules • Local Government Finance Acts 1988 and 1992 • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 <p>Contact Officer: David Barnes, Revenues Manager Telephone: 01352 703652 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	<p>‘in-year’ collection rates: The in-year collection rate is the amount of council tax or business rates due for the financial year that was received by 31 March of the year in question shown as a percentage of the net collectable debit in respect of that year's council tax. In other words it is how much the local authority collected by 31 March as a percentage of the amount they would have collected if everyone liable had paid what council tax or business rates they were supposed to.</p> <p>Liability Order: is a decision by the Magistrates court against any council tax payer who has failed to pay their council tax liability in full after prescribed recovery steps have been taken to recover the sums due.</p>
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Corporate Debt Recovery Framework

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Version Date	Author	Description
1	October 2012	David Barnes	Introduction of policy framework
2	May 2019	David Barnes	<p>Revised policy framework (to take effect from April 2019) associated with changes to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bailiff Regulations and Fees 2. Removal of committal as a sanction for the non-payment of Council Tax. 3. Revised internal working practices for the collection of sundry debt involving the development of a more robust escalation process for disputed invoices. 4. Minimum monetary threshold when taking Bankruptcy action 5. Revised working practices for the recovery of unpaid housing rent

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Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Overpayment (Appendix 2)	9-12
Sundry Debt Recovery (Appendix 3)	13-19
Housing Rent Recovery – Introductory Tenancies (Appendix 4)	20-23
Housing Rent Recovery – Secure Tenancies (Appendix 5)	24-27
Bankruptcy Policy (Appendix 6)	28-30
Write Off Policy (Appendix 7)	31-33

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the Councils policies on the billing, collection and recovery of monies due to the Council.
- 1.2 It is essential that all monies due are collected effectively by the Council and that debts owed are kept to a minimum. This is because the Council has both a legal duty and a responsibility to its citizens to ensure that income due is paid promptly.
- 1.3 The Policy framework also recognises that collection of debt should be fair to everyone, especially those on limited incomes who struggle to pay or those who have not paid because of an oversight. It is also recognised that some people deliberately avoid their payment obligations by delaying their payments or choosing not to make payment and proportionate measures will be deployed to develop a culture of payment while encouraging those in need of help to get in touch with the Council at an early stage.
- 1.4 Where a person or organisation makes contact to discuss payment difficulties their circumstances will be considered fairly and objectively with a view to agreeing a reasonable payment arrangement, minimising recovery action and avoiding potential additional costs. Where people or organisations fail to make contact or maintain their payment obligations, recovery action will continue in the wider public interest.
- 1.5 This Policy framework also sets out the general principles to be applied in relation to management of debt across all services provided by the Council. The Council collects income from many streams; some of this activity is governed by legislation and statutory rules while others by sound principles of financial management and good practice.
- 1.6 Underpinning this policy are effective income management processes critical to the delivery of overall Council objectives, as every pound of income that is not collected or takes extra effort to collect, ultimately leads to additional financial pressures on the Councils budget.

2.0 Scope of the Policy Framework

2.1 This policy framework applies to the collection of :

- Council Tax and Business Rates (Appendix 1)
- Housing Benefit overpayment and Council Tax Reduction (Appendix 2)
- Sundry Debt (Appendix 3)
- Housing Rents (Appendices 4 and 5)

2.2 There are specific rules and regulations which govern the recovery and collection of these debt types – these are set out in the respective appendices.

3.0 Guiding Principles of the Policy Framework

3.1 The Council will ensure:

- Any recovery action taken will be proportionate

Proportionality allows for a balance to be struck between the potential loss of income due to the Council and the costs of compliance.

- The approach taken will be consistent

Consistency means taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar objectives. The Council aims to achieve this in the advice given, the use of its powers and the recovery procedures used. At the same time, the Council recognises the need to treat everyone as individuals and therefore will aim to take account of many variables such as the social circumstances of the individual, the payment history and their ability to pay.

- The actions taken will be transparent

Transparency is important in maintaining public confidence in the Council. It means that helping people to understand what is expected of them, to meet their payment obligations and what they should expect from the Council. It also means explaining clearly the reasons for taking any recovery action and the next steps that the Council may take if payment is not made.

3.2 The Council will also work with the voluntary sector and advice agencies, where we collectively:

- Acknowledge that there is a distinction between can't and won't pay

The policy framework will ensure fairness in that every debtor has an obligation to repay their debt owed so that future services do not suffer. Those who pay promptly should not subsidise those who are not prepared to pay what they owe.

- Recognise that advice and early intervention is a key element from the perspective of all partners.

The policy framework will ensure that the Council and its partner organisations will treat all debtors fairly and, where possible they will promote free debt advice services. Where appropriate, payment agreements will be put in place to assist debtors in adverse financial circumstances. The decision to agree a repayment timetable will be influenced by the willingness of the debtor to take advantage of the debt advice at an early stage.

- Acknowledge that financial capability and vulnerability are sometimes underlying issues around non payment.

The policy framework will seek to promote financial inclusion and early intervention by recognising that debtors may have underlying problems with money management or may not be receiving all the financial assistance to which they are entitled.

4.0 Policy Framework Aims and Objectives

4.1 The key aims are to :

- Ensure the Council provides bills promptly and remind people quickly if they do not pay.
- Offer efficient and flexible payment methods
- Encourage people to make early contact to avoid the build up of debt
- Inform people of their entitlement to benefits, discounts and exemptions to ensure maximum take-up and that net bills/liabilities are issued
- Inform people of the general availability of income related benefits such as Universal Credit, Pension Credits, Housing and Council Tax Reduction
- Take positive action to prevent arrears from occurring in the first place, maximising income and entitlement at an early stage
- Take recovery action against deliberate non-payers or those who delay payment without genuine reason while always working to identify and assist those who genuinely can't pay or are finding it difficult to pay
- Where people have fallen or are likely to fall into arrears, a commitment to work with them and their representatives to set reasonable and realistic payment levels that they can maintain, ensuring that payment arrangements reflect the ability to pay as well as the level of debt owed
- Work in a co-ordinated approach with multiple debts owed to the Council. Priority will be given to debts where non payment could lead directly to the loss of a person's home in the case of non-payment of housing rent. Other debts owed to the Council may, depending on the circumstances, be treated to as a lower priority until payment of the priority debt owed to the Council is made
- Work in partnership with recognised advice agencies to advise people who need help and guidance to repay debts where they can get independent advice from to assist with wider financial problems

APPENDIX 1 - Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document explains the Revenues Service approach to administering the billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax as laid down by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and Local Government Finance Act 1988 and all other supporting legislation. The document details information about the billing and recovery processes. The intention is to explain the processes clearly to show the transparent nature of the work, rather than give a detailed analysis of the legislation involved.

2.0 The Billing Process

- 2.1 The Council recognises that providing a correct bill in an efficient way maximises the likelihood of helping customers pay on time, and it strives to issue accurate bills to customers as promptly as possible, and to offer helpful advice face-to-face, in writing, by e-mail, over the phone and through advice on the website.
- 2.2 All available discounts, exemptions, valuation band changes, and Council Tax reduction will be granted in appropriate cases at the earliest possible time to ensure the amount owed is correct. Customers will be given the maximum number of instalments that are available so that payment can be spread over the longest period within the year.
- 2.3 Discounts, exemptions and reliefs will be reviewed periodically engaging external contractors and utilising third party data where appropriate and lawful, however it remains a customer responsibility to inform the Council within 21 days of any changes in their circumstances that may affect their entitlement to any reduction in their charges.
- 2.4 Clear information regarding reductions, reliefs, including benefit, is widely available through leaflets that are provided with annual bills and through the website. Officers are trained to advise customers about the range of benefits, discounts and exemptions available and how to make claims.
- 2.5 Where there is a joint occupation or ownership, for example joint tenants or owners, or partnerships like husband and wife, both are expected to pay the charge. All bills and other correspondence will be addressed to all the liable persons for the charge. The law says that each person will be liable both for their own share of the charge and for the whole charge (called "jointly and severally liable"), so if necessary action for recovery of the debt will be taken against any or all of the liable persons.
- 2.6 If a taxpayer disputes the basis of why or what they have been charged in relation to Council Tax, the Council will advise them of their appeal rights by initially writing to the Council or alternatively by seeking redress at the Valuation Tribunal for Wales.

2.7 Council Tax and Business Rates is charged for financial years beginning on 1st April and ending on 31st March the following year. Taxpayers who receive an annual bill during March will normally receive ten monthly instalments payable between April and January inclusive, but the Council also welcome taxpayers to pay over 12 months. As the financial year progresses, less months are available, so the number of instalments reduces. Between 1st May and 31st December the number of instalments allowed for the year's charge is the number of whole months less one. New bills created from January will usually be given one instalment payable within 14 days from the date of the bill.

3.0 The Recovery Process

3.1 The Council only has to prove recovery documents are issued in time and in line with regulations; it is not necessary to prove customers have received them.

3.2 As Council Tax and Business Rates are statutory charges it is very important that taxpayers give it a high priority when looking at their finances. If monthly instalments are paid late, or not at all, the Council will take action to recover the overdue amounts by sending documents that explain the consequences of delaying or not making payment. Taxpayers are actively encouraged to contact the Council without delay if they experience difficulties in paying their bill.

3.3 The Council has a planned annual recovery and enforcement timetable that sets out the dates for the issue of all recovery documents like reminders, final notices and summonses. It also details magistrates' court hearing dates and targets for transmitting accounts for further recovery action through the use of Enforcement Agents. The enforcement taken will be:

Reminders and Final Notice Stage:

3.4 Apart from any accounts issued near the end of a financial year, all bills include a monthly instalment scheme. It is a taxpayer's responsibility to make sure that instalments are paid on time. If taxpayers do not pay, or if they make occasional or irregular payments that are not received on or by the due date, they will be considered overdue. If this happens, recovery action will be taken, initially in the form of a **1st Reminder Notice**.

3.5 Legislation allows for reminders to be sent immediately after an instalment is due but the Council will usually allow taxpayers 12 days after a payment has become overdue before issuing a 1st reminder.

3.6 If an overdue instalment is subject to a 1st Reminder Notice, a taxpayer is required to make payment in full of the overdue instalment within 7 days. If payment is made as required, future instalments can then be paid as shown on the bill.

3.7 If the overdue instalment is paid, but a future instalment is not paid on time a **2nd Reminder Notice** will be issued. If payment is made as required, future instalments can then be paid as shown on the bill. The second reminder states clearly that no further reminder notices will be sent if future instalments are not paid on time.

- 3.8 If payment is not made within 7 days following the issue of a of a 1st or 2nd reminder notice, after a further seven days a **Final Notice** will be sent for the full amount outstanding for the year.
- 3.9 Additionally, a Final Notice will also be issued if part or all of an instalment is overdue for a third time. This requires the full annual charge that is outstanding, rather than just the overdue instalment, to be paid in full within seven days. If payment is not made as required a **summons** will be sent for the full amount outstanding for the year together with associated costs of £50 for the issue of the summons.
- 3.10 Dependent on how promptly taxpayers pay, no more than two reminders and one final notice will be issued in a financial year before a summons is issued. Where the right to pay by instalments is lost due to consistent late payment, or no payment, this will only be forfeited for the current financial year; the right to pay by instalments will be reinstated when subsequent years' charges become due
- 3.11 Reminder and Final Notices confirm the full range of payment methods available and include information to encourage taxpayers to get in touch with the Council to discuss payment difficulties. The Council will, where appropriate, re-instate a taxpayer's instalment scheme where the taxpayer has agreed to bring the account up to date and switch to payment by direct debit for payment of future payments.
- 3.12 The Council will normally only offer to re-instate instalments once in any financial year following the issue of a final reminder. The Council recognises the offer to re-instate instalment may help a taxpayers meet financial obligations, but at the same time, the taxpayers previous payment history will be considered to ensure habitual late payers are not continually given the opportunity to delay payment.

Summons Stage:

- 3.13 In the event of late or non-payment as explained above, the Council will issue a **Summons** at the Magistrates' Court, giving at least fourteen days notice of the hearing date. The summons will confirm the charge outstanding together with court costs that are added to the amount payable in recognition of the extra work needed to secure payment. The additional costs charged for a summons are currently £50.
- 3.14 The summons will confirm the date and time of the Magistrates Court hearing at which the Council's officer will need to satisfy the Magistrate that the customer is the liable person, does owe the amount outstanding, and that the Council has sent the correct documents to the customers' current or last known address.
- 3.15 Taxpayers who pay the full amount confirmed on the summons, including the additional £50 costs before the hearing date do not have to attend court, however any payment arrangement made following the issue of a summons which extends payment beyond the liability order court hearing date will be made on the basis that the application for a liability order will continue and will include the initial £50 court costs and additional costs of £20 for the issue of a Liability Order (i.e. a total of £70 costs).

- 3.16 Attendance at the Magistrates Court is not compulsory, and usually the majority of customers summonsed do not attend. A taxpayer can dispute the charge or speak to the Court. The Court will give an audience to anyone who wishes to appear, however, unless the taxpayer has a valid defence then the Court is obliged to grant a Liability Order.

Liability Order stage

- 3.17 Following the issue of a Liability Order, the Council will write to the taxpayer in an effort to secure full payment or to make a suitable payment agreement. The notification will also provide details of potential consequences of enforcement action (and additional enforcement (Bailiff) costs) if the taxpayer does not make payment or fails to make a payment agreement. For Council Tax matters, the Council will also request to a taxpayer complete a 'statutory request for information', with details of their employment details, and if appropriate, information about any benefit that is received. Taxpayers are required to complete and return the statutory request within 14 days.
- 3.18 The Council will enter into a payment agreement with a taxpayer using the first principle that the outstanding balance must be paid in full prior to the end of the financial year, although in cases where there is no ongoing liability, payment agreements may be extended beyond the end of the financial year, depending on the circumstances of the case.
- 3.19 Following the issue of a Liability and in the event of the taxpayer not returning the 'statutory request for information' or failing to make a payment agreement, the recovery action to be taken will be dependent on the circumstances of each individual case and with due regard to the most effective way for the Council to collect :

Attachment of Earnings – Attachments require an employer of the taxpayer (for Council Tax only) to deduct a set percentage of the earnings and send them directly to the Council to pay the outstanding Liability Order. The amount of money deducted depends on how much is earned and whether the person is paid weekly or monthly. The deductions are governed by Council Tax regulations.

Attachment from Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance – Attachments require the Department of Work and Pensions to make deductions from the taxpayers benefit. The level of deduction is fixed by the Government but does increase annually.

Attachment of Members Allowances – The Council may make an attachment of the allowances of an elected member.

Taking Control of Goods & Use of Enforcement Agents – The in-house Enforcement Agents employed by the Council may be used where no attachment is possible or suitable. The Enforcement Agents will be required to comply with the Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2014 at all times.

Initially, if a debt has been passed to an enforcement agent a fixed fee of £75 for each liability order will be incurred. This is known as the compliance stage and taxpayers are encouraged to make early contact with the Enforcement Team within 10 days in order to pay the amounts due in full or set up a realistic payment plan.

If taxpayers fail to engage or set up a repayment plan at the compliance stage, the liability order(s) will be passed to the Enforcement Agent for a visit to be undertaken. If the Enforcement Agent is required to visit there is a fixed fee of £235 plus 7.5% for any balance due above £1,500.

The enforcement agent will normally ask taxpayers for payment in full, however the enforcement agent will normally also enter into a Controlled Goods Agreement which also provides taxpayers with an opportunity to pay.

If possessions are subject to a Controlled Goods Agreement these goods cannot be disposed or sold without the enforcement agents consent.

If taxpayers refuse to sign a Controlled Goods Agreement the enforcement agent can take goods to the value of the debt whilst at the property. There are additional costs of £110 plus 7.5% for any balance due above £1,500 if goods have to be removed and sold.

If the enforcement agent decides the value of the goods is insufficient to pay the amount outstanding and there is no prospective of making payment agreement, or the taxpayer cannot be traced the enforcement agent will normally return the Liability Order to the Council which ends the enforcement agent action.

- 3.20 If enforcement agent action proves unsuccessful, the Council will then consider whether to take further recovery action, dependent on the specific personal and financial circumstances of each individual case and with due regard to the most effective way for the Council to collect :

Charging Order – For taxpayers owing £1,000 or more, the Council may apply to the County Court for an Order that places a charge on the taxpayer’s property and the court, in certain circumstances, empowering the sale of the property is the taxpayer does not pay. The obtaining of a charging order does not prompt automatic payment of the amount outstanding; providing there is sufficient equity in the property value following the repayment of any outstanding mortgage or other existing registered charges, it secures payment of the debt when the property is sold. Before such action is taken, the Council will always send a final letter inviting the taxpayer to a pre-arranged meeting in an effort to make a payment agreement.

Bankruptcy – For taxpayers owing £5,000 or more, the Council may also consider taking bankruptcy action. Before such action is taken, the Council will always send a final letter inviting the taxpayer to a pre-arranged meeting in an effort to make a payment agreement. Bankruptcy will be considered, only as a last resort, in line with the policy in Appendix 6.

4.0 Write Offs

- 4.1 The Council recognises that where a debt is deemed to be irrecoverable, especially after all recovery options have been considered and/or taken, prompt write off of such debts is appropriate and good practice in certain circumstances and in line with the policy in Appendix 7.

APPENDIX 2 - Housing Benefit Overpayment and Council Tax Reduction Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Overpayments of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction are established through a change in benefit entitlement. They are described as an amount of benefit that has been awarded but to which there is no entitlement under the regulations.
 - 1.2 Accurate and prompt identification of overpayments is important to ensure that the incorrect payment of benefit is discontinued and to maximise the chances of successful recovery.
 - 1.3 The Council recognises that to ensure there is minimal loss to public funds firm but fair action must be undertaken in the administration of Housing Benefit overpayments and Council Tax Reduction.
 - 1.4 The policy will reflect best practice in the procedure for dealing with the administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments and Council Tax Reduction.
 - 1.5 The policy will be applied in all cases where an overpayment of benefit has occurred, that is, any amount of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction which has been paid but to which there was no entitlement whether on initial decision or on a subsequent revised or superseded decision.
- 1.1 In undertaking this policy framework, the Council will :
- Take steps to minimise and prevent overpayments from occurring
 - Identify the overpayment promptly
 - Stop the overpayment from continuing
 - Classify the overpayment correctly
 - Determine if the overpayment is recoverable and if recoverable
 - determine from whom to recover
 - determine the most appropriate method of recovery
 - Notify the claimant and other affected persons of the decision
- 1.8 In most cases overpayments can arise as a consequence of:
- Late disclosure of a change in circumstances
 - Errors made by the claimant when completing an application form or review form
 - Claimant error
 - Official errors made by the Council or the Department for Work and Pensions
 - Deliberate fraud

- 1.9 Official error overpayments are only recoverable if the claimant or the person from whom recovery of the overpayment is sought could reasonably have known that an overpayment was occurring at the time the overpayment occurred.

2.0 Prevention of Overpayments

- 2.1 Overpayments are often difficult and time consuming to administer. They can cause difficulties for claimants and their families as they try to manage on limited incomes. They are to be avoided where possible. This will be achieved by:

- Telling claimants how to avoid overpayments, with letters, in leaflets and during verbal communications
- Encouraging claimants to maintain contact with us
- Processing information quickly and accurately to minimise overpayments
- Offsetting any new or underlying entitlement

3.0 Identifying Overpayments

- 3.1 The Council will aim to act on any information received in relation to a claimants change in circumstances within seven days of having received sufficient information to identify that an overpayment has or will be occurring.

- 3.2 This action will in the first instance include the suspension of further ongoing payments of incorrect benefit.

- 3.3 The Council will endeavour to identify any change in circumstances that would result in an overpayment still outstanding after seven days by:

- Undertaking a check of the Department for Work and Pensions records held on the Customer Information System (CIS) to identify whether entitlement to Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) has ceased and if this information is not readily available on CIS by the sending of a benefits enquiry information letter
- Undertaking a check of the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records held on the Verify Earnings and Pensions (VEP) system to confirm current earnings and/or pensions and if this information is not readily available on VEP by the sending of a benefits enquiry information letter.
- Referring potential fraudulent overpayments to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Fraud team
- Ensuring that any post relating to the change in circumstances is prioritised and acted upon

4.0 Classification of Overpayments

- 4.1 The correct classification of overpayments is essential as, depending on the type of overpayment, the authority will receive a percentage of the overpayment back from the government by way of subsidy. A summary of the types of overpayments and percentage of subsidy allowed is shown at the end of this policy.

- 4.2 All overpayments must be correctly classified by an Officer of the Council who has had training to a sufficient standard to allow them to make decisions, which ensure the correct application of the law in the decision making process.

5.0 Calculation of Overpayments

- 5.1 Where an overpayment has occurred the Council must invite claimants to provide sufficient information for any underlying entitlement to benefit for the overpayment period to be assessed.
- 5.2 The full amount of the overpayment should be recovered unless the health or financial circumstances of the person from whom recovery is being sought suggest a lesser amount would be appropriate.
- 5.3 In all cases the overpayment should be recovered as quickly as possible.

6.0 Notification Letters

- 6.1 All notification letters must be dated and issued to all affected persons within fourteen days of the Council having made the decision.
- 6.2 The notification must include the reasons for the decision, the right to request a further statement and the time limit for doing so and the claimants appeal rights and the time limit for doing so.
- 6.3 Copies of the notification letter must be able to be reproduced in the event of an appeal, complaint or proceedings taken against the Council.

7.0 Decisions on Recoverability

- 7.1 In all cases where an overpayment has arisen the Council should consider whether an official error has caused or contributed towards the overpayment.
- 7.2 Where the Council has identified an overpayment, which was caused or contributed to by an official error, it should decide whether recovery of the overpayment is appropriate under the guidance issued by the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 7.3 Before recovery action begins consideration will be given as to whom is the most appropriate person to recover the overpayment from. This may in certain cases mean that further information is required from the affected parties.
- 7.4 Recovery should then be made from the most appropriate persons who may be:
 - The claimant
 - The person to whom the payment of benefit was made
 - The person who misrepresented or failed to disclose the material fact
 - The partner of the claimant if the partner was living with the claimant at the time of the overpayment and at the time the decision to recover was made
- 7.5 In all cases where the overpayment was the result of proven fraud the overpayment should, in the first instance, be sought to be recovered from the person who misrepresented or failed to disclose a material fact

8.0 Methods of Recovery

- 8.1 Overpayments of recoverable Council Tax Reduction will result in an adjustment being made to the claimants council tax account for the appropriate year. An amended bill will be issued and any unpaid monies will be subject to recovery action under the council tax regulations.
- 8.2 The most appropriate method of recovery for Housing Benefit Overpayments should be considered in all cases, including:
- On-going deductions from further payments of Housing Benefit
 - Deductions from other Department for Works and Pensions benefits
 - Direct Earnings Attachments (DEA)Benefit sundry debtor invoices
 - Debits to the rent account where it is in credit
 - Recovery from landlord in appropriate cases
 - Referral to the Councils contracted debt collection agency (after all the above avenues of recovery are exhausted)
 - Applying to the County Court for a County Court Judgement (after all avenues of recovery are considered or exhausted).
- 8.3 A period of at least one calendar month should have elapsed before recovery action begins. This will allow for the claimant to re-apply for benefit, which may identify an underlying entitlement or for the claimant to register any appeal.
- 8.4 In cases where recovery from on-going benefit is sought the standard maximum rate of deduction as laid down by regulation should be applied unless the health or financial circumstances of the claimant suggest a more appropriate rate should be used. In all cases however a minimum amount of fifty pence per week Housing Benefit must remain in payment.

9.0 Write Offs

- 9.1 The Council recognises that where a debt is deemed to be irrecoverable, especially after all recovery options have been considered and/or, prompt write off of such debts is appropriate and good practice in certain circumstances and in line with the policy in Appendix 7

APPENDIX 3 - Sundry Debt Policy Framework

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council charges and collects income from a diverse range of activities, customers and range of public bodies and private businesses. Sundry debt does not include Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Rent or Housing Benefit Overpayments.
- 1.2 The value of invoices raised can range significantly from a few pounds to several hundred thousand of pounds and therefore, taken together, the value of all of these sundry debts is considerable.
- 1.3 It is essential that the Council recovers all collectable debt owed to it and the purpose of this policy aims to:
 - Maximise the collection of the Councils income
 - Ensure that, where possible, payment up front is received ensuring whenever possible that collection of the fee or charge involved takes place prior to the service being provided so that credit is only given when essential to do so
 - Ensure clear terms and conditions of payment appear within documentation
 - Ensure invoicing and recovery procedures are carried out on an accurate and timely basis, encouraging debtors to pay promptly and making collection and recovery activity more efficient by prioritising collection of larger debts
 - Minimise the time taken to raise invoices to within 10 days of the provision of service(s)
 - Minimise the time taken to collect charges or to effect recovery
 - Minimise the time taken to resolve invoice disputes
 - End the ongoing delivery of a non statutory service to a customer in non payment cases, but only where it is possible to do so.
 - Minimise the level of debt owed to the Council and its provision for bad debts
 - Minimise the incidence of debt that cannot be collected
 - Raise corporate awareness and responsibility of the importance of prompt debt recovery across all services
- 1.4 The charge must, depending on legislation, always cover the cost of providing goods or service and the costs of collection, unless the Council has taken a policy decision to subsidise the service.
- 1.5 The charge must be invoiced in an efficient and cost effective way, ensuring that the frequency of invoices are minimised for services that are delivery on a regular and planned basis.
- 1.6 The debt will remain the responsibility of the Service in which it was raised, and recovery action will be taken by the Corporate Debt Team. It is the responsibility of the services to assist the Corporate Debt Team in collecting debts, ensuring that information and assistance is provided to ensure debts are collected quickly.

2.0 Corporate Responsibilities

2.1 All officers involved in the issuing and recovery of sundry debt invoices must ensure that:

- The Corporate Debt Recovery Policy is adhered to (specifically Appendix 3 – Sundry Debts)
- The aims of the policy are adhered to
- The parts of this policy that apply to their Service areas are correctly followed
- Specific attention is paid to prohibit the practise of not resolving invoice disputes within a reasonable period
- Budget Managers are fully aware of their responsibilities
- Relevant systems and procedures are in place
- Officers involved in the debt collection process are appropriately trained and are aware of their corporate responsibility

2.2 The Corporate Finance Manager, Revenues Manager with Internal Audit support will provide assurance that this Policy is adhered to and is effective.

3.0 Raising an Invoice

3.1 A commercial approach should be adopted where fees and charges are obtained in advance or at the time of service provision. Where goods or services provided need to be paid for after this, then the Council offers credit facilities wherever it is considered prudent to do so.

3.2 Prompt invoicing is essential to efficient debt collection; the longer the period, the less likely is prompt settlement. Invoices must therefore be raised within 10 days of the service being delivered or due.

3.3 By raising an invoice, the originating service agrees approval to take appropriate recovery action through the Corporate Debt Recovery Team, including court action when necessary, is granted at the time the debt is raised.

3.4 Invoices must not be raised for amounts of less than £40, excluding VAT, unless the invoice relates to collection of peppercorn rents, licenses or leases in connection with occupation of Council land and property. This is in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

3.5 For payment of amounts of £40 or less services are required to request payment up front where it is reasonable and practical to do so.

3.6 The service responsible for raising the invoice must ensure that the evidence of the service provided is fully validated and that the invoice is accurate and contains sufficient detail for both billing and recovery purposes. Services must ensure that all invoice information is fully completed, including:

- Customer's full name(s)
- Customer's full address(es), including postcode(s)
- Customer's contact telephone number(s)

- Customer's e-mail address
 - Name of contact officer in cases of query over the service provided
 - Date of supply of service
 - Purchase order number (where applicable)
 - Full description of the service/goods supplied
 - For each type of supply – the unit price or rate, quantity or extent of goods and services
 - Amount due
 - VAT amount and rate of VAT charged
 - Total due
 - For each type of supply – the unit price or rate, quantity or extent of goods and services, VAT amount and rate of VAT charged
- 3.7 The content (narrative) on the invoice should be concise but of sufficient clarity to ensure that the customer fully understands the bill.
- 3.8 All invoices must be raised to a correctly named legal entity. In the event of non-payment, legal action cannot be taken against a non-legal entity. Legal entities are:
- **Individuals** - This is usually someone living at a residential address. When a request is received for a service, the person's full name (title, forename(s) and surname) must be obtained and stated. Initials are not sufficient. If the request is on behalf of more than one person then the full name of each person must be obtained and stated. The full correct postal address, including postcode, must be stated.
 - **Sole Traders** - Where an individual is trading in his or her own name the full name of the individual as well as the business name must be obtained e.g. Mr John Smith, trading as Fast Removals. Evidence of the name of the business could be in the form of a request for services on a business letterhead. The individual's full postal address must also be requested.
 - **Partnerships**- "LLP" must be added where applicable, otherwise the full names of one, two or more partners must be stated, followed by "trading as"(as above). If LLP is applicable the full correct business address, including postcode, must be stated, otherwise the full correct postal address(es), including postcode of the partner(s) should be stated.
 - **Limited companies** - the name must include "Ltd" or "Plc". Invoices can be addressed to either the current registered office or to a place of business of the company. Evidence of their Limited Company Status and registered office must be obtained by requiring confirmation of the service request on their official letterhead
 - **Charities limited by guarantee** - Companies which are charitable and also limited by guarantee can be exempted from using the term "Ltd" so, for example: "Oxfam" is a correct name. Evidence of their charitable status must be obtained by requiring confirmation of the service request on their official letterhead.
 - **Clubs run by a committee** - the full name(s) and address(es) of the treasurer and / or the secretary, or the trustees must be stated.
 - **Trustees** – the full name(s) and address(es) of the trustee(s) and the full name of the trust must be stated.
 - **Executors or Personal Representatives** – must be addressed e.g. "Mr Peter Smith!, Executor of James Brown Deceased or "Personal

representatives of James Brown Deceased". The full postal address(es) of the executors/personal representatives must be stated.

3.9 An invoice should not be raised where:

- A purchase order or written agreement has not been received
- It cannot be proven that the goods and/or services have been supplied
- If the debt is already bad or doubtful

4.0 Payment Terms

4.1 The Council will collect monies owing to it fully and promptly in line with the 30 day standard terms as outlined on the invoice. The standard terms apply to all sundry debtor accounts raised by the Council and should not be deviated from unless with the prior approval of the Corporate Finance Manager.

4.2 All requests from customers to enter into payment agreements must be referred to the Corporate Debt team regardless of the amount owed. The Corporate Debt team will set up and monitor all payment agreements.

4.3 Payment terms beyond the 30 day period will only be granted where a customer is not able to settle the debt in full in one payment.

4.4 The Corporate Debt team will withdraw payment terms if a debtor fails to maintain a payment agreement.

5.0 Accounting Arrangements

5.1 Services will receive the credit when an invoice is first raised.

5.2 Where debts cannot be recovered and the debt is written off, the original debt will be debited from directorate bad debt provision by way of a write off. All write offs will be considered in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules and in accordance with the policy guidance in Appendix 7 to this policy.

5.3 All relevant information relating to an invoice (otherwise known as a proof of debt) should be kept until at least six years after it is first issued. If at the end of that six year period the bill still remains unpaid but payments are being made, the supporting documentation should be retained until final settlement or write off of the debt.

5.4 Appropriate accounting arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the Council reclaims VAT from HMRC on a bad debt if:

- Goods/Services have been supplied and VAT has been accounted for and paid to HMRC (as output tax), but no payment (or only a part payment has been received), and
- The amount has, or is, about to be written off in the accounts, and
- Six months have elapsed from the later of the supply date and the time when payment was due, and
- The reclaim of VAT is made within three years and six months of the date the payment was due and payable or the date of supply.

5.5 Refunds for overpayments must be submitted by the Accounts Receivable Control Team to process and reconcile the refund request to control account and journals relating to the ledger code. Refunds will only be processed where there are no other debts outstanding and due from that customer.

5.6 All credit values of £1 or under will be transferred to the Councils Central Fund after the expiry of one financial year plus the current financial year. The same process will also be followed for any credit balances where the Corporate Debt/Accounts Receivable Control Team is unable to trace the debtor.

6.0 Dispute Resolutions

6.1 Where a customer disputes an invoice with the service, the service must notify the Corporate Debt team immediately to prevent the recovery process continuing. Equally, where a customer contacts the debt team rather than the service to dispute the invoice, the matter will be referred to the service responsible for raising the invoice and recovery will be held. Full notes and reasons for the dispute must be added to the customer's account.

6.2 To ensure the efficiency of debt collection and good customer service, all disputes must be resolved by the service responsible for raising the invoice within 20 working days of the dispute being raised. The Corporate Debt team must be notified of the outcome of the dispute.

6.3 A dispute is not resolved unless it meets one of the following conditions:

- Customer is correct and gets a full credit
- Customer is partly correct, gets a partial credit and accepts revisions
- Customer is not correct and accepts the charge
- Customer is not correct but does not accept the decision of the service and the service is prepared to support the commencement or continuation of recovery proceedings.

6.4 Where disputes are not resolved within 20 working days of the dispute being raised, outstanding disputes will be escalated to the senior service manager within the service area initiating the invoice.

6.5 Following a case referral to a senior service manager, if the service does not resolve the dispute or provide a viable reason within a further 5 working days as to why the dispute cannot be resolved, the disputed debt will be escalated to the relevant chief officer for review and resolution.

6.6 For **all** unresolved disputes exceeding 35 working days, the Corporate Debt team will raise a credit note to remove the debt from the system and reverse the income from the service. The service responsible for raising the invoice will be notified when this happens. It will then be the responsibility of the service for the re-raising of the invoice once the dispute is resolved, if appropriate.

7.0 Accounts subject to Recovery

7.1 Following the issue of invoices, unless there is a payment agreement in place, reminders will be sent for all invoices unpaid or partly unpaid after 7 days past the invoice due date, i.e. day 37 after the invoice is raised.

7.2 If an invoice is still unpaid after a further 14 days of the invoice reminder being raised (i.e. day 51 after the invoice is raised), a further letter will be sent that explains to the customer the potential action of a referral to a debt collection

agency or legal action through the County Council that may be considered by the Council.

- 7.3 If, after a further 14 days, after the issue of the letter referred to in 7.2, an invoice is still unpaid (i.e. day 65 after the invoice is raised) the Corporate Debt team will attempt to make telephone contact with the customer in an effort to resolve the matter. Where appropriate, payment agreements will be offered. If telephone contact cannot be made or contact is made but the customer does not wish to engage with the Council to resolve the matter, the Corporate Debt team will consider the most appropriate recovery route. Each case will be treated on its own merits, but the following guidance will normally be adhered to:
- 7.4 Single or multiple debts up to £500 may be referred to the Councils contracted debt collection agents to collect the amount overdue if all previous attempts to secure payment have been unsuccessful. No additional fees will be added to the original debt.
- 7.5 Single or multiple debts over £500 will be considered for action through the County Court if the originating service can provide the necessary supporting information to aid a successful prosecution.
- 7.6 Consideration will be given not to take further recovery but only in cases where it is reasonable, economic and in the interests of Council Tax payers to do so. In any case being considered for write off, the write off guidance in appendix 7 will be followed.
- 7.7 In appropriate cases where County Court action is considered appropriate, any failure of services to provide supporting information to aid a successful prosecution will result in the Corporate Debt team raising a credit note to cancel the charge and the loss of income will be met by the service who raised the original invoice.
- 7.8 For debts of £5,000 or more, the Council may also consider taking bankruptcy action through the courts if sufficient assets exist to meet the outstanding amount owing to the Council. Before such action is taken, the Council will always send a final letter inviting the customer to a pre-arranged meeting in an effort to make a payment agreement. Bankruptcy will be considered in line with the policy in Appendix 6.
- 7.9 In some instances, despite a County Court Judgement being obtained and enforcement action being taken, such action may, in some cases, fail to produce a payment towards some or all of the debt due. In these circumstances, further action is limited and in these cases the invoice will be considered for write off in accordance with the write off guidance in appendix 7.

8.0 Credit Notes

- 8.1 There is a clear distinction between raising a credit note and writing off a debt.
- 8.2 A credit note to cancel or reduce a charge must only be issued to
- Correct a factual inaccuracy or administrative error in the raising of the original invoice

- Cancel an invoice where a dispute has not been resolved within 28 days
 - Adjust the amount of debt due
 - Cancel an invoice where the service is unable to provide sufficient documentary evidence to support the recovery of an outstanding invoice.
- 8.3 All credit notes must be supported by evidence that validates the reason for reducing or cancelling the invoice.
- 8.4 When raising credit notes, services must ensure that all information is fully completed, in the same way as invoices are raised, including:
- It must reflect an agreed reduction in value and be issued within one month of the agreement.
 - Description of supply
 - Rate and amount of VAT charged
 - Total charge
 - In addition the invoice number and date of the original VAT invoice should be shown on the credit note.

9.0 Corporate Reporting and Monitoring

- 9.1 All Chief Officers will be issued with a monthly report to show debt levels outstanding within their portfolios. The reporting systems will show the breakdown of aged debt levels including a comprehensive breakdown of the invoices raised within the service areas which remain outstanding.
- 9.2 In the interests of transparency and accountability, a half yearly report will also be presented to the Chief Officer's Team (COT) showing debt levels across the organisation together with a full breakdown of aged debt levels within each portfolio.

10.0 Write Offs

- 10.1 The Council recognises that where a debt is deemed to be irrecoverable, especially after all recovery options have been considered and/or taken, prompt write off of such debts, including reclaiming of VAT from HMRC (where applicable) is appropriate and good practice in certain circumstances and in line with the policy in Appendix 7.

APPENDIX 4 – Housing Rent Recovery – Introductory Tenancies

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council adopts a 'Rent First' approach in the collection of rent to ensure rent is paid on time. The Council will aim to contact tenants at an early stage with a focus on early intervention and detection of lower levels of debt to ensure preventative action and support is taken quickly to prevent arrear levels escalating.
- 1.2 The Housing Act 1996 has given the Council the option of using Introductory Tenancies for new tenants.
- 1.3 Flintshire County Council decided to offer Introductory Tenancies to new tenants as from 1st January, 1998. However there are some exceptions:-
 - New tenancies granted to existing assured tenants from a social landlord will be secure tenancies.
 - Any new tenancy granted, where one of the new tenants already has a secure tenancy, will be a secure tenancy.
- 1.4 Introductory Tenancies are for a limited period of 12 months, whereupon they will automatically become secure, unless an application has been made to the County Court for possession within the 12 month period.
- 1.5 Therefore to pursue repossession of a property under the rules and regulations of Introductory Tenancies requires the Income Officer to comply with a strict timetable.
- 1.6 The last opportunity to apply to the County Court will be in week 50 of the tenancy (to allow the County Court to issue their papers before the 12 month anniversary of the tenancy being signed for), which means that a Notice of Proceedings for Possession needs to be served at the end of tenancy week number 45 at least.
- 1.7 A weekly rent arrears extract is produced to enable Income Officers to identify tenants with rent arrears on the geographical areas managed.
- 1.8 All recovery action is automatically recorded on the electronic diary.

2.0 Rent Recovery Process

- 2.1 In the event of an introductory tenant falling behind with a rent payment the income officer will contact by telephone requesting payment in full as the default position but to also identify the reasons for non-payment. Focus will be on early intervention and detection of lower levels of debt to ensure preventative action and support is taken quickly to prevent arrear levels escalating.

3.0 Notice of Proceedings for Possession for Procedures

- 3.1 If the Income Officer establishes a need to serve a Notice of Proceedings for Possession, the officer generates a Notice of Proceedings package.

- 3.2 The Income Officer serves the Notice of Possession, including an application for a Review Hearing, sent to the tenant by first class post.
- 3.3 However, if the tenant is elderly or considered to be vulnerable, or there has been no previous contact with the tenant, every effort must be made to establish personal contact when serving the Notice of Proceedings.
- 3.4 Income Officers have the discretion of withdrawing the notice at this stage, if it is felt appropriate.
- 3.5 The tenant has the opportunity to attend the Review Hearing within 7 days of the delivery of the Notice.

4.0 Review Procedures

- 4.1 The tenant may bring a friend/representative to the Review.
- 4.2 The Review will be conducted by the Income Team Leader and the Senior Housing Officer.
 - a) If the Review finds in favour of the tenant the Introductory Tenancy continues until it becomes Secure. The Notice of Proceedings at this stage becomes invalid. If at a later stage the tenant falls back into arrears a new notice is to be served.
 - b) If the review finds in favour of the Council, the Income Officer applies to the County Court for Possession Order as soon as the notice expires.

If a tenant fails to apply for a Review and remains in arrears 4 weeks after serving the notice, the Income Officer has the discretion to proceed to Court.

Once the County Court issues their papers, the tenancy will remain Introductory until the matter is resolved.

- c) Another option available to the Council is to offer an Introductory Tenant an extension of 6 months to the trial period of the tenancy. To do so one of the following conditions have to be met:
 - The Income Officer has served a Notice of Extension, including a right to appeal (Review of Decisions to Extend a Trial Period Wales Regulations 20076. by first class post on the tenant at least 8 weeks before the original expiry date of the Introductory Tenancy. If the tenant requests a review of the Council's decision to extend the tenancy.
 - The tenant did not attend the Review Hearing but the Income Officer does not want to proceed to court yet.
 - The decision of a review was to extend the tenancy.
 - Following the notice of possession and prior court action the tenant will receive written notification of the pre-action protocol.

5 Pre-court Procedures

5.1 The Income Officer generates the following:-

- Copy of the court pro-forma, case history notes.
- The copy of the Notice of Proceedings for Possession, signed, dated and served.
- A completed copy of the Rent Arrears Review form, if available.
- Assessment of household Income and Expenditure, if available.
- Copy of the letter notifying of the Review Panel's decision.

5.2 Each Income Officer is responsible for controlling and monitoring their own court applications, to ensure that notification of Court Hearing dates are received from the County Court promptly.

5.3 Each Income Officer is responsible for maintaining a central register (e.g. Electronic court diary/white board) in which the date of each and every Court Hearing is entered.

5.4 On receipt of the Court date, the Income Officer notifies the tenant in writing, advising the tenant of the Court appointment. Good Practice guidelines suggest that a copy of the letter is to be sent to all tenants.

5.5 The Income Officer serves the Notice of Proceedings Possession, including an application for a Review Hearing is sent to the tenant by first class post.

5.6 If the tenant clears the rent account and legal costs incurred, to our satisfaction before the Court Hearing date, the Income Officer can withdraw the case completely, sending a letter to the County Court and allowing the tenancy to continue.

6.0 Cost Court Procedures

6.1 Court cases will be heard at County Court.

6.2 It is mandatory for the Court to grant a possession order.

6.3 Documents and evidence required to be presented at the Court include:-

- History of the account.
- Court pro-forma
- An up to date statement of account

6.4 The only power available to the Court is to postpone the date of possession for up to 14 days, and in the case of exceptional hardship for up to 6 weeks.

6.5 If the Income Officer is dissatisfied with the conduct of the tenancy, but there is no justification to end the tenancy through a Court Order, there is the option to extend the Introductory Tenancy for a further 6 months. Following consultation with the Income Team Leader, a Notice to extend the tenancy should be issued. This must be hand delivered to the tenants at the property no later than 8 weeks before the end date on the original tenancy agreement.

7.0 Post Court Procedures

7.1 Written notification of the court decision is sent to the tenant.

8.0 Eviction Procedures

8.1 The Income Officer completes a Request for Warrant of Possession of Land through the county court computer system (Pcol= possession claims on Line).

8.2 The County Court will acknowledge the application and will confirm the date of eviction via electronic mail.

8.3 Each Income Officer is responsible for controlling and monitoring their court applications, to ensure that notification of eviction dates are received from the County Courts promptly.

8.4 Notification of the eviction day is sent electronically to the Housing Neighbourhood, Housing Options and Repairs Teams.

8.5 If the tenant clears all the rent arrears before the due date of eviction (including court costs), the Council has the discretion to continue with the eviction or offer a new Introductory Tenancy. Income Officers need to be aware that even if all the arrears and costs are paid, the Council can still take possession of the property. Consultation with the Neighbourhood Manager is necessary at this stage.

8.6 Every effort should be made to keep in personal contact with the tenant right up to the eviction date, providing the tenant with a written copy of the actual procedure on day of eviction 7 days before eviction is due to take place.

9.0 Proceeding to Evictions

9.1 Before an Income Officer can apply for an eviction they must first prepare a detailed Case History detailing action taken, in report form, i.e. Notice of Possession Proceedings served, Court action taken and orders/costs awarded, agreements made, support and advice given by internal and external agencies, any previous Eviction dates & Suspension Hearings

9.2 It should also include any comments/notes the Income officer thinks will support their case for an Eviction Application.

9.3 The income Officer should then send this report, electronically, to the Income Team Leader for consideration.

9.4 At this stage the application can be refused, comments received and action reconsidered if appropriate. Any information regarding action taken or justification for the application should be welcomed at this stage and, if necessary, further action taken by the Income Officer to prevent an Eviction taking place.

APPENDIX 5 – Housing Rent Recovery – Secure Tenancies

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council adopts a 'Rent First' approach in the collection of rent to ensure rent is paid on time. The Council will aim to contact tenants at an early stage with a focus on early intervention and detection of lower levels of debt to ensure preventative action and support is taken quickly to prevent arrear levels escalating.
- 1.2 The majority of tenancies in Flintshire are secure tenancies. New tenants will be given an introductory tenancy for the first 12 months then will automatically become secure as long as they are not subject to legal action by the Council.
- 1.3 The computer system produces a weekly rent arrears extract to enable Income Officers to identify tenants with rent arrears on the geographical areas managed.
- 1.4 The income Officer is to be aware of the tenant's entitlement to Housing Benefit, or Universal Credit and ensure that the tenant is claiming any other relevant benefits.
- 1.5 Personal contact must be maintained throughout the rent arrears procedure, and if any arrangements to pay are agreed with the Income Officer is to confirm the arrangement in writing.
- 1.6 Regular monitoring is imperative. If the tenant fails to comply with any arrangement's to pay, they may receive a Notice of Seeking possession which is the first stage of legal proceedings.
- 1.7 Debt counselling services are offered to tenants such as Shelter Cymru and Citizens Advice Flintshire and will refer cases to the councils Housing Options team where necessary.
- 1.8 The Support Service Provider (i.e. Housing Options Team) needs to be informed of each stage of legal action to be taken by the Income Officer (starting with the serving of a Notice).
- 1.9 However, if the tenant is elderly or considered to be vulnerable, or there has been no previous contact with the tenant, every effort must be made to establish personal contact when serving the Notice of Proceedings.
- 1.10 Before the serving of Notice of Seeking Possession, any contents insurance premiums need to be cancelled and the tenant notified in writing of same.
- 1.11 Ensure all actions taken in chasing rent arrears (inc. date applications are made to Court, date of evictions etc.) are recorded on the rent arrears electronic diary.

2.0 Rent Recovery Process

- 2.1 In the event of an secure tenant failing behind with a rent payment the income officer will contact by telephone requesting payment in full as the default position but to also identify the reasons for non-payment. Focus will be on early intervention and detection of lower levels of debt to ensure preventative action and support is taken quickly to prevent arrear levels escalating.
- 2.2 If no response a Notice of Seeking Possession may be served on the tenant.

3.0 Notice of Seeking Possession

- 3.1 The Income Officer serves the Notice of Seeking Possession by first class post which is electronically documented on the tenants rent account in the case of those tenants who fail to pay or engage with the support which has been offered.
- 3.2 However, if the tenant is elderly or considered to be vulnerable, or there has been no previous contact with the tenant, every effort will be made to establish personal contact prior serving the Notice of Seeking Possession.
- 3.3 Income Officers have the discretion of withdrawing the Notice of Seeking Possession at this stage, if it is felt appropriate.
- 3.4 After serving the notice, the Income Officer monitors the rent account carefully, continues to contact the tenant by telephone and personal visits if necessary.

4.0 Pre-Court Procedures

- 4.1 The Income Officer requests authorisation to proceed to court as follows:-
 - Possession Order.
 - Warrant for Possession.
- 4.2 The income officer forwards the court pro-forma to the Income Manager for consideration. On receipt of the authorisation the income officer applies to court.
- 4.3 The Income officer is responsible for recording the court hearing date and will attend the hearing.
- 4.4 Good practice dictates that no later than 14 days before the Court Hearing the Income Officer notifies the tenant in writing of the court date.

5.0 Court Proceedings

- 5.1 Court cases will be heard at the County Court.
- 5.2 To help both the Housing and Court Officers it is proposed to standardise the procedure as follows:-
 - The cases may be heard in Court or in chambers.

- The Officer takes to the Court the standard pro-forma, original notice of seeking possession together and case notes.
- The Officer may be invited to swear the oath and state his/her position in the organisation.
- The Officer needs to be prepared to answer questions asked by the judge. The judge may wish for the Officer to elaborate on any information provided.
- Finally the judge will invite the Officer to detail the order requested by the Council (e.g. an order for possession suspended for as long as tenant pays the weekly rent plus £_ off the arrears).
- The Officer completes his/her own copy of the court pro-forma accordingly.

6.0 Court Order Suspended

- 6.1 If the tenant fails to comply with the terms of the suspended order, the Income Officer contact the tenant in the first instance.
- 6.2 If no response the next stage will be to apply for a warrant of eviction advising the tenant in writing.
- 6.3 If the Court has adjourned the case generally or on terms and the rent arrears have increased within a 12 month period, apply back to the Court.
- 6.4 If the Court has adjourned the case for a fixed period (e.g. 3, 6 or 12 months) and the arrears increase within that period, the officer will apply back to the court. Please note that if the case has not been restored during the given period the case will be struck out by the Court and the Income Officer will need to recommence the arrears procedure from the beginning.

7.0 Eviction Procedures

- 7.1 The Income Officer completes the court pro-forma and forwards to the Income Team Leader for consideration/authorisation.
- 7.2 The Income Officer will apply to court via the website (Pcol.possession claim online).
- 7.3 Details of the eviction date are to be forwarded to the Neighbourhood, Repairs and Housing Options teams.
- 7.4 Every effort should be made to keep in personal contact with the tenant right up to the eviction date, providing the tenant with a written copy of the actual procedure on day of eviction a few days before the eviction is due to take place.
- 7.5 The tenant has the right to apply to have the eviction suspended by an ex-party agreement, 'Notice of Application form is completed and sent to the court by the tenant.
- 7.6 If the tenant applies for the eviction warrant to be suspended the Court advises the Council of a date and time when that application will be heard. The Income Officer attends the hearing to present the Council's case.

- 7.7 If the County Court decrees that the eviction is suspended, a Variation Order will be granted and the Income Officer notifies the tenant of the details of the new Order in writing.
- 7.8 If and when an order is ever satisfied, during the period between receiving an eviction date and reaching that date, the County Court should be advised in writing, with a copy sent to the tenant.

8.0 Proceeding to Evictions

- 8.1 Before an Income Officer can apply for an eviction they must first prepare a detailed Case History detailing actions taken to recover the debt in line with the pre-action protocol. Which is forwarded to the Rent Income Manager for authorisation.
- 8.2 At this stage the application can be refused, comments received and action reconsidered if appropriate. Any information regarding action taken or justification for the application should be welcomed at this stage and, if necessary, further action taken by the Income Officer to prevent an Eviction taking place.

APPENDIX 6 - Bankruptcy Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to using the most effective recovery methods available and this policy will ensure that the Council's very occasional use of bankruptcy is consistent and complies with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- 1.2 Council Tax and Business Rate regulations allow for debts over £5,000 to be considered for bankruptcy providing that Liability Orders have been obtained. For Sundry debts and Housing Benefit overpayments, bankruptcy proceedings may be taken against debtors who owe in excess of £5,000 where a County Court Judgement has been granted in respect of the debt.
- 1.3 The Council also recognises that serious nature of bankruptcy which may result in an insolvent person's property being vested in a trustee – someone who realises and distributes payment among the creditors in final settlement of their claims. The serious nature of this action cannot be under estimated as the consequences could result in a person losing their home and possessions, and be liable to pay a charge and statutory fees/costs associated with bankruptcy amounting to several thousand pounds
- 1.4 Given that the Council is not a preferential creditor for the purposes of bankruptcy there is no guarantee of a dividend being paid. The Council will only consider using bankruptcy as a last resort and final option and will take a cautious and diligent approach in deciding if bankruptcy is reasonable action to take.
- 1.5 Bankruptcy action takes place in the debtors local County Court with bankruptcy jurisdiction unless the debtor resides in London, in which case the action takes place in the High Court or the Central London High Court.
- 1.6 The Revenues Team will manage the administration of bankruptcy cases and proceedings in respect of Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debt and Housing Benefit overpayments, with the assistance from Legal Officers in appropriate cases.

2.0 When bankruptcy Action may be taken

- 2.1 The Corporate Debt Team may consider using bankruptcy proceedings in the following circumstances:
 - Where the debt exceeds £5,000 and the debtor appears to have sufficient assets or equity to ensure the debt is recoverable by the Official Receiver of the Insolvency Service or the Trustee in Bankruptcy.
 - Where the debtor is not prepared to make a payment agreement to clear the debt within a reasonable and acceptable timescale.
 - Where other methods of recovery are considered inappropriate or have failed and bankruptcy action, as a last resort, appears to be a fair and proportionate course of action.

3.0 Recording Information and Decisions

- 3.1 When the Council consider bankruptcy proceedings, a log of events will be maintained on the customers account throughout the process to ensure that bankruptcy remains the most appropriate course of action.
- 3.2 **Decision Making (stage 1)** - Prior to commencing bankruptcy proceedings enquiries will be made of the Revenues and Benefit records to:
- Establish a debt history and whether any previous debts have been collected within a reasonable period by other means.
 - Ensure that all known benefits, discounts and exemptions have been granted based on the information held
 - Establish whether, based on any information held, the debtor may be vulnerable or unable to deal with their day to day financial affairs or have had previous debts written off.
- 3.3 Contact will also be made with relevant portfolio to ascertain if the debtor is known to them and therefore may be vulnerable. If the debtor is currently receiving any care service further enquiries will be made with the key worker to establish if the debtor may be vulnerable by way of, for example, age, mental illness, serious learning difficulties or where it is known that the debtor is unable to deal with their own affairs. Should it be apparent the debtor has such difficulties then consideration will be given to whether the help of other agencies should be sought, and to the appropriateness of pursuing an alternative course of action, including the potential to write off in line with the policy in appendix 5.
- 3.4 **Decision Making (stage 2)** – If records held and enquiries with relevant Directorates do not indicate that the debtor may be vulnerable then enquiries will be made with a credit reference agency and the Land Registry to establish information about the debtor’s financial standing and ownership of property and assets.
- 3.5 **Decision Making (stage 3)** – In order to assist with the decision making process as to the appropriateness of bankruptcy a visit will be made to the debtor’s home address (and/or business address if known) to discuss the matter and to establish whether a payment agreement can be established.
- 3.6 In the event that the visit establishes that the debtor may be vulnerable then details of the perceived vulnerability will be recorded. Further enquiries will then be made with the relevant support services within the Council together with possible referral to other advice agencies and to determine an alternative method of recovery.
- 3.7 If a payment agreement cannot be made, or contact with the debtor cannot be made, the Council will serve a final letter will be sent to the debtor that explains the intended action, confirms the charges due, and offers a final opportunity to arrange payment within 14 days. The letter will also advise the debtor to seek independent advice from one of the advice agencies. A copy of the Insolvency Service’s publication – ‘A guide to Bankruptcy’ will also be sent to the debtor.

3.8 **Decision Making (stage 4)** – If payment is not made and no satisfactory arrangement agreed, the matter will be discussed with the Head of Finance and if appropriate with the service department to approve the next course of action associated with bankruptcy proceedings.

4.0 Statutory Demand

4.1 Where a decision is taken to commence bankruptcy proceedings a formal 'statutory demand' for payment will be issued by the Council to the debtor and the service of the statutory demand upon the debtor is the first formal stage in bankruptcy proceedings.

4.2 Guidance on service requirements are set out in the Insolvency Proceedings Court Practice Direction. A letter will also be issued with the statutory demand setting out the intentions of the Council and what the debtor needs to do to comply with it.

4.3 The debtor will still have the opportunity to contact the Council, even at this stage and, depending on information supplied, it may still be possible to a short term repayment arrangement. The debtor also has the right to apply to the County Court to have the Statutory Demand set aside.

5.0 Bankruptcy Petition

5.1 The Council may present a Creditors Bankruptcy Petition to the County Court within four months of service of the Statutory Demand Notice if the debtor has not complied with it, or if alternative payment arrangements cannot be agreed following the service of the Statutory Demand.

5.2 Prior to presentation of the Petition, further enquiries will be made all relevant Directorates to establish whether the debtor has become known to them during the recent process in which case the action will be reconsidered.

5.3 The Council is required to serve the Petition upon the debtor and guidance for service requirements are set out in the Insolvency Proceedings Court Practice Direction.

5.4 At this stage, the debtor is required to pay the debt in full before the hearing of the Petition at Court otherwise the Court will be asked to make a Bankruptcy Order. The Council will always support a short adjournment of the court proceedings if the debtor provides the court with evidence that they will be able to pay in full within a very short period.

5.5 If, between the Petition being presented to the Court and the hearing of the Petition, it becomes known that the debtor does not have the capacity to deal with the matter, then full consideration will be given to seeking an adjournment of the proceedings to enable both the debtor and the Council to obtain further advice.

6.0 Making of a Bankruptcy Order

6.1 If the Court awards a Bankruptcy Order, the Official Receiver of the Insolvency Service is immediately appointed Trustee in Bankruptcy.

APPENDIX 7 - Write Off Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises that where a debt is irrecoverable, prompt and regular write off of such debts is important so that the Council can budget for bad debts. An integral part of debt recovery is the effective management of bad debts to ensure that resources are applied efficiently to the collection of monies outstanding which can reasonably be expected to be collected.
- 1.2 The Council will seek to minimise the cost of write offs to the local tax payers by taking all necessary and appropriate recovery action to recover what is due. All debts will be subject to the full collection, recovery and legal procedures and considerations as outlined in this Corporate Debt Recovery Policy Framework.
- 1.3 Write offs will be carried out in accordance with the Councils Financial Procedure Rules, and only in cases where
- The demand or invoice has been raised correctly and is due and owing;
and
 - There is a justified reason why the debt should no longer be pursued.
- 1.4 The Corporate Finance Manager/Section 151 Officer will have the authority to write off debts of up to £5,000 (in aggregate) for each debtor. Write off of debts between £5,001 and £24,999 will be considered for write off by the Corporate Finance Manager/Section 151 and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management via delegated powers. All debts considered for write off in excess £25,000 will be referred to Cabinet for approval.
- 1.5 Debts will normally only be considered for write off where the account is 'closed' and there are no reoccurring debts. Only in exceptional circumstances will amounts on 'live' and ongoing accruing debts be considered for write off. All such cases must demonstrate that further recovery will not achieve collection of the debt.
- 1.6 The Council will record all write off decisions.

2.0 Reasons for Write Off

- 2.1 Is it not possible to list every possible scenario which could make a debt suitable for write off, however the following reasons capture the main reasons why debts become irrecoverable:

Absconded / No Trace	The debtor has left the address listed on the invoice/bill and all reasonable attempts, including using trace agents, to find the debtor have failed.
Deceased	The debtor has passed away and there is evidence of in-sufficient or no funds in the deceased persons estate to pay the amount outstanding

Debt 'out of time'	Debts over 6 years old and where a Liability Order has not been granted (Council Tax and Business Rates), or no contact has been made and no payments have been received (in accordance with the Limitation Act 1980 as amended).
Small Debts and debts Uneconomical to pursue	When all recovery processes have been tried or considered and where the cost of proceeding to recover would be cost prohibitive to the Council and to its taxpayers.
Debts subject to a Relief Order	Where debts owed to the Council are subject to and included in a Debt Relief Order and cannot be recovered.
Bankruptcy	The debtor is declared bankrupt and sums due before the date of bankruptcy cannot be recovered.
Companies in Liquidation/ Wound Up / Dissolved Struck Off	The Company is a Limited Company registered with Companies House and no longer exists and there is no means of recovering the debt.

3.0 Conditions for re-claiming VAT on Bad Debts

- 3.1 The Council will be entitled to a refund of VAT from HMRC on any bad debts (excluding Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments) if the conditions prescribed below are met :
- Goods and services have been supplied and VAT has been accounted for and paid to HMRC but no payment (or only a part payment – see 3.4) has been received;
 - The debt has, or is, to be written off in the accounts and transferred to a bad debt account
 - The debt must not have been assigned
 - The debt has remained unpaid (or partly unpaid) for six months or more after the later of the date payment was due or the date of the supply of the goods or services
 - The re-claim of VAT is made within three years and six months of the later of the date payment was due or the date of the supply of the goods or services.
- 3.2 The Council is required, in accordance with HMRC guidance, to retain copies of all invoices and bad debt account details for a fixed period of six years
- 3.3 VAT on bad debts will be re-claimed on the monthly VAT return, ensuring that appropriate VAT codes are debited with the appropriate amounts to reduce the amount of the write off recorded against the appropriate bad debt provision for the relevant Directorate.

- 3.4 Where the Council is re-claiming VAT on debts where part payment is received, the entitlement to bad debt relief on VAT is based on the amount outstanding for the supplies made. For a single supply, where no payment is received, the amount of VAT accounted for can be reclaimed. If a part payment of the debt is received, a refund can only be claimed on the VAT relating to the amount still unpaid.
- 3.5 HMRC advise that payments should be allocated to the earliest supply made unless the customer specifies that a payment is for a particular supply and pays for that supply in full.
- 3.6 In bad debt cases where everything except the VAT element is paid, if the customer refuses to pay the VAT element of an invoice and this is the only element outstanding, relief is limited to the VAT element of the total debt outstanding. For example, if the charge was £100 (which was paid) and £20 VAT remains outstanding, the Council is entitled to re-claim VAT of £3.33 (i.e. 1/6 of £20).
- 3.7 Any bad debt relief claimed on sales must be at the same rate of VAT as used for those sales, that is, 20% from 4 January 2011, 17.5% from 1 January 2010 to 3 January 2011 and 15% from 1 December 2008 to 31 December 2009.
- 3.8 If VAT is re-claimed on a bad debt and a payment is later received from the customer, the VAT element included in the payment must be paid over to HMRC in the tax period in which the payment is received.
- 3.9 For any technical queries on VAT treatment of invoices please refer to the Council's Tax Advisor.



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Communal Heating Charges 2019/20
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2018, Cabinet approved the recommended communal heating recharge for HRA tenants living in properties with shared gas meters.

At the time, Cabinet were asked to approve proposed recharges for both 2018/19 and 2019/20 with the caveat that a revised proposal would be brought to Cabinet if prices or usage increased.

As prices have increased by more than was anticipated at the time, revised recharges are now proposed for 2019/20 to avoid a deficit building on the heating reserve account.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approve changes to the current heating charges at council properties with communal heating schemes as outlined in the table 1, paragraph 1.08 of this report. All changes will take effect from 1 st August 2019.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING COMMUNAL HEATING RECHARGES
1.01	The Housing and Assets Portfolio currently operates nine communal heating schemes within Flintshire. The Council negotiates fuel costs in advance and tenants benefit from the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate. The cost of fuel used within these schemes is paid for initially by the Authority through a heating reserve account and then collected from tenants in addition to their weekly rent.
1.02	New communal heating charges are implemented in the summer each year, this enables an accurate picture to be gathered on the previous year's usage and allows us to calculate costs and any corresponding surplus or deficit on the heating reserve account.
1.03	Any proposed changes to charges are intended to ensure that each communal heating scheme recovers the full energy cost charged in respect of each scheme.
1.04	The Council charges tenants for the energy consumed within each block. This is a basic flat rate charge irrespective of individual usage. The method of applying tenants heating charges is to apply uplifts or decreases to tenants each year, based on previous year's usage plus energy rate costs.
1.05	<p><u>2017/18</u> The cost of gas increased by an average of 32% per Kwh in 2017/18 due to the Council's contract expiring. As the price increased so significantly, Cabinet (July 2017) approved a three year stepped increase to the weekly heating charge across six of the nine communal heating schemes from September 2017.</p> <p>This proposal was caveated as there was a possibility of prices or usage increasing. In the event of an increase, a revised proposal would be brought back to Cabinet.</p>
1.06	<p><u>2018/19</u> In April 2018 the cost of gas increased by an average of 10%. A colder winter also meant that the majority of schemes saw a small increase in usage. The stepped increase proposal was revised to avoid an increasing deficit on the heating reserve account.</p>
1.07	<p><u>2019/20</u> In April 2019, the average price increase was 18%. As a result of the mild winter the majority of schemes have seen a small decrease in usage.</p>
1.08	<p>The table below sets out recommended heating charges based on actual usage in 2017/18 and 2018/19, the assumption that costs increase by 18% in 2019/20 and usage remains at similar levels for the next 12 months.</p> <p>Revised charges will be introduced in August 2019 to help spread the increased cost to tenants over a longer period.</p>

Table 1

Communal Area	Number of Beds	Weekly Charge 2018/19	Increase 2019/20	Revised Weekly Charge 2019/20 (from Aug 2019)
Bolingbroke Heights, Flint	1 Bed	£4.30	£0.50	£4.80
	2 Bed	£5.16	£0.60	£5.76
Richard Heights, Flint	1 Bed	£4.30	£0.50	£4.80
	2 Bed	£5.16	£0.60	£5.76
Castle Heights, Flint	1 Bed	£5.10	(£0.15)	£4.95
	2 Bed	£6.12	(£0.18)	£5.94
Llwyn Beuno, Holywell	1 Bed	£8.70	£1.85	£10.55
	2 Bed	£10.44	£2.22	£12.66
Llwyn Aled, Holywell	1 Bed	£9.80	£2.40	£12.20
	2 Bed	£11.76	£2.88	£14.64
Panton Place, Holywell	1 Bed	£6.90	£1.90	£8.80
	2 Bed	£8.28	£2.28	£10.56
Acacia Close, Mold	1 Bed	£8.35	(£1.55)	£6.80
	2 Bed	£10.02	(£1.86)	£8.16
	3 Bed	£11.27	(£2.09)	£9.18
Glan-y-Morfa Court, Connahs Quay	1 Bed	£7.50	£2.15	£9.65
	2 Bed	£9.00	£2.58	£11.58
Chapel Court, Connah's Quay	1 Bed	£7.90	£1.00	£8.90
	2 Bed	£9.48	£1.20	£10.68

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 As identified above.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT

3.01 No formal consultation required.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Tenants cannot claim Housing Benefit for the cost of domestic heating.
4.02	Estimates have been based on energy usage during 2017/18 and 2018/19. A severe winter could lead to higher costs which could lead to an increased charge during 2020/21.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Rachael Corbelli, Strategic Finance Manager Telephone: 01352703363 E-mail: rachael.corbelli@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Housing Revenue Account: records all revenue expenditure and income relating to the provision of council dwellings and related services. Tenant: a person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord (in this instance Flintshire County Council). Heating Reserve Account: the account which records all expenditure on communal heating and all income from tenants.



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 th June 2019
Report Subject	Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 60 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, requires all Local Highway Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). The RoWIP is a plan for the Local Authority to manage and improve its rights of way network over a 10 year period.

This second ROWIP assesses the 2018 network and evaluates progress made since 2008. The current (2018) policy context is examined, priority areas are identified and a new-style Statement of Action proposed.

In July 2016, the Welsh Government issued guidance to local highway authorities in Wales for the review and redrafting of RoWIPs. This guidance has been used to direct the preparation of Flintshire's second RoWIP.

Part of the plan is a booklet containing a suit of policies and procedures associated with Rights of Way.

This final draft has been amended following a statutory three month consultation

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members approve the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and policy and procedures booklet.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PLAN																				
1.01	The RoWIP 2018-2028 focuses on three main sections; evaluation of the previous plan; assessment of the current network condition and; statement of action going forward over the life of the plan.																				
1.02	The plan is a statutory requirement under Section 60 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000.																				
1.03	<p>Evaluating delivery of the first ROWIP</p> <p>The first RoWIP identified the following areas as being key priorities for 2008-18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the network • Service Management • Improving the network • Signage • Clear obstructions and improve enforcement • Definitive Map • Improve accessibility • The development of bridleways and a cycle network • Link up and develop bridleway network • Off-road motor vehicles • Publicity and promotion 																				
1.04	Of the 22 tasks identified, seven have been completed or there has been substantial progress made; while seven have made little or no progress; and eight have made partial progress. However, the recording of essential data has been found to have been inconsistent and sometimes lacking, leading to difficulty in identifying progress in some areas.																				
1.05	<p>Assessment of current condition of the network and its legal record</p> <p>The public rights of way network in 2018 consists of approximately 1800 individual public paths made up as follows:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Footpath</td> <td style="width: 5%;">-</td> <td style="width: 60%;">955.2km</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: right;">(88.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bridleway</td> <td>-</td> <td>114.6km</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(10.6%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BOAT*</td> <td>-</td> <td>11.9km (1.1%)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">*(Byway Open to All Traffic)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>1,082km</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(100%)</td> </tr> </table>	Footpath	-	955.2km	(88.3%)	Bridleway	-	114.6km	(10.6%)	BOAT*	-	11.9km (1.1%)	*(Byway Open to All Traffic)					Total		1,082km	(100%)
Footpath	-	955.2km	(88.3%)																		
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Total		1,082km	(100%)																		
1.06	<p>The RoWIP specifically assesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of Use • Maintenance and repair • Enforcement • Legal record 																				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and protocols • Infrastructure • Surface • Accessibility • Vegetation management • Reporting, recording and monitoring processes • Promoted routes <p>Current management and organisation is detailed with specific reference to staff, budget, the Local Access Forum (LAF), and external relationships.</p>
1.07	A strategic overview of the PRoW network was carried out, with reference to relevant legislation, strategies and documents at national and county level.
1.08	The findings from the review of the consultation responses, the desk review of relevant strategies and plans, and the evaluation of the current condition of the network can be drawn together to show a number of emerging messages:
1.09	<p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who walk regularly are broadly happy with the condition of the network; • Users would like to see a more dynamic approach to enforcement; with improved communication about action taken; • Horse-riders want bridleway improvements; • Disabled users feel strongly about the restricted access to Wales Coastal Path, and need facilities. <p>Landowners have concerns about users opening up gaps around stiles.</p>
1.10	<p>Condition monitoring and maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is very little available data on network condition; • Work is primarily reactive, and not pro-active; • Stakeholders are unclear about how and why maintenance works are prioritised and done.
1.11	<p>Information and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAMS on-line reporting system is a positive development. • Promotion of the network, carried out by the Countryside team, is limited; • There is very little information for either land managers or path users, but there is demand for it; • PR opportunities are not maximised.
1.12	<p>The organisational perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights of Way staff focus on their own individual areas; • The team has looked externally to learn from good practice elsewhere; • Relevant data and information is difficult to access.

	There is a weak relationship between Rights of Way and the rangers/Countryside service.
1.13	<p>There are aspects where the local rights of way network that can be said to meet present needs, in terms of what participants in the review have said they like about the Flintshire's rights of way network. These can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to many different parts of the County for regular walking; • Footpaths mainly in good useable condition; • Noticeable improvements in recent years; • Good signposting from roads; • Providing some opportunities for off-road mountain biking and horse-riding.
1.14	<p>However, it is evident that there are ways in which Flintshire's local rights of way are weak in terms of meeting present and future needs, in relation to the problems that participants in the review raised and the improvements that they said they would like to see. These can be summarised as follows (in no particular order of importance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waymarking is not as consistent as some users would like; • There are not enough bridleways for riders to enable them to ride off-road as much as they would like; • Wheelchair users are not all able to access the Wales Coast Path, and experience some problems with the surfacing on local footpaths; • Landowners have experienced problems as a result of inappropriate behaviour by users and their dogs, particularly in terms of compromising the stock proofing of their fields; • There is insufficient information about the Rights of Way network, in terms of what is there, and people's rights and responsibilities.
1.15	Opportunities identified in the Statement of Action:
1.16	<p>Physical accessibility of the network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities where disability access can be improved; • Maintain good condition of footpaths; • Waymarking and signage improvements; • Investigate opportunities for bridleway linkages; • Investigate opportunities for footpath links between key places; • Using volunteers more for maintenance and improvement works; • Deal with enforcement issues in a timely way.
1.17	<p>More purposeful use of the Rights of Way network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain strategic linkages, and facilitate networks, at strategic and operational levels; • Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for walking for

	<p>health;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for active travel.
1.18	<p>Legal recording and changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement; Address anomalies; Continuous review of the Definitive Map and Statement; Build expertise amongst the ROW team staff; Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding; Develop and disseminate a team prioritisation policy for legal work.
1.19	<p>Promotion and information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the route network; Promote routes for riders and cyclists; Improve information provision for land managers and ROW users; Improve information provision for people with disabilities.
1.20	<p>Strategic working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work pro-actively, using the ROWIP for direction; regularly review progress and report to LAF and Cabinet; Develop, review and update policies to ensure comprehensive and consistent coverage of key areas of activity; Build and maintain strong means of communication with key stakeholders, including Councillors, users and landowners; Create and implement a volunteering strategy, including considering collaborative opportunities; Develop use of GIS as a proactive management & decision-making tool; Develop and disseminate a team prioritisation policy for legal work.
1.21	<p>Key task planning and delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound record-keeping, especially on CAMS; Well designed and planned surveying/data gathering; Consistent procedures for all key work tasks.
1.22	<p>Organisational development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review lead roles and responsibilities for key tasks for particular individuals; Encourage individuals to work with initiative, within a 'whole team'; Build relevant expertise related to lead roles within the team; Establish the LAF; Investigate opportunities for closer collaborative working with neighbouring and over-lapping authorities; Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding.
1.23	<p>In response to the early findings of the RoWIP, a Policy and Procedure booklet has already been developed as a priority.</p>

	<p>The policies and procedures will form the basis of a booklet to be made available to users of the Public Rights of Way network and to landowners, in order that there is widespread understanding and transparency about what Flintshire County Council does and how it does it.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Authority has considered best practice and published guidance notes in the delivery of the service.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The RoWIP details the likely resource implications over the next 10 years, and it is expected to be delivered from existing Service budgets and additional grant aid and income.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>The following organisations were consulted in the development of this plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Horse Society, Clwyd Branch • Exercise Referral Scheme, Deeside Leisure Centre • Flintshire Disability Forum • Flintshire Local Voluntary Council • Farming Union of Wales • National Farming Union • Natural Resources Wales • Public Health Wales • Ramblers Flintshire (Footpaths Officers) • Walkabout Flintshire
3.02	An electronic survey disseminated to members of Ramblers Flintshire and Walkabout Flintshire walk leaders received 40 responses.
3.04	A pre-consultation letter was sent out in 2017 to Town and Community Councils and neighbouring Authorities.
3.04	A statutory 3 month public consultation was undertaken and the summary responses are included in the appendices. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also been consulted on the ROWIP and Policies and Procedure booklet.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028
5.02	Flintshire Rights of Way Policy and Procedures 2018
5.03	Summary consultation responses document

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Tom Woodall, Access & Natural Environment Manager Telephone: 01352 703902 E-mail: tom.woodall@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT
PLAN

2018- 2028

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the second ROWIP

The first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) was published in October 2008 and covers the period through to the end of September 2018. In the foreword to the ROWIP, its aims were expressed as being to, “...secure improvements to the management, maintenance, protection and recording of the [public rights of way] network, to ensure that it becomes more open and accessible to the public.” The Executive Summary to the first ROWIP is included as Annex 1.

This second ROWIP assesses the 2018 network and evaluates progress made since 2008. It looks specifically at progress against the first ROWIP’s Statement of Action. The current (2018) policy context is examined, priority areas are identified and a new-style Statement of Action put forward. In July 2016, the Welsh Government issued guidance to Local Highway Authorities (LHA) in Wales for the review and redrafting of ROWIPs (Welsh Government, 2016.). This guidance has been used to direct the preparation of Flintshire’s second ROWIP. Experience with the first ROWIPs highlighted the need for greater flexibility in the plans. The guidance suggests the inclusion of ‘Delivery Plans’ as an annex to the main ROWIP and that these are used as an opportunity to regularly review progress, especially in the light of any significant changes of circumstance. It is intended that a Delivery Plan will be produced and maintained as an annex to this ROWIP.

1.2 The area covered

This Plan covers the County of Flintshire. But it should be noted that there are other influences affecting parts of Flintshire and the management of those parts of the public rights of way (PRoW) network. In particular, Flintshire includes part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Denbighshire Countryside Service, takes general responsibility for the day to day management of PRoW within the AONB, although Flintshire Council, as the Local Highway Authority, retains overall responsibility for the paths in its area and leads on non-routine issues such as any definitive map questions.



1.3 Method

Preparation of the plan involved the following areas of activity.

Research

Data searches and analysis, on-line searches and review of printed material have all been used to provide the evidence behind the assessment stage. This ROWIP makes extensive use of data recorded on Flintshire's digital Countryside Access Management System (CAMS), which includes data from a 33% survey of the network undertaken in 2017 and a full network survey from 2010. No further on-the-ground research was carried out for this ROWIP.

Consultation with stakeholders

The following organisations were consulted:

- BHS Clwyd Branch
- Exercise Referral Scheme, Deeside Leisure Centre
- Flintshire Disability Forum
- FLVC
- FUW
- NFU
- NRW
- Public Health Wales
- Ramblers Flintshire (Footpaths Officers)
- Walkabout Flintshire

Meetings were held with:

- Flintshire Disability Forum, Shotton Area Group
- FUW Flintshire
- Ramblers Flintshire
- Walkabout Flintshire

An electronic survey disseminated to members of Ramblers Flintshire and Walkabout Flintshire walk leaders received 40 responses.

2 Evaluating delivery of the first ROWIP

2.1 Key priorities in ROWIP 1

The first ROWIP identified the following areas as being key priorities for 2008-18:

1. Management of the network:
 - Development, adoption and promotion of a set of Enforcement Policies and Procedures;
 - Seeking additional funding; and
 - Develop partnership working.
2. Management:
 - Examine management practices to identify cost savings;
 - Increase joint working on rights of way across departments and also with other Local Authorities;
 - Set up an effective management and monitoring system; and
 - Develop use of volunteers.
3. Improving the network:
 - Improve maintenance, using prioritisation as identified by the Local Access Forum (LAF);
 - Work with user groups to identify gaps in the network;
 - Addressing issues from the severance of PRoW by the A55 trunk road;
 - Improve accessibility; and
 - Publicise and promote improved rights of way.
4. Signage:
 - Improve signage, along with necessary on-the-ground improvements.
5. Clear obstructions and improve enforcement:
 - Addressing obstructions on the network, including non-reinstatement following ploughing.
6. Definitive Map:
 - Writing Policies and Procedures that reflect good practice;
 - Preparing a Statement of Priorities;
 - Determining outstanding applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO);
 - Put programme in place to remove the backlog of Legal Event Modification Orders (LEMO);
 - Review outstanding anomalies;
 - Backlog of Public Path Orders (PPO) to be reviewed and prioritised; and
 - Develop a robust enforcement policy to avoid development over paths.
7. Improve accessibility:
 - Improving accessibility by following the 'least restrictive access' principle.
8. The development of bridleways and a cycle network:
 - No specific proposals.
9. Link up and develop bridleway network:
 - Develop linked up bridleways and multi-user routes.
10. Off-road motor vehicles:
 - Encourage users to identify alternatives to footpaths and bridleways for their activities.
11. Publicity and promotion:
 - Publicise and promote the Council's work on rights of way.

Each of the above priority areas was worked up into detailed proposals making up the first ROWIP's Statement of Action.

2.2 Delivery of Statement of Action

The Statement of Action (SoA) included performance indicators with the intention that progress could be monitored. Table 3.1 provides an action by action assessment of delivery of the SoA.

KEY:

	Actions completed
	Partial progress
	Little or no progress

Task	Performance Indicator	Progress to 2018	Narrative
1.1 Rights of Way Management	Review of management of PRoW carried out	Reported to Cabinet (21/6/16) as having been completed in 2012.	No copy of this report has been found. Process now underway (May 2018) to again review the management setup.
1.2 Policies & Procedures	Full set of policies and procedures to be in place within 5 years	Partially done	Being reviewed and developed (May 2018)
1.3 Requests for Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for communication and time limits for response, inspection and action. Percentage of requests for action dealt with in accordance to agreed timescales. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate guidelines for responses, no inspection target, response and action depends upon priority. No system in place to assess this. 	The CAMS can provide information to measure success but target times for various actions still need to be determined.
2.1 Statement of priorities	Statement of priorities adopted by October 2009	Done	
2.2 Remove backlog & new DMMO applications determined within defined timescales	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of apps received p.a. % determined in 12 months No. of outstanding apps Appoint 3 DM/PPO officers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Not known Not known Not known Achieved 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Only counted as received when an application is properly made and landowner notified. Now 3 RoW officers plus an admin person, all with roles in DMS management.
2.3 Backlog of LEMO	No. of outstanding LEMO to be near zero by 2012	75 LEMO made.	This was an active target but not known if it was met – problem found with poor quality orders uncovered in the process, also with limits on legal officer's time. Now the LEMO is done immediately following DMMO
2.4 DMS	% of paths by length that are free	List of anomalies	List to be updated.

Task	Performance Indicator	Progress to 2018	Narrative
anomalies	from DMS anomalies.	was made but it is not thought to be up to date	
2.5 Process PPO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All cases will be reviewed No. of outstanding PPO's No. of PPO required 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 10 Not known 	3 – number not readily available.
3.1 All PRoW signed where they leave a metalled road	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly sign installation programme % of network signed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Intention but not a quantified target per annum. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On-going target with annual budget of £1000 for 10 signs per annum. Used to be specific funding through NRW, also funding through specific schemes such as Watts Dyke Way. Signposting tends to follow clearing of other problems so only sign when path is fully available.
3.2 Waymarks and signposts	% of paths that meet the 'easy to use' BVPI criteria for waymarking	Not known	Stopped surveying in 2015. Only limited availability of BVPI data
3.3 Surfaces in proper repair etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual maintenance programme updated and paths prioritised Length of paths cleared p.a. % pf paths that meet BVPI test for surfaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, but also reactive. c.3,800m Not known 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EG they use slurry sealing of paths to prevent deterioration. Annual clearance programme doesn't go into CAMS, only reported problems.
3.4 All bridges in a safe condition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Biannual inspection % of bridges that are satisfactory 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Surveyed every 2 years. Figures unavailable from CAMS - see Streetscene asset management system. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> These are dealt with by the Streetscene Operations Managers who carry out an annual survey.
3.5 Path furniture safe and convenient	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy of least restrictive access Removal of barriers % of path furniture that is easy to use. Defined timescales for problem resolution 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes From CAMS List of priorities but not a timeframe with it. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> CAMS can record if structures conform to BS standard and are dog friendly. Work is done ASAP according to priority, especially related to danger.
3.6 Obstructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Draft and implement enforcement policy and procedure within 2 years Programme of enforcement action implemented within 3 years Appointment of Enforcement Officer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete No No No realistic figure available 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy produced outlining the order of priority only. Shared role between several officers. Figure not available through CAMS

Task	Performance Indicator	Progress to 2018	Narrative
	4. % of paths clear of obstructions		
3.7 Inspection and monitoring	1. Length of PRoW inspected p.a.	1. Only the promoted routes.	1. This is done by Ranger service.
4.1 Improve coast access	2. No indicatorOks identified		Joint responsibility – Inspectors and Countryside Service Rangers.
4.2 Improve equestrian access	1. Survey to be carried out to establish extent of problem and identify which routes need improvement 2. No. of gates installed on bridleways p.a. 3. Length of new bw/rb created p.a.	1. Not done 2. Not known 3. <1km p.a.	Some bridleway creation together with facilities such as Pegasus Crossing.
4.3 Improve cycle access	1. No. and length of new cycle routes p.a.	1. None on PRoW	There are specific cycle officers in other departments so hasn't been seen as a PRoW issue. This is an area for inter-department cooperation.
4.4 Improve Accessibility for All	1. Comprehensive audit of network and of promotional material 2. Plan drawn up for a programme of selected path improvement by 2010 3. "A percentage" of paths examined each year for accessibility, in addition to BVPI.	1. Yes, done as part of full survey. 2. No 3. No.	3. Reactive only.
4.5 Improving and extending the network	1. Plan prepared identifying solutions to specific problems, such as lack of provision for different users	1. No	1. Opportunities have been taken to add a bridleway.
4.6 Guided and promoted walks	None identified (though a number of 'opportunities' were put forward: a. Review current provision b. Provide more info on PRoW and associated costs c. Seek advice from LAF d. Provide info on access land e. Provide site maps for countryside sites and walks f. Use more maps/images g. Use website to promote a 'Walk of the month' h. On-line problem reporting	a. No b. No c. Yes d. No e. Yes f. No g. No h. Yes	h. Yes, but problems encountered setting it up and it is still not considered to be 100% reliable.
4.7 Annual report	1. Annual report covering progress on targets and PI identified in ROWIP	1. Last published in 2014	

2.3 Assessment of progress made

Changes to individual elements of the PRow network will be considered within the following sections of this ROWIP. However, in general terms, it is apparent that of the 22 tasks identified, seven have been completed or made substantial progress, while seven have made little or no progress, and eight have made partial progress.

3 Assessment of current condition of the network and its Legal record

3.1 Current condition

3.1.1 Monitoring

In the 2008 ROWIP, it was noted that regular inspections could aid the Authority in taking a proactive approach to rights of way management (and could also provide a defence against negligence claims). However, with the exception of bridge inspections by Streetscene officers, no inspection regime was put in place.

Limited surveys were undertaken for Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) purposes¹, using a standard method involving a five percent sample of the network. The survey was designed to give an indication of the 'ease of use' of a network but, because of the small number of paths monitored each year, the results were found to vary significantly from year to year. Although accurate on a national scale, the BVPI surveys were seen as being of limited value to Authorities with smaller networks, such as Flintshire and in 2014 the decision was made to stop carrying out the annual surveys.

There is now no routine monitoring of the network and any network assessment has to be based upon accurate record keeping in CAMS with occasional baseline surveys of all or part of the network.

3.1.2 Network composition

3.1.2.1 Current make-up

The public rights of way network in 2018 consists of approximately 1800 individual public paths made up as follows:

Footpath	-	955.2km (88.3%)	
Bridleway	-	114.6km (10.6%)	
BOAT*	-	11.9km (1.1%)	*(Byway Open to All Traffic)

Total 1,082km (100%)

In common with most networks in Wales, the Flintshire network is heavily biased towards footpaths, with routes available to horse riders and cyclists making up just 12% of the paths total. Motor vehicle users have just over 1% of the public paths network legally available to them.

3.1.2.2 Change since 2008

In 2008, the network was made up as follows:

Footpath	-	938.5km (88.9%)
Bridleway	-	106.5km (10.1%)
BOAT	-	11.2km (1.06%)

Total 1,056km (100%)

¹ Originally BVPI 6.10 and subsequently CMT/001, the data was supplied by local authorities to the Local Government Data Unit, now called Data Cymru.

Essentially the network has hardly changed since 2008. The network has increased overall and a large part of this was down to the All Wales Coastal Path and the amount of recorded rights of way that were added to the network as part of this process.

3.1.3 Ease of Use

In December 2000, the Government published new and revised Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) in line with its programme to modernise Local Government. Best Value Authorities were under a duty to seek continuous improvements in the way in which they exercised their functions and BVPIs provided a performance management framework for reporting progress.

The relevant indicator is the total length of rights of way, which were easy to use, as a percentage of the total length of all rights of way. 'Easy to use' means:

- Signposted or waymarked where they leave the road and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path;
- Free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation) to the public's right of passage;
- Surface and lawful barriers (e.g. authorised stiles and gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

In order to meet the easy to use standard, a path must record a pass against each of the individual items that make up the test.

3.1.3.1 Current

From the non-random 2017 survey results; 43.4% of paths by number passed the easy to use standard. But by length, which was the required measure and which is most relevant to users, 34.1% of the paths surveyed passed. This survey was carried out in July 2017 and there may be seasonal variations that impact the results.

The low pass rate is the compounded result of failures in a number of areas and a more useful picture of the network can be gained by considering the pass rate for individual aspects.

Signposting from the roadside is an area that has been given particular attention. The overall pass rate by number of all paths is about 74%.

Way-marking away from the roadside is in a more complete state with 98% of paths in the 2017 survey recording a pass for this aspect.

Stiles and gates scored 'pass' for about 77% of paths (by number).

Other forms of obstruction, such as barriers or fences across paths, or items and buildings deposited on them are a further significant cause of ease-of-use failure.

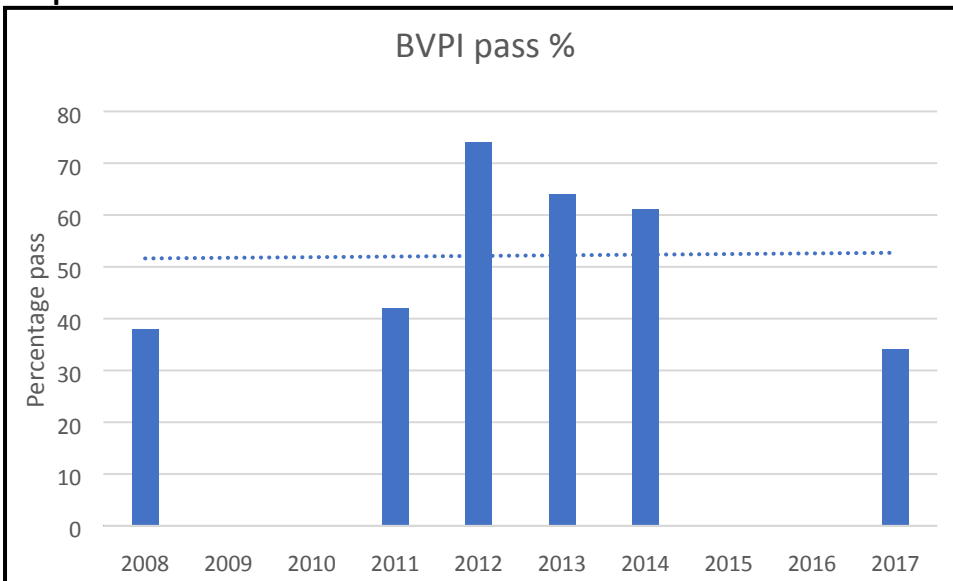
In contrast to other path infrastructure, only 3.3% of paths (by number) failed because of surface issues.

3.1.3.2 Change since 2008

Unfortunately, the BVPI records for 2008 to 2014 (the year that the surveys were stopped) are unavailable and so it is necessary to search for alternative publications that record the annual scores.

In 2008, the ROWIP recorded that 38% of the network met the easy-to-use standards. Graph 3.1 below shows an average of 52% easy to use. However, given the gaps in the data, and the very different sample selection in 2017, it would be unwise to over-interpret these data. The mathematical trend-line, shown as a dotted line, suggests a slow rate of improvement overall.

Graph 3.1



3.2 Infrastructure

3.2.1 Policies and protocols

Informally, the PRoW team adheres to the ‘least restrictive access’ principle, that is, replacing stiles, whenever possible, with gaps, gates or kissing gates. This is good working practice and should be extended and formalised to guide authorisation of new structures.

No formal Policies have been put in place to cover path furniture, though it is assumed that any items installed will comply with the relevant British Standard, such as BS5709 covering gaps, gates and stiles.

3.2.2 Network furniture

A full network survey was carried out in 2010 with all of the data being entered into the CAMS. Although not at the start of the ROWIP period, these data give us a solid baseline from which to monitor any subsequent changes to the network. There has not been a further 100% network survey, but a 33% survey was carried out in 2017, potentially giving a robust sample size upon which to extrapolate changes across the whole network. However, the survey was not random but was based upon a selection of whole community networks and a number of partial networks that, together, represented 33% of the total network length (see Fig. 3.1). This introduced an unknown amount of selection bias, undermining the reliability of the data as a representative sample.

However, as a number of Communities' networks were re-surveyed in their entirety (based upon the similarity of the total number of items recorded), it should be possible to confidently compare the results from these communities in both 2010 and 2017. The communities involved are:

- | | |
|------------------|------------|
| Buckley | Leeswood |
| Connah's Quay | Llanasa |
| Flint | Mold |
| Gwaenysgor | Mold Rural |
| Higher Kinnerton | Northop |
| Holywell | Trelawnyd |

Fig. 3.1: Distribution of paths surveyed, 2017

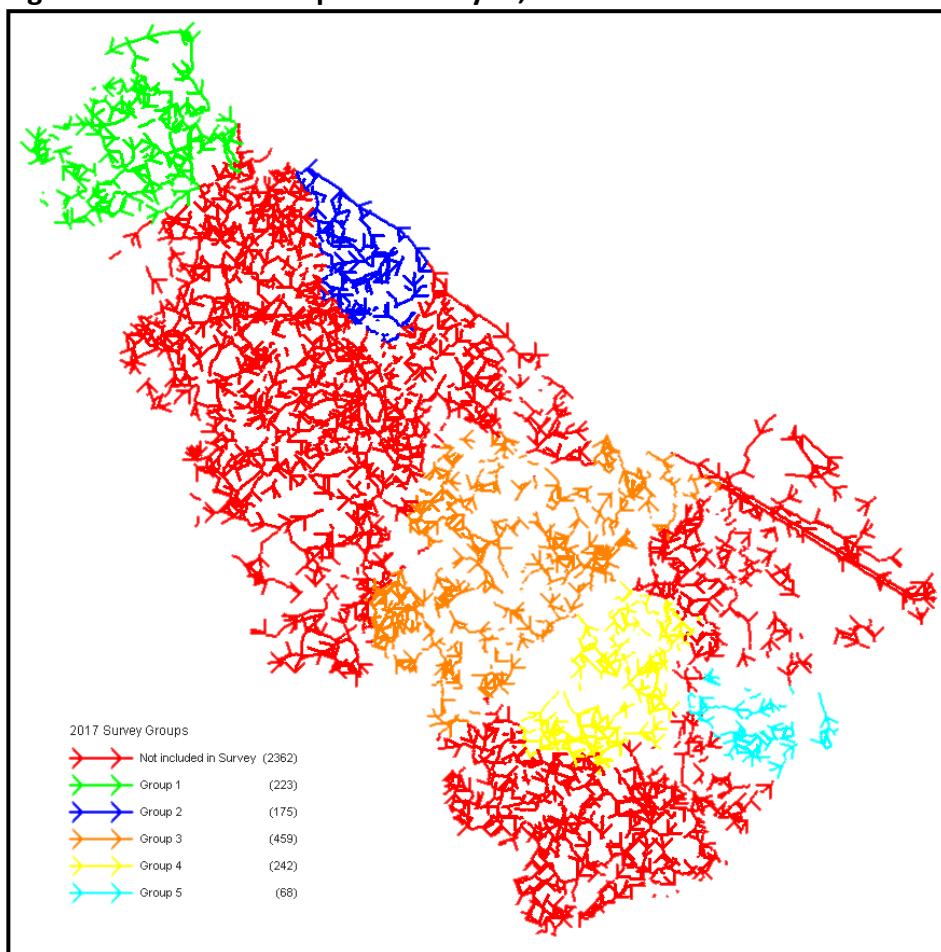


Table 3.1 overleaf compares the results for these Community networks obtained in 2010 and 2017 for various types of infrastructure.

Table 3.1: Infrastructure data from replicated communities

Item	2010*	2017*	% change
Stiles	1204	1224	+1.7%
Kissing Gates	261	238	-8.8%
Gaps	85	90	+5.9%
Gates (<1.2m)	53	54	+1.9%
Roadside Signs	732	829	+13.3%
Sleeper bridges	25	29	+16%
Other bridges	118	158	+33.9%

* Numbers of the items recorded within the 12 replicated communities' surveys. These are NOT the total network figure.

Table 3.2 Infrastructure data for complete network

Item	2010 (Full survey results)	2018 data (recorded on CAMS)	Change
Stiles	3310	3316	+6
Kissing Gates	493	506	+13
Gaps	185	186	+1
Gates (<1.2m)	155	152	-3
Roadside signs	1938	1992	+54
Sleeper Bridges	58	58	0
Other bridges	245	336	+91
All gates (excluding Kissing gates)	1494	1501	+7

It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from the available data and further survey work will be needed to fully compare the survey data from 2010 and what's recorded in CAMS in 2018. However, using the figures available, the number of stock stiles have increased slightly, the number of kissing gates have increased slightly more than new stiles and recorded gaps are almost unchanged. Small gate numbers have decreased marginally but the figure for *All Gates (excluding kissing gates)* indicates a further increase. Roadside signs have significantly increased since 2010 as have the number of bridges recorded (apart from sleeper bridges which remained the same). The increase in *Other Bridges* accords well with the prominence given to bridge installation in the Annual Report.

3.2.3 Surface

As was discussed in 3.1.3.1, only 3.3% of ease-of-use failure in the 2017 survey were related to surface issues, suggesting that 96.7% of the network's surface is in an acceptable condition. However, this figure is based on a subset of the partial, non-randomised survey, so there can be only limited confidence that this is a true reflection of the network as a whole. Nonetheless, the figure strongly suggests that the PRow network's surface is generally in acceptable to good condition. This accords well with the first ROWIP not recording surface issues as a significant source of BVPI failures, and it also reflects the considerable effort made annually with vegetation clearance (see 3.4.3.1 below).

3.2.4 Accessibility

The 2008 ROWIP committed the County to developing a programme for improving accessibility of the network (Task 4.4 in the SoA). However, little progress appears to have been made with this other than an informal Policy of taking opportunities to replace stiles with gaps, gates or kissing gates.

3.3 Maintenance, repair and enforcement

3.3.1 Policies and protocols

Several Policies were adopted by the Council in 2016, including to guide the approach to be followed for prioritising maintenance efforts. The Policy is to follow a hierarchy for addressing issues based upon their safety implications and also the popularity of the path – giving higher priority, for example, to promoted routes. The hierarchy is as shown in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3: Priority of maintenance issues

Priority No.	Issue
1	Health and safety issues
2	Volume and degree of usage and potential usage, especially National Trails, national and promoted footpaths and published trails, eg AONB and the Wales Coastal Path.
3	Ways that are suitable for those who are less agile, wheelchair users and the visually impaired.
4	Multi-use and bridleway circular routes and those identified in liaison with the British Horse Society.
5	Walks, rides and other activities for health.
6	Link Paths off the National Trail and promoted trails.
7	Paths published by community councils, including accesses to school.
8	Circular and other routes published by Flintshire CC, including accesses to school.

In practice, a simpler system has been adopted whereby issues are prioritised as high, medium or low priority when they are entered into CAMS, as the system dictates. The prioritisation of issues is tempered with an unwritten Policy of addressing other issues in the vicinity at the same time as the priority issues, increasing the efficiency of the maintenance effort but making it less clear to path users as to what the prioritisation process is.

With respect to enforcement, a similar prioritisation hierarchy has been developed. Again, health and safety related issues are given the highest priority, with the aspiration that health and safety related complaints will be investigated on the day of complaint and measures immediately put in place to mitigate the problem. The full hierarchy is shown in Table 3.4 overleaf:

Table 3.4: Priority of enforcement issues

Priority no.	Issue
1	Health and Safety implications
2	Time-dependent problems such as ploughing and cropping, hedge trimming and tree pruning.
3	Wilful, unnecessary and determined obstructions.
4	Obstructions on routes that have been the subject of a high volume and wide variety of complaints, including bridleway and multi user routes, the Offa's Dyke National Trail and other promoted routes.
5	Obstructions and problems on routes that would lead to obstruction-free, access to all ways.
6	Obstructions whose removal would lead to a significant improvement to the rights of way network

While the Policy prioritises the order for addressing enforcement issues, there is no Policy in place as to how the issues will be dealt with and, in practice, the approach adopted will vary from officer to officer and case to case.

Options for enforcement include serving notice and recharging for works carried out. This power has only rarely been used, with an official letter generally securing resolution of the issue. For some issues requiring enforcement action, there is also an option of prosecution. The County Legal and Democratic Services Officer has delegated authority to seek prosecution but this power has not been used.

Task 3.6 in the first ROWIP's Statement of Action was that an effective enforcement Policy and Procedure 'will be drafted and implemented within two years of the ROWIP's publication'. No evidence has been found that this task was completed and enforcement remains subject to individual approaches and, therefore, inconsistencies.

At its Cabinet meeting of 21st June 2016, the Council adopted a Policy that the surface of public paths should be maintained only to a sufficient standard for the normal traffic entitled to use the path, that is, a footpath will be maintained to a standard suitable for pedestrians and a bridleway will be maintained to a standard suitable for pedestrians and equestrians. Cyclists are not mentioned in the Policy proposal but should be included as part of the 'normal traffic' entitled to use bridleways. No specific consideration was given to the maintenance standard for byways open to all traffic.

3.3.2 Resources

The physical maintenance of the network is primarily carried out by the two Rights of Way Inspectors, based at Ty Dewi Sant, Ewloe and fully equipped with vehicles, tools and machinery. The Inspectors will install signposts, repair/ replace stiles, erect kissing gates, clear fallen trees, repair sections of path and work of a similar scale. Larger tasks are put out to contractors, with the contracts overseen by the Inspectors.

The Inspectors divide the County between them as shown in Figure 3.2.

As noted earlier, Flintshire contains part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB. Day to day maintenance of PRoW within the AONB is organised through the Denbighshire Countryside Service in liaison with their Flintshire colleagues. The AONB has an active volunteer programme with volunteers regularly working on rights of way.

An important resource for managing the repair and maintenance of the network is the CAMS. This became available to all PRoW staff in 2010 and is now used as the main record keeping and work programming tool for the County.

3.3.3 Maintenance responsibilities

Responsibility for PRoW maintenance varies from aspect to aspect; however, fundamentally the Local Highway Authority, Flintshire County Council, has a duty to ensure the satisfactory maintenance of the PRoW network and to assert and protect the rights of the public.

3.3.3.1 *Vegetation management*

Highways law shares the burden of vegetation management between the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and the landowner. The LHA is generally responsible for the maintenance of the surface of a public path, including keeping down undergrowth, while the landowner is responsible for overgrowth from the sides of a path. However, in the case of a cross-field path, it is the farmer's responsibility to ensure that no crops are grown on the path.

Flintshire Council uses contractors to clear paths three times during the growing season. The County's PRoW Inspectors clear 4km or so in response to reported problems.

3.3.3.2 *Path surface*

It is generally the LHA's responsibility to maintain the surface of a path but it is the farmer's responsibility to reinstate a cross-field path within seven days of ploughing or 24 hours of any subsequent cultivation.

There is no annual maintenance regime for surface repair, work is carried out in response to problems being reported. Small repairs may be done on the spot by the Inspectors but larger jobs will involve organising work through contractors.

3.3.3.3 *Path furniture*

Stiles and gates on PRoW, if authorised, are legal obstructions for the benefit of farming activities. As such, maintenance is primarily the landowner's responsibility, although the LHA is obliged to offer at least 25% support, recognising that there is a public interest in maintaining stiles and gates in good order. In practice, the Council will generally assume full responsibility for the repair or replacement of stiles when problems are reported, taking the opportunity to seek the replacement of stiles with gates or kissing gates where there is landowner agreement. However, occasionally stile kits are supplied to landowners for them to fit themselves.

During 2016/17 ten stile kits were supplied. In addition, some 69 stiles were repaired or replaced and 15 kissing gates installed by the Rights of Way Inspectors or contractors.

Signposting where a path leaves a road, and waymarking along the length of a path, are LHA responsibilities. 29 signposts were installed during 2016/17 and 120 waymarkers erected.

Bridges on paths are usually the LHA’s responsibility unless the landowner has chosen to put in a more substantial structure, for example where a vehicular stream-crossing point is also used by a footpath. Management of the County’s stock of bridges on PRow, excluding sleeper bridges, is devolved to bridge engineers within the Authority’s Streetscene department.

There is no available record of furniture installed since 2008, but a selection of the most significant items from the record for 2013/14 (the last available record) for both Western and Eastern Inspector areas is shown in Table 3.5 below:

Table 3.5: Path furniture installed, repaired or replaced between 2008 and 2014

Type	Western area	Eastern area
Signposts	68	8
Direction signs	100	20
Waymarkers	98	150
Stiles	16	38
Stile-steps	26 repaired	118 repaired
Steps	29	25
Kissing gates	13	2
Bridle gates	5	
Sleeper bridges		11
Other bridges	3 repaired	1 repaired
Revetment (metres)	25	40

3.3.4 Reporting, recording and monitoring processes

As was noted in 2008, work on PRow in Flintshire is very much reactive. In the first ROWIP it was noted that there was, “no set inspection routine other than the yearly best value performance indicator (BVPI) surveys, so most of the work arises from complaints from third parties.” This remains the situation to date except that, as the BVPI surveys were abandoned in 2014, there is even heavier reliance on reports coming in from the public.

Ad hoc reporting from the public has been supplemented in 2017 with a partial (33%) survey of the network but there is currently no regular monitoring regime in place.

All issues reported, or identified in the course of other work, are recorded in CAMS by the receiving officer. Each issue is given a priority of high, medium or low, based primarily on health and safety implications and/or whether they are time-critical. The issues are allocated to the relevant Inspector, based on area, and then appear on that Inspector’s CAMS generated ‘To do’ list.

Path users can use the on-line reporting system to log issues at any time. Rights of way officers’ next logging in to CAMS are prompted about reports received but need to ‘accept’ the reports and then allocate them to an Inspector. It is not one-person’s responsibility to check CAMS for on-line reports and up to five people could potentially open a report. Despite this lack of defined responsibility, the system reportedly functions well.

When issues are addressed, but often before they have been resolved, the original reporter will receive an automatic email notifying them that the issue has been attended to. Some confusion can

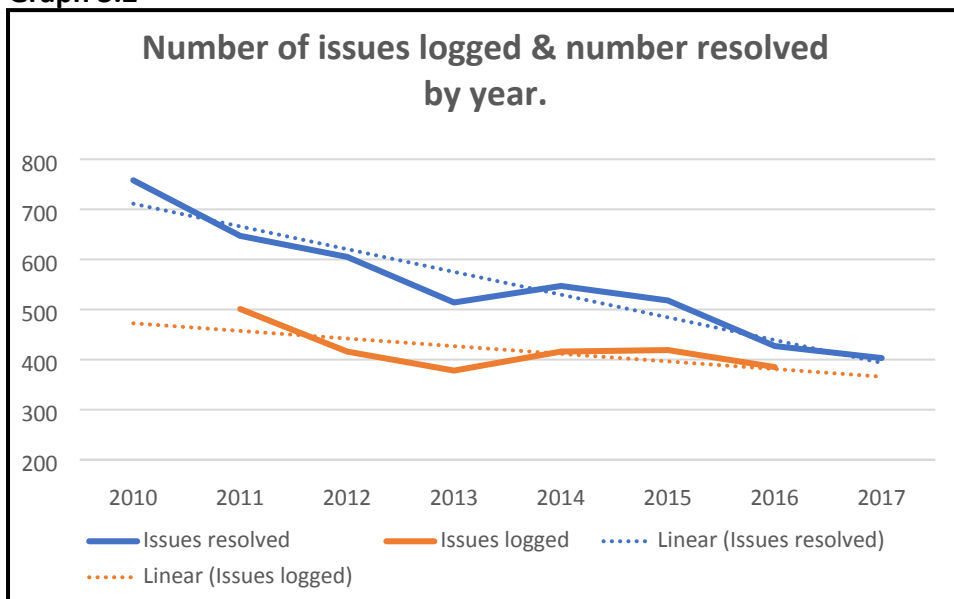
be caused by CAMS generating a ‘completed’ message when, for example, a dangerous situation has been made safe – perhaps by temporary closure of a path – rather than fully resolved.

A worthwhile improvement to the automatic response from CAMS would be for it to offer more tailored responses appropriate to the action taken and whether or not further action is needed.

There is no automatic system in place for updating reporters who have phoned in or emailed a report of an issue, even though it has been logged in CAMS by an officer. A phone-call or email is needed from the officer if the reporter is to be kept informed.

3.3.5 Reporting and resolution rates

Graph 3.2



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Issues resolved	758	647	605	514	547	518	427	403
Issues logged	5709	501	416	378	416	419	385	1109

NB, the figures in green text have not been used as they are enlarged by the 2010 full network survey entries and the 2017 33% survey entries rather than being representative of the number of issues ‘naturally’ arising, as in other years.

Graph 3.2 shows the trends in numbers of issues logged in CAMS by year and the number of issues resolved that same year. It can be seen that the numbers of issues dealt with each year has consistently been higher than the number of new issues logged, suggesting a steady eating into the backlog of issues first recorded in 2010. However, the convergence of the two trend lines suggests that the number of issues resolved each year is reducing and, if this trend were to continue, the backlog would be expected to begin to rise once more. In practice, the two curves are more probably converging on loose parity, achieving a steady state where, over a few years, the numbers of issues logged and resolved will be approximately equal.

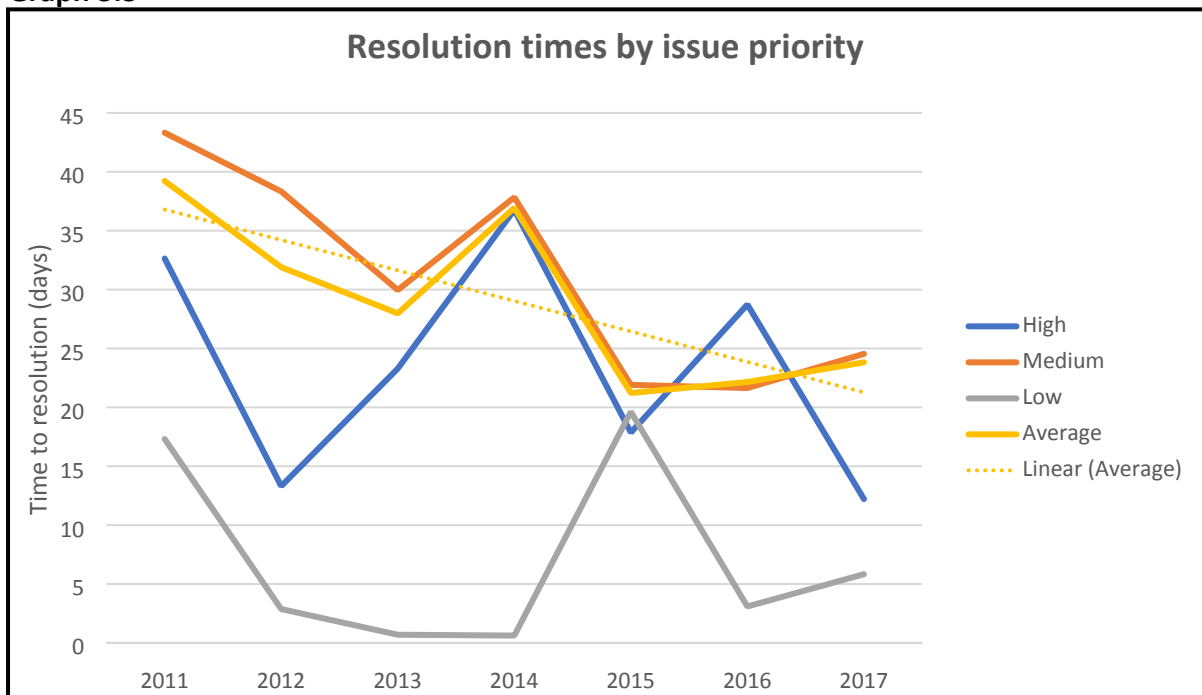
However, it should be borne in mind that the annual rate of issues reports is not the same as the total number of reported issues in the system. The total number of issues logged to the end of 2017 was 9,333. The total number of issues resolved in the same time was 4,419. This suggests that there

is a backlog of about 4,900 unresolved issues recorded in CAMS. At the current level, and making the assumption that the backlog is representative of the types of issues normally received, it would take between ten and eleven years to fully address the backlog, even if no more issues are reported. If new issues continue to be reported at current rates, the time taken to deal with the backlog, with current resources, would be nearer 40 years. In the 2008 ROWIP it was noted that there was an estimated backlog of 2840 maintenance tasks, but with a high level of uncertainty as to the actual number.

So, the message arising from these figures is that the current level of effort is possibly sufficient to maintain the status quo against incoming issues but to address the backlog within the lifetime of this ROWIP will require at least a doubling of resource.

Graph 3.3, below, looks at the mean resolution time for issues sorted by the priority that they were given when logged. The trend line for the overall average across all priorities clearly shows that there has been a significant decrease (about 40%) in the time taken to resolve issues since 2011. Despite the year on year volatility, this general trend is reflected across all issues whatever priority they are assigned.

Graph 3.3



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
High	32.64	13.31	23.29	36.77	17.86	28.73	12.21
Medium	43.32	38.33	29.96	37.83	21.91	21.64	24.54
Low	17.31	2.87	0.69	0.62	19.62	3.09	5.83
Average	39.22	31.9	27.98	36.94	21.22	22.15	23.82

Considering Graphs 3.2 and 3.3 together reveals an apparently contradictory situation where resolution rates have improved significantly but the number of issue resolved each year is going down. This may be a function of the recording system or the way that it is being used but, further consideration should be given as to whether or not this is a true picture. One potential explanation

for the apparent slow-down is that shortly after the full network survey in 2010 there was a higher proportion of ‘quick-win’ issues that could, on average, be dealt with more quickly than the normal run of reported issues. If that is the case, it would be expected that the resolution rate will rise again following the 2017 survey and its further crop of quick-win issues.

3.3.6 Enforcement

As of June 2018, there were 331 obstructions recorded on CAMS. The BVPI data discussed in 3.1.3.1 suggested that 32% of the network’s paths (by number) suffer from obstruction. Assuming that there is only one obstruction per path link (a link being the stretch of path between one path or road junction and the next) and with an average link length of about 307m affecting some 102km of the network – or 9.4% by length.

The first ROWIP identified the need for an Enforcement Officer. That need is still recognised but, as yet, no such officer has been appointed. The enforcement role is part of the Rights of Way Officers’ remit and between the two officers 12 formal letters were sent out in 2017/18. Most letters are sent in response to actual complaints received but some letters are also sent preventatively where there is considered to be a high risk of repeated non-compliance.

As for 2008, the most common obstructions requiring enforcement action are: fences or other barriers across paths; tied up or locked gates; overgrowth; crops; and, buildings.

3.3.7 Promoted routes

Table 3.6 summarizes the events, routes and publications found following enquiries and on-line searches. The table includes a number of events featuring guided walks in Flintshire, including the Countryside Service’s ‘Countryside Events’ programme for 2018.

Table 3.6: Promoted routes and events

Promoted routes		
Name	Opening date	Notes
Offa’s Dyke Path National Trail	1971	60-mile route through the Wales/ England border country. Set up and run as a National Trail. Short length only in Flintshire.
Wales Coast Path	2012	861-mile route around the coast of Wales. Set up and managed in Flintshire by the Countryside Service Rangers.
Wales Link Path	2018	Spanning eighteen miles and going through four counties, the Wales Link Path now connects up the Wales Coast Path via the southern/eastern edge of Flintshire.
Dee Way	2005	Privately promoted, 127-mile route linking to the Dee Valley Way in Denbighshire and beginning/ending at Flint.
North Wales Pilgrims’ Way	2015	134-mile annual pilgrimage route with details on-line to self-guide. Starts at St. Winefride’s Well, Holywell.
St. Winefride’s Way	2004	The 14-mile route links St Asaph’s Cathedral, Denbighshire, with St Winefride’s Well in Holywell, Flintshire. Privately published guide.
Cistercian Way	1998	650 miles around Wales, including Flintshire. Set up by the Friends of the Cistercian Way.
Wat’s Dyke Way Heritage Trail	2008	A 6-mile route following the Wat’s Dyke earthwork. Set up and run by the Wat’s Dyke Association
NCN5		A cycle route through Flintshire developed and promoted by Sustrans. This 372-mile route includes an on-road section through Flintshire but with proposals for a traffic-free, coastal alternative.
Rural Walks in Flintshire	2006	29 graded walks. (19 have ‘10 minute walks’ options.) Includes information about level of accessibility and proximity to parking. Needs updating to include on-line links for information on the map pages – e.g for bus timetables. Needs to be re-designed to facilitate easy printing of

Promoted routes		
Name	Opening date	Notes
		individual routes, perhaps with GPS data capability. Maintained by the Countryside Service Rangers.
Events		
Countryside Events	2018	Published by the Flintshire Countryside Service. Consists of more than 50 events, often including guided walks, some of which use PRoW.
Prestatyn and Clwydian Range Walking Festival	2018	28 free led walks for various levels of fitness put on by the AONB team, with some incursions into Flintshire.
Flintshire Family Walking Festival	2016	Organised by Flintshire CC but has not been repeated since 2016.

From the above table, it is apparent that there is a wealth of suggested walking routes within or passing through the County. However, it is also apparent that there is very little available specifically for disabled walkers. Similarly, there are no promoted bridleway routes, for either cyclists or horse riders.

3.4 Legal record

The relevant date for the Flintshire DMS is 31/10/1978. But the DMS is a changing resource that is subject to continuous review and amendment. The number of modification orders altering the DMS increases over time. To reduce the number of separate documents comprising the DMS, Authorities will occasionally undertake a consolidation exercise, producing a new DMS with a new 'relevant date'. Flintshire has reviewed and consolidated its DMS on two occasions: 1963 and again in 1976, resulting in the current DMS with its relevant date of 1978.

3.4.1 Resources

The DMS and the original Community Council submissions, are held at County Hall in Mold and a copy of the Definitive Map is held in the Hawarden Records Office.

The previous ROWIP recommended that an additional three officers should be appointed to help deal with the backlog of DMS work, as well as securing the services of a full time Legal officer. However, it has not proven possible to secure this level of additional staffing.

There is no lead 'Definitive Map Officer' for Flintshire; the DMS is maintained by a combination of the two Rights of Way Officers, the Technical Officer and the Rights of Way Team Leader, with Legal support from the Council's Finance, Legal and Democratic Services section. The DMS work is just part of the Rights of Way Officers' role and, effectively, the Council has no more than one full-time-equivalent Officer to manage the DMS.

3.4.2 Policies and protocols

Welsh Office Circular 5/93 on public rights of way recommends that the County Council periodically publish a statement setting out how it will bring and keep up to date the definitive map and statement. A statement of priorities was adopted by the Council on 21st June 2016, after consultation with the Local Access Forum (LAF), and is based upon a hierarchical approach setting out the relative importance the Council will attach to public path and definitive map orders. The hierarchy is split into seven categories of descending priority, as shown in Table 3.7. It was devised to rank highly those

issues that were likely to be most urgent: hence, the highest priority given to paths that are in imminent danger of being 'lost' through development and schemes that have been targeted for grant-aid. Also ranking highly are those paths that have been obstructed by long-term residential development. The footpaths may have not been open to the public for many years, but they still legally exist and can act as a blight on any potential property sale.

The statement also covers the Council's approach to prioritising Public Path Orders (PPO), that is, orders made to alter paths for the purpose of expediency rather than as a result of the discovery of evidence.

Table 3.7: Priorities for Definitive Map Modification Orders and Public Path Orders

Priority no.	Response/ action
1	Ways that are in danger of being lost through imminent development (i.e. at the planning application stage)
2	Orders affecting ways that are targeted for external funds, whose expenditure is time-limited and where the proposals are achievable within that time frame.
3	Path(s) that are obstructed by housing, which require an order or orders to resolve the situation.
4	Applications for modification orders
5	Mapping anomalies
6	Public path orders that are wholly or primarily in the public's interest
7	Public path orders that are wholly or predominantly for the benefit of private individuals

3.4.3 Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO)

In 2008, there were 14 applications for DMMO awaiting attention. In June 2018, the figure was 16. Many of these applications have been outstanding for a number of years, with two of the applications now more than twenty years old. As several of the applications rely upon the evidence of path users, then these should be a priority as there is a real danger that over time, the evidence could be uncorroborated as witnesses withdraw or move away.

Although the application rate is generally running at no more than two or three per annum, the backlog of cases is slowly growing, showing that the current allocation of staff and resources is just

sufficient, a situation that could change for the worse during the life of the second ROWIP as we approach the 2026 cut-off date put forward in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

3.4.4 Public Path Orders (PPO)

In 2008, there were 12 PPO applications outstanding. During the life of the first ROWIP, 22 orders were made. However, it was also noted in 2008 that a further 67 cases had been identified where PPO were needed to resolve issues such as houses built over the line of paths. A program of work to address these, and the backlog of applications, was to be drawn up with the aim of resolving all of these issues. However, no deadline was set for developing or implementing the programme and it appears to have fallen by the wayside.

Applicants can be charged for the administration of PPO, giving an incentive to address third party applications as a priority. However, the adopted prioritisation policy (see Table 3.7) places these at the bottom of the list, behind issues such as sorting out paths blocked by housing. It may be considered that it is worthwhile to promptly address new applications using dedicated officer time paid for by charges, separately to efforts put into addressing the backlog.

3.4.5 Legal Event Modification Orders

In 2008, there were thought to be about 174 LEMO needed. However, there is no register of these and so the actual figure was, and still is, uncertain. The target set was that the number of LEMO required should be 'close to zero' by 2012. In practice, 75 LEMO have been made since 2008 – although it should be noted that several of these were 'omnibus' orders covering more than one event.

As LEMO are now made simultaneously with PPO, the backlog should not be increasing and, as producing LEMO is a purely administrative procedure, with no potential for objections or expensive advertising, the aim of having zero LEMO outstanding should be readily achievable – given sufficient officer time and legal support.

3.4.6 Anomalies

The 2008 ROWIP recorded that the County maintained a schedule of such anomalies, with 99 issues listed. Unfortunately, this schedule has not been rediscovered and there is no current list with which to compare it. However, it seems certain that no progress has been made with addressing this backlog of anomalies.

Once anomalies are discovered, they should be investigated and resolved, but, rather than this being left to chance, a thorough review of the DMS should be carried out to identify these anomalies. This would allow a work programme to be developed to address these, including an assessment of the resources needed.

3.4.7 Limitations and Authorised Structures

The definitive statement should be the main repository for information about authorised furniture, with all stiles and gates recorded in the statement treated as duly authorised. However, the records for the County show that structures were not generally recorded and so there is no comprehensive record of historically authorised structures.

Similarly, the statement is where limitations, such as path widths, should be recorded but, again, these were generally not recorded and do not appear in Flintshire's definitive statement.

The lack of records for these established structures and traditional widths are a potential source of confusion and conflict and consideration should be given to establishing a complete register of limitations and authorised structures on a path by path basis. This information should be made available via the interactive map so that would-be disabled users are aware of constraints that they are likely to encounter.

Furniture specifically, is recorded on CAMS and is visible for people to see on the CAMS Web system, if they wish to simply view the map rather than logging issues.

Furniture authorised since the DMS was sealed is recorded in a hard-copy file, including the correspondence authorising the stile or gate. Before any authorisation is given, the site of the intended structure is visited and a checklist completed confirming that the item can be authorised. The checklist is included as Annex A.

3.5 Promotion and information

We have previously listed and outlined the existing stock of promoted walks in Table 3.6 and noted that there has been no active promotion of new routes by Flintshire Council since the Rural Walks in Flintshire book was published in 2006.

Here the focus is on the wider promotion of PRoW usage and the provision of general information for both path users and land managers, looking at what information is available to encourage responsible use of the network and to explain rights and responsibilities.

3.5.1 Resources

The on-line interactive map hosted on the Council's website at <https://fccmapping.flintshire.gov.uk/connect/analyst/?mapcfg=publicrightsofway> provides a versatile tool for all would-be users with access to the internet to research paths across the county.

Although this is not the definitive map, the interactive online map offers a complete reproduction of the definitive map but on a variable scale and has the advantage of offering the capacity to zoom in on target areas. Detailed information about each path, including community name and path number, can be retrieved by clicking anywhere along its length. However, there is no access to the definitive statement and no on-line way of finding out what limitations there might be on the path using the interactive online mapping. Adding links to the relevant part of the statement for each path would be a lengthy task but could be very valuable for users, especially those with restricted capacity or special needs.

Whilst the interactive map does not hold links to this information, users can access this information by using the CAMS Web system (<https://rightsofway.flintshire.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx?NavigationPage=Page1>). Whilst the CAMS Web system is primarily for users to log and track issues, the mapping is accessible for users to explore further. Through this system, users can find out what furniture exists, the length of the path and also view photos that have been added through survey work.

The interactive map has a legend providing the opportunity to call up a long list of council-provided service locations. It should be straightforward to add more information that is already held in CAMS, such as the locations of stiles, gates and kissing gates, or the locations of known problems and obstructions.

3.5.2 Information for users

The Council does not carry any detailed information about countryside access rights, the duties of the LHA or the rights of landowners on its website. Non-specific advice is available on many other websites, such as the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) site (<https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/rights-of-way-and-wider-access/rights-of-way/?lang=en>) and The Ramblers (<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice.aspx>), but there are no links provided to any of these or other such sites.

For the path-using public, there is very little information available about access opportunities for disabled users. Extensive internet searches failed to bring up any substantive information about opportunities outside of the country parks for those with any form of restrictive disability, although it is known that considerable work has been done to improve the accessibility of the Welsh Coast Path in Flintshire. (Searching the Council's website only brings up links to the Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in 2017, which has only very limited application to the countryside network but some applicability within the built environment.)

Similarly, there is little or no information directly provided for cyclists or horse riders using bridleways. However, there are links provided to other organisations providing more information about the limited opportunities available.

3.5.3 Information for applicants

Those wishing to make an application to perhaps add a path to the DMS, or to seek the diversion or closure of a recorded path need specific and detailed information. Most LHA's require an applicant for either a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) or a Public Path Order (PPO) to use its own, in-house forms and to follow its specific protocols – including, where appropriate, the payment of fees. At present, information is not available about the process.

3.5.4 Information for land managers

Easy to access information about the responsibilities that land managers have to maintain access can be helpful in preventing problems and ensuring better compliance. But, no guidance has been prepared for landowners or land managers going about their normal working operations. While there are readily available sources of information for these groups through, for example, NRW, NFU Cymru and CLA Cymru, there are no links provided to these other sources on the Council's website. Adding links, or developing and uploading advice to the website, would be beneficial and requires little time or resources.

3.5.5 Active Travel Routes

The Government's ROWIP guidance instructs LHA to look at how PRoW currently contribute to Active Travel Routes and what potential there is for incorporating existing or new paths within the active travel network.

Flintshire has published a series of 16 Active Travel Existing Route Maps (ERM), showing routes that have been inspected and are considered to be suitable for cycling or walking as an alternative to using motorised transport. Examining the 16 maps alongside the interactive map of PRow shows very little overlap between ERM and PRow, as tabulated below:

Table 3.8: Public paths used in Active Travel Routes

Active Travel ERM	Degree of overlap with rights of way
Buckley	One instance of shared PRow/Active Travel route; BUC13
Broughton	No overlap with PRow
Connah's Quay	Small amount of overlap near Shotton
Deeside Industrial Park	Path along north shore of Dee
Flint	No use of PRow
Gorsedd	No overlap
Greenfield	No overlap
Holywell	No overlap
Hope	No overlap
Leeswood	No overlap
Mold	Overlap through 'ornamental gardens', M19
Northop Hall	No overlap
Penyffordd	Overlap on PE5 and PE8
Sandycroft	Overlap only on north shore of Dee
Shotton	No overlap except north shore of Dee
Lixwm	No overlap

Notwithstanding the limited overlap, it would be mutually beneficial to include an Active Travel layer on the Interactive Map. Likewise, it would be helpful to include PRow on the ERM.

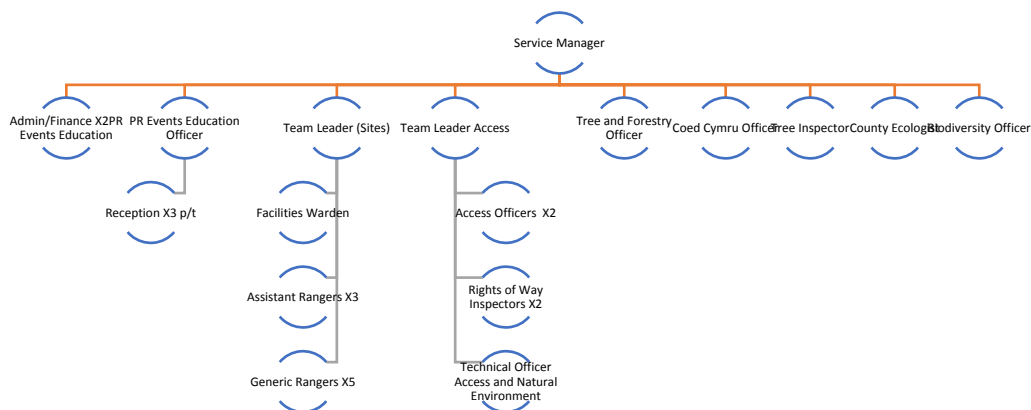
The County has also published and consulted on an Active Travel Integrated Network Map, which is billed as 'a 15-year vision to improve infrastructure for walkers and cyclists across the County.' Many of the links proposed are aspirational and represented as straight lines between communities. Fulfilling these aspirations could offer significant opportunities for improvements to PRow, including upgrading public footpaths to bridleways or cyclepaths. Working with Active Travel colleagues to identify suitable PRow for inclusion in the integrated network plans should be an early priority within this ROWIP period.

4 Current management and organisation

4.1 Resources

4.1.1 Staff

Fig. 4.1: Access and Natural Environment Services organisation chart



The Rights of Way team sits within the County’s Access & Natural Environment Service and comprises five full time officers and a service technician.

While the Rights of Way team is responsible for the bulk of the PRow work carried out, and is solely involved with the DMS and enforcement elements, the network also benefits from a degree of input from the Rangers. This is especially so with respect to the Wales Coast Path and maintenance of the promoted routes.

Not shown on Fig. 4.1 but still making an important contribution is the AONB’s PRow staff and volunteers embedded within Denbighshire Countryside Service but working across the whole of the AONB.

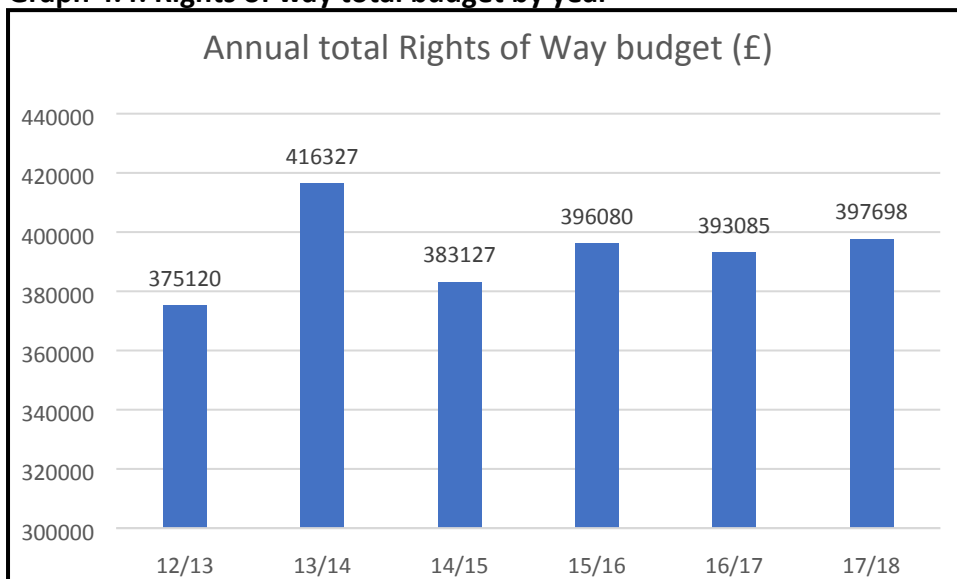
The current team structure contrasts markedly with that in place in 2008. At the time of the first ROWIP, three Rights of Way Officers together with a Technician, an Administrative Assistant and a Senior Rights of Way Officer sat within Highways Regulatory Services. The two Rights of Way Inspector posts meanwhile were placed within Neighbourhood Services. The bringing together of the team under the Countryside Services was brought about in May 2016. The merger, with a remit of flexible joint working is considered to be a positive step aiding co-operative working.

Looking at staffing levels; it is notable that in 2008 there were 8 members of staff working on PRow. In the current structure, there are only six posts – despite the need for more staff resources to begin to improve the network, as noted in the first ROWIP.

4.1.2 Budget

The 2008 ROWIP estimated that the annual investment required for rights of way in Flintshire per year, over the following five years, would be £269,351 or £ 255 per km. The budget figures from 2012/13 (the earliest date available) to 2017/18 show that this level of support has been exceeded since at least 2012, as shown in Graph 4.1. Although the budget peaked in 2013/14, the overall level of investment made by the County has remained high.

Graph 4.4: Rights of way total budget by year



4.1.3 LAF

The Flintshire Local Access Forum (LAF) has met regularly during the life of the first ROWIP. The LAF operated on a three-year cycle and came to the end of its most recent term in 2017. Its last meeting was held on October 23rd and at this meeting it was agreed that talks should be held with the Wrexham LAF Chairman to discuss the possibility of forming a joint LAF. A Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed by the Chief Officers of Flintshire and Wrexham Councils and recruitment is underway to the new, combined LAF. Each county will have its own LAF sub-group and the first combined meeting is expected to be in early September 2018.

The previous LAF had a successful run of 18 years but experience of the benefits of the cross-border model, as seen in Conwy and Denbighshire, together with the development of common themes, such as the Wales Link Path, and a perceived need to increasingly focus on regional rather than local issues finally led to the decision being taken to reform as a merged forum.

4.1.4 Rights of Way Volunteer Scheme

In 2016, the Council invited users to join its new Rights of Way Volunteer Scheme, to be loosely based upon the successful 'Silver Slashers' model from Ynys Môn Ramblers (<http://www.ynysmonramblers.org.uk/footpath-maintenance.html>). Take-up has proven slow and, while the scheme is still live, it has not been successful in establishing a regular, self-sustaining working group.

The County's ranger service has a more established volunteer base and there has been occasional tie-up whereby the ranger service's volunteers are drafted in to work on rights of way. In total, the five rangers typically facilitate up to 10,000 hours of volunteer work each year. The expectation is that, using the ranger's experience of building and working with a volunteer base, the voluntary effort can be expanded further to the benefit of the PRoW network.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB also runs a well-established volunteer scheme which, amongst its portfolio of work, undertakes footpath improvements across the AONB, including the parts in Flintshire.

Flintshire County Council published a Volunteer Policy for 2016/17 with the overall aim 'to work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for the people of Flintshire.' The policy highlights the support available to volunteers through the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC).

4.2 External relationships

Flintshire's network benefits from a number of relationships with other bodies, including:

- A tri-county agreement with Denbighshire and Wrexham for the management of the AONB, with Denbighshire taking the lead as the authority with the largest share by area.
- Work has begun to learn from nearby counties with respect to bolstering the number and quality of the county's policies and protocols.
- The establishment and development of the Wales Coast Path in Flintshire has involved a combination of Natural Resources Wales, together with internal inter-section working between the Rangers and PRow staff.
- Offa's Dyke Path National Trail only dips into Flintshire for short lengths. It is therefore expedient to devolve management of these small sections to Denbighshire's Countryside Service, which looks after a much greater length of Trail, mainly within the AONB.
- The Wales Link Path crosses Flintshire and Wrexham in its 18 mile journey from the end of the Wales Coast Path to its junction with Offa's Dyke at Llandegla in Denbighshire.

5 Strategic overview of the PRow network and associated policies

5.1 Stakeholder perceptions

Stakeholders were contacted from a range of interest groups including: walking groups, horse riders, landowners, people with disabilities, those involved in delivering exercise on prescription and public health professionals. In addition, a brief questionnaire was completed by members of walking groups about their observations of using Rights of Way in Flintshire over the period since the first ROWIP was created.

Clearly there is a divergence of views with landowners seeking support to enforce proper use of the ROW, and users, broadly, seeking increased access. However, there is much common ground, which can be built on in the next ten years.

5.1.1 Walkers

Meetings were held with representatives of two walking groups, Ramblers in Flintshire, and Walkabout Flintshire, who were then invited to complete a short survey about their experiences; 40 individuals responded.

Survey responses were from people with significant experience of Flintshire's ROW, with over 70% of respondents having been walking in the area for over 10 years and currently walking in Flintshire on a weekly basis. Half of these walked more than once a week.

Their experience of the ROW over the last 10 years was that 87% had seen changes in the past 10 years, with a significant majority reporting visible improvements such as improved stiles, gates and condition, and a minority (5%) reporting issues with obstructions.

In terms of reporting issues, 40% of respondents had never reported an issue, a quarter were reporting once or twice a year, with a small percentage (10%) reporting more frequently, i.e. monthly and even weekly. In terms of reporting, the most popular mechanism was the online system (CAMS) but a number also telephoned, emailed and reported in person. Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported they were happy or very happy with their ability to report; 9% (which in this sample represented 3 people) were unhappy or very unhappy. The remainder were neutral on this matter. Once an issue was reported, a significant number of respondents were dissatisfied. Those who were satisfied were very satisfied, comments such as "As soon as I reported it, they sorted it out" being typical. However, for those who were dissatisfied, the reasons fell into two categories: firstly, dissatisfaction with the process, i.e. they did not know what happened to the report they made; and secondly, they were dissatisfied with the outcome, e.g. "It remains unresolved". There were comments about the CAMS system, which can report an issue as resolved where no action has been taken, which frustrated some users.

In final comments, many respondents recognised the tensions of a mounting backlog of work, e.g. "Some of the claims go back over 20 years" and "A difficult time with cuts". Some constructive suggestions were made, such as learning from neighbouring Local Authorities, and using volunteers to waymark paths. Praise was given to individual staff on the ground. However, some of the suggestions such as "Lower stiles" are directly at odds with the requirements of farmers to keep their land stockproof. Most of the comments related to the length of time taken to address issues, the perceived lack of enforcement action, and issues with the CAMS system, in particular that it does not

generate a report for the records of the person submitting. One comment is a good example of the tone of responses, “The Council does a reasonable job in difficult circumstances. There should be a greater emphasis on enforcement”.

5.1.2 Horse Riders

The British Horse Society was contacted for the views of horse riders. They reported some very long-standing issues, dating back to before the original ROWIP. A key issue for riders is opening up bridleways for safe riding as rural roads become increasingly busy and therefore dangerous for horse riders. For example, “We no longer ride on the rural roads around us now because they’re too dangerous”.

They recognise the pressures facing the team but feel that horse riders and bridleways are at the “bottom of the list”.

5.1.3 People with Disabilities

Flintshire Disability Forum represents people with disabilities throughout the County, and whilst they have a focus on mobility issues, they are also networked with groups who represent visually impaired and deaf people. They hold regular sessions for people with disabilities in Mold and Shotton, and the views of disabled people was canvassed at the Shotton meeting which was attended by around 15 people.

Participants at this meeting reported that there has been an issue with use of the Wales Coast Path (WCP) in Flintshire, where those with electric wheelchairs cannot pass through the barriers created to deter motorbike riders. Wheelchairs which are pushed, e.g. by a carer, can pass through the barriers. The group does not understand why these barriers are in place and reported that there are no such barriers in the neighbouring county. This has become an issue which has soured the view of the Forum in relation to accessibility and ROW in Flintshire.

Users also reported issues with individual footpaths, for example where tree roots pushing an adjoining wall out on to the ROW, so that although the path remains accessible to those able to walk, wheelchair users have been forced to use the road. They were not clear about how or where to report these issues. One of these issues was preventing an individual from enjoying his chosen sport, bowls, as the path to the bowling green was no longer accessible in his wheelchair.

The Forum regularly arranges outings for members, but these take place in neighbouring authorities (Loggerheads and Alyn Valley were mentioned), whereas the two country Parks in Flintshire remain unused.

5.1.4 Landowners and Farmers

Field boundaries

A number of issues arose with field boundaries. The perception was that they were not clearly marked enough, leading walkers who were not always following the ROW to “go wrong” when crossing a field. They were happy for improved waymarking to be done on their land. They suggested that the problem was exacerbated by some simple maps produced by local visitor centres which meant that inexperienced walkers often “went the wrong way”.

Wooden gates had caused problems, mainly by being left open by both walkers, but also those cycling in groups, and there was some evidence of gates being wedged open with stones. There was some

comment that he approved stile, whilst the correct height for walkers, was not always stock proof and there had been examples of stock leaping over the stile, which was a problem. The preferred barrier for landowners was a kissing gate, made of metal, or a spring-loaded gate. In this way, it was said that fields remained stock proof, ROW remained accessible to most users, and the maintenance needed was low.

There was a strong concern about the failure of dog walkers to control their animals, and regular refusal, when requested, to place dogs on leads. In addition, those walking dogs had sometimes overcome the challenges of getting a dog over a stile by creating an opening nearby, either through clearing growth in a hedgerow, or by cutting through a wire fence. It was noted that creating an opening for a dog also creates a space where stock can pass through, which was a very real cause for concern for farmers. One option is to add dog gates to stiles, but landowners recognised this was an additional expense, and that there was more maintenance on such gates.

Farmers did not generally report these issues of concern to the Flintshire Council ROW team.

Maintaining ROW, and the duties of landowners

There was a lack of clarity for some farmers about their duties in respect of ROW in relation to a number of matters: in fields with crops; whether to place notices in fields with stock, e.g. cows with calves at foot; when the council maintained a ROW, and when it was the landowner's responsibility; who had the right to use the different types of ROW; what challenge might be appropriate for misuse.

Diverting ROW

The perception of farmers was that diverting a ROW was not possible, for example because they planned to build an agricultural building. Indeed, most farmers agreed that they planned new developments on their farms to avoid ROW, even where a short diversion would mean that the construction would have a lower planning or environmental impact. None had considered that it was possible to seek advice from the team prior to starting such developments.

Other issues

Litter was an issue, especially litter which could be damaging to stock, however it was not clear whether this was litter left by ROW users, or wind-driven.

Members of farming unions did not understand how the work of the ROW team was prioritised; examples were given of work done which they could not understand, e.g. regular grass cutting on an unused bridleway, the creation of a set of steps (at some cost) on a ROW only used by the landowner. They were keen to see money spent wisely and to understand why works were carried out.

Farming union members expressed their views that landowners' interests were given less priority than those of users, and that the legal requirements on them were burdensome.

5.2 Policy context

The ROWIP sits within a broad policy context framed by national legislation and its implementation at a county level.

Since Flintshire's first ROWIP, three particularly important pieces of legislation have been introduced: The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), the Planning Act (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment Act (2016). The Welsh Government has identified, in a simplified document², the links between these three pieces of legislation. In addition, the Active Travel Act (2013) has also brought about new requirements, and there will be proposed changes to Flintshire's Active Travel Plans during the period of this ROWIP.

Locally, this new legislation has led to the production of Flintshire Public Services Board's Well-being Plan, and the implementation of Active Travel route maps covering 15 designated settlements within the county. As previously, the Flintshire County Council Corporate Plan, now called the Flintshire Council Plan is of core relevance to the ROWIP, as is the Local Development Plan.

5.2.1 Relevant legislation, strategies and documents at national and county level

5.2.1.1 National

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is focussed on improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It contains seven national well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsive Wales

The Act also introduced the sustainable development principle and five ways of working that are seen as key to changing how organisations work to ensure that they "act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The five ways of working are:

- Long-term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

The Environment Act is focussed on planning and managing Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined up way. It covers: sustainable management of natural resources; climate change; charges for carrier bags; collection and disposal of waste, fisheries for shellfish and marine licensing; flood and coastal erosion committee and land drainage.

In relation to sustainable management of natural resources, the Act provides a framework comprising:

- The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) – published in 2016.
- A National Natural Resources Policy – published in draft for consultation in 2017.
- Area Statements – in development.

² <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160610-three-bills-diagram-en.pdf>

The Planning (Wales) Act 2016

The Planning (Wales) Act gained Royal Assent on 6 July 2015.

The Act sets out a series of legislative changes to deliver reform of the planning system in Wales, to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development.

The act addresses five key objectives:

- A modernised framework for the delivery of planning services – the Act introduces powers to allow planning applications to be made directly to Welsh Ministers in limited circumstances
- Strengthening the plan led approach – the Act introduces a legal basis for the preparation of a National Development Framework and Strategic Development Plans
- Improved resilience – the Act will allow the Welsh Ministers to direct Local Planning Authorities to work together and for Local Planning Authorities to be merged
- Frontloading and improving the development management system – the At will introduce a statutory pre-application procedure for defined categories of planning application
- Enabling effective enforcement and appeals – the Act enables changes to enforcement procedures to secure prompt, meaningful action against breaches of planning control and increase the transparency and efficiency of the appeal system.

5.2.1.2 County

Flintshire Council Plan 2017 – 2023

This document presents the Council's themes for the period 2017 -2023. It is described in the text as an Improvement Plan. The Council revises the report annually, setting out how actions within the themes, of which there are six, will be delivered and measured.

The six themes in the plan for 2017-18 are:

- An Ambitious Council
- A Learning Council
- A Green Council
- A Connected Council
- A Service Council
- A Supportive Council

Each theme has specific sub-priorities, and also impacts identified within each theme. In addition, the Plan shows links to other strategies, and to the work of the PSB. The following potential links with the RoWIP have been identified:

Within the 'A Green Council' theme, the priority is described as *Sustainable Development & Environmental Management* and the accompanying impact is described as "Enhancing the natural environment and promoting access to open and green space".

Also under this theme is the priority of *Safe and sustainable travel services*, with an impact described as "Developing the transport infrastructure and employment sites, and transport services, widening access to employment and training sites", which gives a potential link between ROW and Active Travel Plans.

In the theme 'A Connected Council', the priority is described as *Resilient Communities*, with impact described as "Supporting local communities to be resilient and self-supporting". This impact would include the work done by local groups and volunteer led activities, including local Ramblers and Walkabout Flintshire to encourage the use of ROW throughout the County, and in the case of Walkabout Flintshire, to use the rights of way network for group activities that promote health and well-being.

Local Development Plan Written Statement June 2017

The Flintshire LDP provides the sustainable framework for land use planning in the County up to the year 2030, and will be a platform for development thereafter. The intention is that it will shape Flintshire's future both physically and environmentally, and influence it economically and socially. It will respond to the needs of a growing population and regionally important economy, in making provision for new jobs, homes, infrastructure and community facilities, but notes that it must do this in a way that ensures that the well-being of its communities is maintained, and that the impacts of the development and use of land are managed and mitigated sustainably. In addition, through its provisions, the LDP will also seek to ensure opportunities such as environmental enhancements are realised.

The context is set by national legislation and planning guidance, which requires Local Authorities in Wales to prepare and maintain a development plan that deals with the land use aspects of the challenges above, and does so in line with the sustainable development duty embodied by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

The LDP, which will cover the time period between 2015 and 2030, will provide the framework to facilitate the sustainable delivery of growth and development. The status of the Plan at the time of the development of the new ROWIP is that the Deposit is due for consultation in November 2018.

Key links between the Local Development Plan, (as indicated in the Integrated Impact Assessment) and the ROWIP include:

Environment

- Encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport and development locations, reducing the need to travel by car.
- Protect and enhance the local distinctiveness and the historic environment and its setting.
- Opportunities should be sought to continue the preservation of the special landscapes in Flintshire.
- Opportunities should be sought to maintain the important historic aspects of Flintshire.
- Access and awareness of the unique aspects of the County should be improved.
- Part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB is situated in the County which must be protected and enhanced where appropriate.

Social

- Improve accessibility and transport links to basic goods and services from residential areas.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of the population and reduce health inequalities.

- Opportunities should be sought to improve the health of the population by encouraging healthy lifestyles. This could be achieved, for example, through well designed development that promotes physical activity, walking and cycling.

Economic

- Establish a strong tourist economy, sensitively capitalising on environmental, heritage, and leisure assets and ensuring the benefits are experienced locally, further described as
- Opportunities should be sought to reduce car/van transport and increase the use of greener more sustainable modes of transport
- Opportunities should be sought to reduce the distance people are travelling to work

Flintshire Well-being Plan 2017-2023

The Plan is published by the Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB), as a requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It is a statement of the PSB's commitment to improve local well-being for today and for future generations.

It has been the subject of wide consultation and has been developed from a comprehensive well-being assessment. It has five objectives:

- Community Safety
- Economy and Skills
- Environment
- Resilient Communities
- Well-being and Independent Living

The plan demonstrates the connections across the objectives and with the Council (Corporate) Plan, (which follows the same themes and a similar period 2017-2023).

Key links between the Flintshire Well-being Plan and the ROWIP include:

In the section on Environment, proposed actions include:

- Promote the benefits of using the natural environment for exercise, volunteering and education.
- Identify and act on issues which are causing environmental and ecological deterioration by working with partners such as the farming, commercial, industrial and transport sectors.
- Identify all existing 'green' assets through an asset mapping exercise, and seek opportunities to enhance and link these in future.
- Improve green transport links across Flintshire and into neighbouring counties, developing greater access opportunities to the green infrastructure.

In Resilient Communities, proposed actions include:

- Opportunities for people to improve their health and well-being are increased.
- Use and appreciation of the natural environment and use of the outdoors are increased.
- Change our long term physical planning for communities so that it enables the development of community buildings and natural and green spaces that better connect people.

And finally, in the section on Well-being and Independent Living, the following actions are identified:

- Explore and make best use of opportunities to promote mental health and well-being.
- Ensure links with other PSB priority work areas to maximise promotion of health and well-being opportunities, e.g. Get Flintshire Moving (Resilient Communities).

The Flintshire Well-being Assessment

The document is published by Flintshire's PSB, bringing together data to consider the well-being across the whole of the area and within particular communities. Data sources include statistical data, public engagement information and academic research. The assessment is structured around the seven themes identified within the Well-being of Future Generations Act, with a focus on Flintshire.

These are :

- A Prosperous Flintshire
- A Resilient Flintshire
- A Healthier Flintshire
- A more Equal Flintshire
- A Flintshire of Cohesive Communities
- A Flintshire with Vibrant Culture and a thriving Welsh Language
- A Flintshire which is Globally Responsible

Key findings in the Well-being Assessment which have a direct link to the ROWIP include:

- Flintshire has a diverse landscape ranging from lowland valleys to upland exposed plateaux.
- Compared to the Welsh average, Flintshire citizens are generally more likely to make healthy lifestyle choices. However, only around a third of the adult population in Flintshire meet recommended physical activity levels.
- Communities enjoy quality of life, are safe and well-connected and are places where people feel they belong and support one another.
- In total, it is estimated that tourism brought in around £238.7 million to the local economy in 2015. In recent years there has seen a steady increase in the number of visitors to the area, over 3.6 million visitors in 2015, 2.8 million of which were day visitors.
- Flintshire is well-placed in terms of built facilities and the natural environment, which impacts positively on physical activity and well-being.

Active travel

Active travel is defined as walking and cycling (including the use of mobility scooters) for everyday journeys, e.g. to school, work, shops or to access services such as health and leisure centres.

The Active Travel Act makes it a legal requirement for Flintshire County Council to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel within certain of its settlements as specified by Welsh Government.

The first step was to produce Existing Route Maps³, showing routes suitable for active travel and which met the standards set by Welsh Government. Flintshire's Existing Route Maps for pedestrian and cycle use were approved by Welsh Government in 2016, and 15 maps have been produced, covering the areas of Buckley, Broughton, Connahs Quay, Deeside Industrial Park, Flint, Gorsedd, Greenfield, Holywell, Hope, Leeswood, Mold, Northop Hall, Penyffordd, Sandycroft, Shotton and Walwen (Lixwm).

The Existing Route Maps do not show all possible walking and cycling routes, or other ROW, as the focus is on the ones which meet the Active Travel criteria. The report to government on Active Travel Routes for 2016/17 shows expenditure of £711,200 spent on maintenance, safety improvements and upgrades to the existing routes.

A Green Space Framework Strategy 2013

This strategy recognises the value of green spaces throughout the County, and includes ROW, parks, common land and designated areas, including the AONB. The stated vision is:

“Flintshire will enjoy a well-planned and managed network of integrated, accessible and diverse green spaces; creating a sustainable environment for the benefit of all people, wildlife and our natural heritage.”

It states clearly that “We want people to use Green Spaces positively and more frequently as part of their daily lifestyle, and we accept that to do this we need to improve green spaces to deliver welcoming, accessible, attractive and safer community spaces”.

There are three aims within the strategy, but the most relevant in terms of the RoWIP is Aim Three: i.e. “We will make existing green spaces more accessible for both people and wildlife”. This aim includes the following points which are relevant to the ROWIP:

“Entrances and paths do not restrict people of any ability from benefiting from green spaces as well as considering the safety of all users”.

“Green spaces should be easily accessible and closely situated to the communities they serve ensuring everyone has local access to a green space which offers both natural value and play value”.

“Where-ever possible green spaces should be linked to one another to create “green corridors” to provide off-road routes which provide linkages to places of work, education, leisure and shopping facilities”.

To do this, the Strategy proposes that everyone should have safe access to a green space within a five minute walk of their home. For the purposes of this Strategy, a five minute walk is considered to be a journey of 500 metres, and it is anticipated that significant work will be required to ensure safe pedestrian and cyclist access is provided along key identified routes.

4.2.2 Other relevant strategies and documents

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has published its first Well-being Statement, ***Managing today's natural resources for tomorrow's generations 2017/18***. The document outlines the organisation's well-being objectives and how they contribute to Welsh Government's seven well-being goals for Wales, as well as the steps they will take to deliver them. The seven well-being objectives are to:

1. Champion the Welsh environment and the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources Ensure land and water in Wales is managed sustainably and in an integrated way
2. Improve the resilience and quality of our ecosystems

³ Copies of all maps are available via

<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Active-Travel-Existing-Route-Map.aspx>

3. Reduce the risk to people and communities from environmental hazards like flooding and pollution
4. Help people live healthier and more fulfilled lives
5. Promote successful and responsible business, using natural resources without damaging them
6. Develop NRW into an excellent organisation, delivering first class customer service.

In due course, the new duty on Natural Resources Wales to produce **Area Statements** – as a tool for bringing about sustainable management of natural resources – will be relevant to the Flintshire’s strategic priorities for rights of way.

The **Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 Final Report** was commissioned by NRW, following previous similar surveys in 2008 and 2011. It focussed on public engagement with the natural environment including participation in outdoor recreation, health and economic benefits, attitudes to biodiversity and pro-environmental behaviours. At a national scale, this provides relevant contextual data including:

- 93% of people have taken at least one visit to the outdoors in the last 12 months.
- Decreases between 2011 and 2014 were recorded for the proportion of people that had taken a visit in the last 4 weeks, as well as for visits taken within a mile of the start point, and shorter visits of less than an hour.
- Shorter, closer to home visits are more likely to be taken than longer visits taken further afield.
- People aged 75 or over were least likely to have taken visits.
- Walking is the most dominant activity undertaken, although increases in running were recorded. The other highest levels of participation were recorded for outdoor swimming, road cycling and off-road cycling.
- Walking was particularly likely to be undertaken by people who had children in the household, those aged 25-54, those in paid employment, carers and those with access to a car.
- Women were more likely to undertake walking than men. When analysed by age, visits taken by those aged 55 or over were more likely to have included walking, while the main activity for those aged 34 or under was more likely to be running.
- Walking was the single main activity on 6 in 10 visits for those who had visited the outdoors in the last 4 weeks.
- The most popular places to go outdoors (recorded by more than two-thirds of the population) were village, local park, beach, roadside pavement/track, woodland/forest, sea, other local open space.
- The most frequently cited reasons for not visiting the outdoors given by those who had not done so in the last 12 months were (in descending order) physical disability, other health reason, old age, busy/lack of time. For those who had not visited in the last four weeks, the most frequently cited reasons were (in descending order) busy/lack of time, bad/poor weather, other health reason, physical disability.
- Health or exercise was the most frequently cited motivation for visiting the outdoors (23%), closely followed by exercising a dog (22%), and then visits for pleasure or enjoyment (15%) and for fresh air/pleasant weather (14%).

- Over half of the visits to the countryside within the last 4 weeks involved less than 2 hours being spent on the main activity. 28% of visits where walking was the main activity involved less than an hour being spent. Visits of less than an hour were more likely to be by those with no car access, people aged 75 or more, those with a long-term illness or disability, and those with no academic qualifications.
- 38% of visits were taken within a mile of the start point (home, workplace, holiday accommodation), 37% within 1 to 5 miles.
- In terms of the main mode of transport used on visits to the outdoors, 46% of visits involved the use of a car, 42% walking, 5% bike and 2% public transport.
- Equal proportions of visits were taken along as with family – 39%, 20% with friends and 5% as part of an organised group. Around a quarter of visits included children in the party, and about two fifths included dogs.
- Money was spent during 42% of visits taken to the outdoors, with the average amount across all visits being £12.74. Spend was most frequently on food and drink.
- In terms of future demand, 60% of adults would like to visit the outdoors more often for recreation, a similar figure to previous surveys. There is increased interest in walking, although actual participation in walking has decreased since 2008. The destinations of greatest interest were ones that typically involve a greater amount of travel, i.e. beaches and mountains/hills/moorland.

5.3 Other relevant context

5.3.1 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) introduced a measure designed to provide landowners with surety that they will not be faced with unexpected claims for newly discovered rights of way based upon historical evidence, that is, evidence from before 1949. The measure, contained in section 53 of CROW, will come into force if and when the Welsh Government passes regulations to implement it. If implemented, the measure would extinguish any unrecorded historical rights on 1st January 2026 or a date up to five years later. 2026 is now commonly referred to as ‘the cut-off date’.

As yet, the Welsh Government has not committed to making the necessary regulation to implement this measure. However, if the cut-off date is introduced, there will be significant consequences for the DMS workload of all LHAs. It is expected that, if the cut-off date is enacted, there will be a significant upsurge of claims for unrecorded PROW in a bid to secure these routes before they are extinguished.

Claims based upon historical evidence that are properly made and lodged with the Council before the cut-off date will not be automatically extinguished but will remain pending investigation and determination. Therefore, the expected additional work load will, in the first instance, be one of checking that claims have been properly made. Assuming that they have, there is no overriding need for them to be determined before the cut-off date. Nonetheless, the additional claims will add to the DMS backlog and the County’s duty to process them.

There is no way of telling in advance how many claims will be made, so the possibility of implementation of the cut-off date remains a potentially significant factor in the PRoW team's workload towards the latter end of this ROWIP period.

5.3.2 Improving opportunities to access outdoor recreation

In 2015 the Government carried out a consultation about 'Improving opportunities to access the outdoors for responsible recreation'. This wide-ranging consultation invited respondents to look at all aspects of outdoor recreation opportunities in Wales and to suggest new strategies, including new legislative measures for improving delivery.

The Government has not set itself a deadline for the production of new legislation or indicated that it will bring forward legislation in any particular areas. However, there is the possibility that the consultation is an early stage in an exercise that results in a radical overhaul of access legislation in Wales within the lifetime of the second ROWIP. If this happens, this document will need a fundamental review and probable amendment.

6 Evaluation of future needs and opportunities

6.1 Summary of key points from assessment of ROWIP 1 delivery and stakeholder perceptions

The findings from the review of the consultation responses, the desk review of relevant strategies and plans, and the evaluation of the current condition of the network can be drawn together to show a number of emerging messages (presented below in no particular order).

Stakeholders:

- People who walk regularly are broadly happy with the condition of the network.
- Users would like to see a more dynamic approach to enforcement, with improved communication about action taken.
- Horse-riders want bridleway improvements.
- Disabled users feel strongly about the restricted access to WCP, and need facilities.
- Landowners have concerns about users opening up gaps around stiles.

Condition monitoring and maintenance

- There is very little available data on network condition.
- Work is primarily reactive, and not pro-active.
- Stakeholders are unclear about how and why maintenance works are prioritised and done.

Information and promotion

- The CAMS on-line reporting system is a positive development.
- Promotion of the network, carried out by the Rights of Way team, is limited.
- There is very little information for either land managers or path users, but there is demand for it.
- PR opportunities are not maximised.

Progress with ROWIP 1

- Regular walkers are noticing improvements.
- Review of the Statement of Action shows that out of a total of 22 tasks, 6 have been completed, there is partial progress on 8, and little or no progress on 8.
- The lack of available data for assessment may be hiding more progress than is evident.

The organisational perspective

- ROW staff focus on their own individual areas.
- The team has looked externally to learn from good practice elsewhere.
- Relevant data and information is difficult to access.
- The synergy between ROW and the Rangers/Countryside service is limited.

6.2 Evaluation of the extent to which local ROW meet the present and future needs of the public

6.2.1 Meeting present and future needs

There are aspects where the local ROW network that can be said to meet present needs, in terms of what participants in the review have said they like about the Flintshire's rights of way network. These can be summarised as follows (in no particular order of importance):

- Providing access to many different parts of the County for regular walking.
- Footpaths mainly in good useable condition.
- Noticeable improvements in recent years.
- Good signposting from roads.
- Providing some opportunities for off-road mountain biking and horse-riding.

However, due to a limited resource it is evident that there are ways in which Flintshire's local ROW are not entirely meeting present and future needs, in relation to the problems that participants in the review raised and the improvements that they said they would like to see. These can be summarised as follows (in no particular order of importance):

- Waymarking is not as consistent as some users would like.
- There are not enough bridleways for riders to enable them to ride off-road as much as they would like.
- Wheelchair users are not all able to access the Wales Coast Path, and experience some problems with the surfacing on local footpaths.
- Landowners have experienced problems as a result of inappropriate behaviour by users and their dogs, particularly in terms of compromising the stockproofing of their fields.
- There is insufficient information about the ROW network, in terms of what is there, and people's rights and responsibilities.

6.2.2 Opportunities

The assessment has shown that there are a number of areas of opportunity. These are summarised below, and then covered in more detail in the Statement of Action.

Physical accessibility of the network

- I. Investigate opportunities where disability access can be improved
- II. Maintain good condition of footpaths
- III. Waymarking and signage improvements
- IV. Investigate opportunities for bridleway linkages
- V. Investigate opportunities for footpath links between key places
- VI. Using volunteers more for maintenance and improvement works
- VII. Deal with enforcement issues in a timely way

More purposeful use of the ROW network

- I. Build and maintain strategic linkages, and facilitate networks, at strategic and operational levels.
- II. Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for walking for health.
- III. Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for active travel.

Legal recording and changes

- I. Consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement.
- II. Address anomalies.
- III. Continuous review of the Definitive Map and Statement.
- IV. Build expertise amongst the ROW team staff.
- V. Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding.
- VI. Develop and disseminate a team prioritisation policy for legal work.

Promotion and information

- I. Promoted routes network
- II. Promoted routes for riders and cyclists
- III. Improve information provision for land managers and ROW users
- IV. Improve information provision for people with disabilities

Strategic working

- I. Work pro-actively, using the ROWIP for direction; regularly review progress and report to LAF & Cabinet.
- II. Develop, review and update policies to ensure comprehensive and consistent coverage of key areas of activity.
- III. Build and maintain strong means of communication with key stakeholders, including Councillors, users and landowners.
- IV. Create and implement a volunteering strategy, including considering collaborative opportunities.
- V. Develop use of GIS as a proactive management & decision-making tool.
- VI. Develop and disseminate a team prioritisation policy for legal work.

Key task planning and delivery

- I. Sound record-keeping, especially CAMS.
- II. Well designed and planned surveying/data gathering.
- III. Consistent procedures for all key work tasks.

Organisational development

- I. Review lead roles and responsibilities for key tasks for particular individuals.
- II. Encourage individuals to work with initiative, within a 'whole team'
- III. Build relevant expertise related to lead roles within the team
- IV. Establish the LAF
- V. Investigate opportunities for closer collaborative working with neighbouring and overlapping authorities
- VI. Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding.

6.2.3 Policies and Procedures

The Statement of Action sits alongside the *Flintshire County Council Policies and Procedures* booklet, appended as Annex C.

It has been compiled as a positive response to findings from the assessment, with the intention of creating widespread understanding and transparency about what Flintshire County Council does and how in relation to the County's PROW network. The booklet provides introductory information about the duties and powers of the Highway Authority, explains the Path Prioritisation Scheme, and then provides the policies and procedures relating to issues relating to the Definitive Map, enforcement and maintenance.

NEW VERSION OF STATEMENT OF ACTION TABLE

The Statement of Action sets out the strategic priority areas for delivery during the course of the ROWIP. The Statement of Action will be supplemented by Annual Delivery Plans which will set out the detailed work programme for the year ahead.

The Statement of Action has been drawn up within the context of the Policies and Procedures booklet with the following assumptions:

- The core PROW budget will remain limited, and is likely to reduce further.
- The PROW team aims to work in partnership internally and externally wherever possible and beneficial, in order to seek synergies and best value for the resources available.
- The Statement of Action is based on the evidence from the assessment. It has been designed to balance aspiration with pragmatism, so that annual delivery plans can work towards defined priorities for management, maintenance and improvements but within the realities of available resources.
- The Statement of Action includes intentions to try to increase the resources available.

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
1	Physical accessibility of the network			
1.1	People with disabilities are keen to have more access to the PROW network, in particular at the coast.	To understand where additional access is required and to provide opportunities where feasible.	Consult with disabled users to identify their access priorities. Investigate opportunities where disability access can be improved. Promote existing opportunities to disability groups.	M
1.2	A network that has generally good surface condition and roadside signage, and that received few complaints during the ROWIP 2 consultation. The assessment shows that there	1. To maintain the surface of paths in good condition. 2. To reduce the number of stiles on the network in favour of gaps or gates, as a means to increase accessibility. 3. A network with the minimum of	1.1 Annual mowing programme. 1.2 Prompt responses to reports of problems. 1.3 Whole network survey. 2.1 Work with landowners to replace stiles with gaps or gates.	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	<p>are issues with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiles on the network, which can limit accessibility; • One third of paths, (representing 9.4% of the network) have some form of obstruction. 	obstructions possible and a robust mechanism for resolving new ones arising.	<p>3.1 Require gates or gaps in any new fences.</p> <p>3.2 Develop and adhere to an obstructions removal and enforcement protocol.</p>	
1.3	<p>There is a high percentage of paths that are well signed throughout their length. However, some respondents to the consultation want better waymarking.</p> <p>At least three quarters of paths are signed where they leave a metalled road.</p>	<p>1. A network where users can easily follow the correct route, thereby satisfying landowners and users alike.</p> <p>2. Confidence that Flintshire County Council is meeting its statutory obligations for signposting from a metalled road.</p>	<p>1.1 Respond promptly to reports of missing waymarks.</p> <p>1.2 Encourage landowners to fully sign paths on their land.</p> <p>1.3 Routinely check local waymarking whenever any path repairs are carried out.</p> <p>2.1 Ensure that all locations that should be signed are recorded in CAMS.</p> <p>2.2 Survey all sign locations and record any missing signs.</p> <p>2.3 Develop and implement a programme of sign installation.</p> <p>2.4 Plan for sign end-of-life replacement.</p>	H
1.4	<p>Horse riders would like more off-road routes to be available to them.</p> <p>The PROW network in the county</p>	<p>1. To be able to increase the proportion of the network available to horse riders and cyclists.</p> <p>2. To develop circular routes for riders</p>	<p>1.1 Encourage landowners to dedicate footpaths as bridleways or to allow their permissive use.</p> <p>1.2 Give priority to claims for</p>	L

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	includes 115 km of bridleways, representing limited opportunities for off-road riding and cycling.	and cyclists.	bridleways. 2.1 Investigate opportunities for bridleway linkages, thereby making the most of existing provision. 2.2 Seek to upgrade footpaths to bridleways in collaboration with Active Travel Plans.	
1.5	Some consultation respondents would like to be able to travel between key places by walking on footpaths.	A network which is fit for contemporary patterns of use, which meets users' demands and contributes to the potential for Active Travel.	Investigate opportunities for footpath links between key places, prioritising those which also meet Active Travel criteria. Work with planning colleagues to ensure green infrastructure is built into all developments.	M
1.6	Staff resources are limited and insufficient for the volume of work. There are office-based and outdoors tasks which are potentially suitable for volunteers.	1. An adequately resourced PRoW team. 2. A dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers who support the aims and objectives in the ROWIP in a variety of ways.	1.1 Determine necessary levels of staffing and financial resources to deliver the ROWIP. 1.2 Develop a business case to bid for additional resources. 1.3 Maximise opportunities from internal and external co-operation. 2.1 Set in place plans and a programme for upskilling existing volunteers and recruiting new ones. 2.2 Work with FLVC to explore opportunities for volunteers through existing groups and projects 2.3 Consider partnership working	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
			<p>with NOMS to provide opportunities for those on supervised community service.</p> <p>2.4 Working in a way that encourages retention of existing volunteers, e.g. providing a variety of volunteering opportunities, providing meaningful volunteering opportunities, ensuring the volunteers feel welcomed and valued, making the volunteering fun. Investigate opportunities for working in partnership with other internal services and external groups/organisations, to enable synergistic use of volunteering.</p>	
1.7	<p>Consultation respondents are reporting perceptions of delay in the Authority's work to deal with enforcement issues. However, data shows that overall response times are improving.</p>	<p>1. To deal with enforcement issues in a timely way. 2. Stakeholders are aware of what enforcement work has been done. 3. PROW team has clear procedures to work to.</p>	<p>1.1 Clearly allocate enforcement responsibilities. 1.2 Ensure that all enforcement issues are recorded in CAMS. 2.1 Through Exegesis, send informative automated responses to complainants when actions taken. 3.1 Set in place and monitor usage of clear procedures for dealing with enforcement issues, including communication with relevant external stakeholders.</p>	M

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
1.8	Some stiles and gates have been built on the network without formal authorisation.	All path furniture is authorised or is treated as an obstruction.	Develop and adopt formal policies to cover the authorisation of structures on PRoW. These policies to adhere to the least restrictive access principle. Maintain a publicly available record of all authorised structures.	H
2	Legal recording and changes			
2.1	The Definitive Map and Statement has a relevant date of 1978. The DMS now consists of the 1978 DMS plus all of the individual changes that have taken place since then. There is a number of outstanding LEMOs required to complete changes to the DMS. The locations of all paths in the network are shown on an interactive map on the Council's website.	1. A Definitive Map and Statement that is as up-to-date as possible. 2. A DMS that is readily available for public scrutiny.	1.1 Make any outstanding LEMOs. 1.2 Consolidate the Definitive Map & Statement and republish. 2.1 Ensure that any changes to the DMS are accurately reflected in the on-line interactive map. 2.2 Supply the newly consolidated map and statement to all major libraries and relevant portions to each Community Council.	L
2.2	The assessment showed that there is no overall record of anomalies. Whilst progress is being made on tackling the known anomalies, there is a long way to go, and more anomalies are likely to come	1. To understand the number and nature of anomalies across the network. 2. To reduce the number of anomalies.	1.1 Review the complete DMS for anomalies and set up a schedule to record them. 2.1 Develop and implement a programme to deal with them during the life of the ROWIP.	L

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	to the team's attention.			
2.3	There are PPOs and DMMO's, some of which date back several years since the applications were received.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The backlog of DMMO and PPO is reduced to zero. 2. New PPO and DMMO normally made or determined within 12 months of completed application. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Schedules of applications received to be kept up to date and publicly available. 1.2 A plan to be drawn up and implemented for resolution of all outstanding applications. The plan will prioritise addressing claims dependent upon witness evidence. 2.1 Sufficient resources will be allocated. 2.2 Relevant staff will be supported to develop necessary skills. 2.3 Sufficient legal officer support will be secured. 	H
2.4	Staff members focus on geographical areas of work, with little opportunity to develop specific subject expertise and there can be an inconsistency of approach.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To build expertise among the ROW team staff, so that all necessary areas of work can be competently covered. 2. All work, including applications for orders, to be dealt with consistently across the County. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Encourage and support staff to seek membership of IPROW⁴. 1.2 Carry out a targeted skills audit to gain a sound understanding of skills gaps. 1.3 Draw up a plan for staff development and training and secure a staff training budget. 2.1 Through restructure provide a focus on the DMS in the responsibilities of officers 	H

⁴ Institute of Public Rights of Way and Access Management

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
			2.2 Draw up protocols and practice guidelines to guide handling of applications.	
2.5	Limited and potentially falling core funding from the Authority, which restricts what the PROW team can deliver and achieve.	To increase the resources (not just funding) available to the PROW team, to enable them to continue – and ideally increase – their work outputs and outcomes.	Determine necessary resources and put together a business case to bid for additional funding. Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding. Monitor potential developments that may impact on workload (such as implementation of the cut-off date) and, if necessary, prepare pre-emptive resource bids.	M
2.6	There is a backlog of legal work, which will be challenging to overcome with the current and anticipated future level of staff resource.	1. The most important legal work to be completed in as timely a fashion as possible. 2. To be able to be clear to all stakeholders (internal and external) about the order in which legal work will be carried out.	1.1 Work with the officers to develop their PROW experience and expertise. 2.1 Develop and disseminate a team prioritisation policy for legal work for internal and external use. 2.2 Develop a protocol with the legal department for prioritisation.	H
3	More purposeful use of the ROW network			
3.1	The PROW team have some existing strategic linkages and networks, but the assessment revealed some as yet untapped	The PROW team to have strong and active networks and collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders where there can be some	Build and maintain strategic linkages, and facilitate networks, at strategic and operational levels.	L/M

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	relationships e.g. with public health organisations.	form of mutual benefit.		
3.2	There are existing groups and organisations promoting walking for health, but which, for various reasons, are not taking full advantage of the PROW network.	For the PROW network to be actively used as a resource for walking for health.	Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for walking for health. Develop collaboration with the team delivering Exercise for Health in the county to maximise the opportunity for use of PROW for this scheme Broker joint working between local community groups who can support the Exercise for Health scheme using PROW.	M
3.3	The consultation showed some interest in using PROW for active travel purposes.	For the PROW network to be used and promoted where appropriate for active travel.	Investigate opportunities for appropriate routes for walking or cycling for active travel. Work with other Council officers to incorporate public paths into Active Travel Integrated Network, taking opportunities to upgrade footpaths to bridleways where possible. Include Active Travel routes on the interactive map.	L
4	Promotion and information			
4.1	The consultation showed a general lack of awareness of the promoted routes and permissions.	For the PROW to be used appropriately by users throughout the network	Improve information about the promoted routes network. Develop information not only about where the routes are but how they	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
			should be used.	
4.2	The consultation showed some inappropriate use of PROW by cyclists	Reduced illegal use of footpaths by cyclists and horse riders.	Improve targeted information about promoted routes for riders and cyclists. Provide clear on-line sign-posting to other information sources. Develop and promote routes specifically for off-road horse-riding and cycling.	L
4.3	The consultation showed that disabled people are unaware of accessible PROW and do not generally make use of them.	More use of PROW by people with disabilities.	Improve information provision specifically targeted at people with disabilities.	L
4.4	There is currently no information available on the authority's website for land managers about their rights and responsibilities in relation to PROW on their land. There appears to be a demand from land managers for more information to be available. It is important that PROW users are aware of their rights and how to use PROW responsibly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land managers and users to be aware of their responsibilities, and to behave accordingly. 2. Users of PROW treat the PROW, and nearby land and boundaries, with respect. 3. Applicants for changes to the network to have a ready source of information specific to processes in Flintshire 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Develop improved relationship between the team and landowner representatives, and jointly develop information for land managers 1.2 Provide on-line information for landowners or provide links to other sites carrying good quality advice. 2.1 Develop and promote information for PROW users about the responsibilities whilst using PROW. 3.1 Develop and publish on the website a series of advice notes for would-be applicants for PPO and DMMO. 	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
4.5	Currently there is limited information available to people searching the Council's website.	To be able to make available relevant information using a means that is increasingly popular for members of the public.	Investigate the feasibility of improvements to the interactive map on the Council's website e.g. Active Travel maps, CAMS GIS data and definitive map extracts. Promote and inform people of the infrastructure information viewable in the CAMS Web system	L
4.6	The consultation suggested that some external stakeholders do not understand how the Council prioritises its maintenance and improvement work.	Clarity for the PROW team and its stakeholders on how work on the PROW network is prioritised and delivered.	Develop, disseminate and make available on the Council website procedures and standards for responding to reported issues	M
5	Strategic working			
5.1	Flintshire's first ROWIP has come to an end; the second ROWIP provides new opportunities for guiding the direction of PROW work in the county.	For the ROWIP to provide clear strategic direction and a framework for all of the work done by Flintshire's PROW team.	1.1 Work pro-actively, using the ROWIP for direction. 1.2 Regularly review progress and report to LAF & Cabinet. 1.3 Develop fully targeted Annual Delivery Plans based upon the SoA	H
5.2	At present, Policies exist for some but not all areas of the PROW team's work, and some of these may be outdated.	Clear strategic and operational guidance for the staff team and others about the way in which the PROW team will work.	Develop, review and update Policies to ensure comprehensive and consistent coverage of key areas of activity, with LAF consultation and Council adoption.	H
5.3	There is potential to strengthen communication across the spectrum of the PROW team's	For all key stakeholders to understand the PROW team's work, and to have a strong relationship with individuals in	Build and maintain strong means of communication with key stakeholders, including Councillors,	M

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	stakeholders. Currently some stakeholders report that they do not understand how the team works or why certain work is done.	the team. For key stakeholders to have the information they need to champion the cause of the PROW team.	users and landowners. Develop and publish on the website a full suite of information about the working policies of the team.	
5.5	Staff resources are limited and insufficient for the volume of work, and they appreciate the work currently undertaken by volunteers. There are office-based and outdoors tasks which are potentially suitable for volunteers.	To make the most of the potential volunteering resource, in a way that works for the PROW staff team, its partners and the volunteers.	Create and implement a volunteering strategy, potentially with FLVC, including considering collaborative opportunities.	H
5.6	GIS-based information is currently used in CAMS, but more could be made of it to support strategic planning of the PROW team's work.	1. PROW team members equipped with the skills to make use of GIS in their roles. 2. GIS available to team members. To make best use of the available resources, facilitating the team's work and its outcomes. 3. Full use to be made of the CAMS.	1.1 Train staff in the use of GIS as a proactive management and decision-making tool. 2.1 A GIS platform to be made available to all team members. 3.1 Appoint a lead officer to be primarily responsible for the maintenance of CAMS.	L
6	Key task planning and delivery			
6.1	CAMS is the main repository for all network data but two thirds of the network has not been formally surveyed since 2010, reducing the system's reliability as a strategic planning tool.	1. To have as up to date as possible data about the network stored in CAMS. 2. To re-survey the entire network at least once over a three year period with snapshots based on annual	1.1 All staff to be trained in the use of CAMS with annual refreshers/reminders of the importance of thorough and consistent logging of data. 2.1 Arrange for a survey of the 67%	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
		sample surveys	of the network not surveyed in 2017 to be carried out, 33% 18/19 and 34% 19/20. 2.2 Re-introduce regular partial monitoring of the network (minimum 10% p.a.) 2.3 Plan to re-survey the whole network 3 three times by the end of the ROWIP period.	
6.2	Tasks are reported to and carried out by a number of different players in several independent organisations, potentially resulting in lost data and/ or replication of effort.	1. Confidence that all issues reported and works carried out are captured in CAMS. 2. Clarity and confidence for users that their reports are acted upon in accordance to the published protocols.	1.1 Regular liaison between all players involved in Flintshire's PROW. 1.2 Development of a simple, common reporting format that will enable records to be fed back to the PROW team for entry into CAMS. 2.1 Continue development of the on-line reporting system. 2.2 Develop and implement systems for ensuring feedback to users reporting problems.	H
7	Organisational development			
7.1	The PROW team is undergoing an organisational change process as part of wider changes within the	Clear roles, responsibilities and work programmes for all PROW team members, including individuals being	Review lead roles & responsibilities for key tasks for team members.	H

	WHAT HAVE WE GOT?	WHAT DO WE WANT?	HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?	PRIORITY High Medium Low
	Authority.	allocated lead responsibilities for particular areas of work, resulting in a logical and effective way to share the team's workload.		
7.2	The term of the previous LAF has expired. A process is underway to set up a joint LAF with Wrexham.	1. A well-functioning and effective LAF that can support and promote delivery of the ROWIP. 2. A LAF that can take a strategic overview	1.1 Establish the LAF. 2.1 The role of the LAF to be primarily strategic with sub-groups set up for addressing purely local questions.	H
7.3	Flintshire's resources are limited. There is precedent for Authorities to work collaboratively, including sharing staff resource.	To deliver and achieve as much as possible within the available resources.	Investigate the opportunities for closer collaborative working with neighbouring and over-lapping Authorities.	M
7.4	Limited and potentially falling core funding from the authority, which restricts what the PROW team can deliver and achieve.	To increase the resources (not just funding) available to the PROW team, to enable them to continue – and ideally increase – their work outputs and outcomes.	Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing additional resources, including external project funding and partnership working with other agencies in the statutory and voluntary sector.	H

Annexes

Annex A: ROWIP 2008 – Executive Summary

The Network Condition Assessment identified that there is an estimated shortfall of £97,000 per annum just to maintain the network at its current standard (i.e. 38% of paths being easy to use). In addition to this a further £167,000 per annum, over 10 years, will be needed to bring the network up to an acceptable standard. At the moment, the County Council is not in a position to commit these additional funds.

The annual investment required for rights of way in Flintshire per year, over the next five years, is estimated as £269,351 or £ 255 per km. (Paragraph 4.5 Statement of Action)

The County Council will need to commit more resources (both in terms of additional staff and finances) to ensure that the definitive map is 'fit for purpose'. This will involve removing the backlog of all outstanding definitive map modification orders to enable the County Council to prepare a new map using the latest technology. Efficiency will be improved through the extension of the computerised GIS and database to ensure greater accessibility to records. (Tasks 2.1 – 2.5 Statement of Action)

The County Council will also review how the various elements (i.e. the Countryside Service, the Rights of Way Inspectors and the County Hall Rights of Way Team) involved in the management of the Public Rights of Way operate. In particular, it will consider how improvements in overall performance may be achieved. (Task 1.1 Statement of Action)

The partnership-working element of rights of way work will be developed further (Task 4.1 Statement of Action).

A programme of improving accessibility to the network will be developed. The County Council will pursue sources of funding to progress this. It will also develop a programme of extending opportunities for equestrians and cyclists (through the provision of additional bridleways and cycle tracks) throughout the County. (Task 4.4 Statement of Action).

The County Council has already received funding from the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) to improve and develop access to Flintshire's coast. It will continue to develop and implement this programme to provide greater opportunities for the public to gain access to this valuable resource. (Task 4.7 Statement of Action).

A full set of policies and procedures will be published by the County Council for the management and protection of the public rights of way network (Task 1.2 Statement of Action).

The backlog of obstructions (in other words the number of reported obstructions that have not been removed) needs to be addressed, so that in future all problems will be resolved within set timescales. Having a system of regular inspections in place and increasing the provision of signs and waymarks will be a priority. Improvements to the condition of the network will be measured through an annual performance indicator. (Tasks 3.1 – 3.7 Statement of Action).

Finally, the County Council will publicise its achievements through the publication of an annual report. It will also use every opportunity to give greater publicity to the excellent work it has carried out over the years, so that the public is more aware of its successes. This could reduce the cost of maintaining the network by making the public aware of its existence, thereby encouraging greater use. (Task 4.7 Statement of Action).

Annex B: Checklist for authorising structures

CHECKLIST RELATING TO THE INSTALLATION/RENEWAL OF STRUCTURES ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Re Public Footpath No. _____ in the Community of _____

		COMMENTS
1.	Is the structure noted on the Parish Claim or current Definitive Statement?	NO Must therefore be capable of being authorised see 3,4, 5 and 6 below
		YES If so, what type? Gate Stile Therefore no specific authorisation <u>required</u> - need to consider alternative structure or gap as in 7. below
2.	Present situation on site	Gap Fence/hedgerow Gate Stile
3.	What is the current use of the land?	Agricultural use Breeding/keeping horses Other
4.	Is a structure necessary to prevent ingress/egress of stock?	YES <u>Therefore</u> authorisation may be given

		NO											
5.	Is a structure necessary for safety reasons?	YES <u>Therefore</u> authorisation may be given											
		NO											
6.	Is the structure capable of authorisation?	YES											
		NO											
7.	Will the landowner agree to a	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gap</td> <td>YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gate</td> <td>YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gate with self-closing mechanism</td> <td>YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kissing gate</td> <td>YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stile</td> <td>YES/NO</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gap	YES/NO	Gate	YES/NO	Gate with self-closing mechanism	YES/NO	Kissing gate	YES/NO	Stile	YES/NO	
Gap	YES/NO												
Gate	YES/NO												
Gate with self-closing mechanism	YES/NO												
Kissing gate	YES/NO												
Stile	YES/NO												
Action taken													
Signed													
Dated													

Annex C: Glossary

- Active Travel Routes – Routes that have been assessed or developed to be suitable for commuter or other non-leisure journeys on foot or by bicycle.
- Anomalies – Inconsistencies on the Definitive Map and Statement can come to light during the course of other work. Usually referred to as ‘anomalies’, these can include issues such as a path changing sides of a hedge on adjacent map sheets, or paths stopping as dead-ends at a community boundary.
- AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. An area of land that is defined as being of particularly high value for the quality of its landscape. The boundaries of AONB are set by the local geography and so often include parts of several Local Authority areas.
- BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator. No longer in use, the BVPI 6.10 was the indicator developed to assess the Local Highway Authority’s compliance with PRow requirements.
- CAMS – Countryside Access Management System.
- DMMO – Definitive Map Modification Order. For example, to record a previously unrecorded path on the Definitive Map and Statement. Anyone with evidence can make an application for a DMMO. The onus is then on the Local Highway Authority, also called the ‘surveying authority’, to consider all of the evidence available to it and make a determination as to whether or not an order should be made. If objections are raised, the orders are often referred to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. The LHA has non-binding duty to determine DMMO within 12 months of receipt of the application, but the need to accurately and exhaustively search for and assess evidence, together with the potential for contentious issues to result in a public inquiry, means that administering DMMO is a time-consuming, specialist task and each application can potentially take several years to resolve.
- DMS - Definitive Map and Statement. The documents that record the legal existence of public rights of way. The legal record of public rights of way is often referred to, for shorthand, as the ‘definitive map’. However, the full document is the ‘definitive map and statement’ (DMS). The statement sometimes contains additional information about paths, including any constraints (such as widths, stiles or gates) that may affect the path. If there is a conflict between the map and the statement, it is the statement that takes legal priority. In Flintshire, the statement does not generally record limitations. The DMS consists of the last sealed map plus all of the modification orders that have since been made.
- LAF – Local Access Forum. A group of local access experts that meets at regular intervals to consider issues of local, regional and national importance to access users, both on PRow and in the wider countryside, and to offer advice to the LHA.
- LEMO - ‘Legal event modification orders’ (LEMO) record on the definitive map legal changes that have already taken place under some other legislation. For example, recording a diversion made as a result of a PPO. LEMO do not have to be advertised,

are not subject to objections, and take effect as soon as they are made. In some cases, public path orders will include a LEMO, so that a separate order is not needed.

- Limitations - Stiles and gates across a PRoW can be lawful obstructions, but only if they meet specific conditions and have been authorised by the LHA. The principal conditions for authorisation are that a landowner has made an application to the LHA and that the structure is necessary for agriculture, forestry or horse-keeping.
- LHA – Local Highway Authority. Usually the county or unitary council, in this case Flintshire County Council.
- NRW – Natural Resources Wales.
- PPO – Public Path Order. For example, to stop up or divert a recorded PRoW. Whereas DMMO change the DMS to record already existing rights, Public Path Orders (PPO) are concerned with making changes to those rights, generally for the benefit of land management or development but sometimes also for the benefit of the path-using public. PPO can be made under the Highways Act 1980 or as a result of planning approval.
- PRoW – Public right of way. Unless the context dictates otherwise, this means a public footpath, bridleway or byway.
- Relevant date – The relevant date of the DMS is the date that it was last sealed and is the date on which it was considered to be an up to date record of all known PRoW.
- ROWIP – Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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Introduction

The Public Rights of Way Network is a priceless asset providing the principal means of access to the countryside for all classes of users to enjoy recreational and physical activities, thus contributing to the health and well-being of future generations. This network also makes an important contribution to accessibility within Towns and Communities.

The management, maintenance, protection and recording of the Public Rights of Way network is a complex area of work for local Authorities and Flintshire County Council, as Highway Authority, has therefore developed a series of Policies and Procedures in order to deliver an effective and consistent Public Rights of Way Service throughout the County to ensure that it becomes more open and accessible to the public.

The provision of the Public Rights of Way function is addressed by a wide range of legislation and associated case law. However, within this legal framework, there is scope for each local Authority to interpret specific aspects of service delivery according to its needs and local circumstances.

These Policies and Procedures will be included on the Flintshire Website and available to users of the Public Rights of Way network and to landowners, in order that there is widespread understanding and transparency about what Flintshire County Council does and how it does it.

Where appropriate the Authority will consider best practice and published guidance notes in the delivery of the service.

STATUS OF ROUTES	NUMBER	LENGTH IN KM
FOOTPATHS		955.2 km
BRIDLEWAYS		114.6 km
BYWAYS		11.9 km
RESTRICTED BYWAYS		

Figures – April 2018

Rights of Way General Information

Duties of the Highway Authority

To erect and maintain signposts where any Footpath (FP) / Bridleway (BR) / Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) leaves a metalled road unless agreed with the Parish Council that it is not necessary [Countryside Act 1968 (CA68) s27].

To erect such signposts if in the opinion of the Highway Authority this is required to assist persons unfamiliar with the locality to follow a FP/BR/BOAT [CA68 s27].

To survey new paths agreed by a planning authority [Highways Act 1980 (HA80) s27].

To keep a list of highways maintainable at public expense [HA80 s36].

To maintain highways maintainable at public expense [HA80 s41].

To provide footways by carriageways where necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of pedestrians [HA80 s66].

To provide adequate grass or other margins by a carriageway where necessary or desirable for the safety or accommodation of ridden horses [HA80 s71].

To assert and protect the rights of public to the use and enjoyment of any highway including a duty to prevent, as far as possible, the stopping up or obstruction of highways [HA80 s130; amended CROW2000 s63].

To prosecute re: disturbance of surface where desirable in the public interest [HA80 s131A; Inserted by Rights of Way Act 1990 (RWA90) s1].

To enforce provision re: ploughing of footpaths or bridleways [HA80 s134; amended RWA90 s1].
To make orders authorising agricultural works not exceeding 3 months [HA80 s135; amended RWA90 s1].

To remove snow or soil [HA80 s150].

To have regard to the needs of disabled and blind persons in executing street works [HA80 s175A].

To keep the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S) under continuous review [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(WCA81) s53; Modified by Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW2000) s53]

To re-classify Roads Used as Public Paths [WCA81 s54; repealed CROW2000 s47*]

To prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan [CROW2000 s60].

To have regard to the needs of people with mobility problems when authorising stiles etc.[CROW2000 s69*].

To establish a Local Access Forum [CROW2000 s94].

Powers of the Highway Authority

To erect/maintain signposts along any FP/BR/BOAT [CA68 s27].

To prosecute if expedient for the promotion and protection of the interests of the inhabitants of the area [Local Government Act 1972 s222].

To create footpaths and bridleways by agreement with compensation or compulsory purchase [HA80 s25/26].

To adopt i.e. become responsible for maintenance of highways by agreement [HA80 s38].

Proceedings for an order to repair highway [HA80 s56].

To improve highways [HA80 s62].

To provide on a footpath safety barriers for safeguarding persons using the highway [HA80 s66; amended CROW2000 s70].

To widen highways [HA80 s72].

To construct a bridge to carry a public path [HA80 s91].

To reconstruct a bridge forming part of a public path [HA80 s92].

To drain highways [HA80 s100].

To make an order stopping up footpath(s) or bridleway(s) [HA80 s118].

To make an order stopping up footpath(s) or bridleway(s) which crosses a railway [HA80 s118A].

To make an order diverting footpath(s) or bridleway(s) [HA80 s119].

To make an order diverting footpath(s) or bridleway(s) which crosses a railway [HA80 s119A].

To remove unauthorised marks [HA80 s132].

To remove structures [HA80 s143].

To require removal or widening of gates [HA80 s145 + s149].

To repair stiles, etc. [HA80 s146].

To authorise the erection of stiles, etc. [HA80 s147; amended CROW2000 s69].

To require cutting or felling of trees or hedges that are overhanging or a danger [HA80 s154; amended CROW2000 s65].

To require removal of barbed wire [HA80 s164].

To require information as to ownership of land [HA80 s297].

To consolidate the Definitive Map (DM) [WCA81 s57].

To appoint wardens [WCA81 s62].

To designate a footpath as a cycle track [Cycle Tracks Act 1984(CTA84) s3].

To provide safety barriers on a cycle track [CTA84 s4].

To make Traffic Regulation Orders [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984(RTRA84) s1].

To make a temporary Traffic Regulation Order during works [RTRA84 s14].

To require removal of signs [RTRA84 s69].

To enter land in connection with traffic signs [RTRA84 s71].

To stop up or divert footpaths or bridleways if satisfied it is necessary to enable development to be carried out [Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA90) s257].

To stop up or divert footpaths or bridleways temporarily if satisfied it is necessary to enable minerals to be worked and can be restored [TCPA90 s261].

Miscellaneous Matters

Other matters relevant to the exercise of the Rights of Way function:

Right to ride a non-motorised bicycle on a bridleway [CA68 s30].

Power to obtain particulars of persons interested in land [Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s16].

Presumed dedication of highway after twenty years public use [HA80 s31].

Proceedings for an order against the Highway Authority to repair a highway [HA80 s56].

Power of magistrates to stop up or divert [HA80 s116].

Power of Secretary of State to make rail crossing diversion or stopping up orders [HA80 s120].

Penalty for damaging highway, etc. [HA80 s131].

Penalty for wilful obstruction of highway including interference by crops [HA80 s137].

Power of Magistrates Courts to order offender to remove obstructions [HA80 s137ZA; introduced by CROW2000 s64].

Definitive Map and Statement shall be conclusive evidence as to particulars shown [WCA81 s56].

Prohibition of driving on footpath or bridleway [Road Traffic Act 1988 s34].

Secretary of State's power to stop up or divert any highway if satisfied necessary to enable development to be carried out [TCPA90 s247].

Secretary of State's power to extinguish the right to use vehicles on a highway on application by the local planning authority [TCPA90 s249].

Extinguishment of unrecorded rights of way [CROW2000 s53].

Public Rights of Way Maintenance Priorities

Introduction

The hierarchy sets out the relative importance that the Council will accord this work, falling into 8 broad categories. It was devised to rank highly those issues that were likely to be most urgent: hence, the highest priority given to paths where a serious injury has occurred or it likely to occur. Also ranking highly are those paths that are well used by the public, including Offa's Dyke national Trail and other well-promoted routes, such as those featured in the publication, *Rural Walks in Flintshire*.

Priority no.	Issue
1	Health and Safety issues
2	Volume and degree of usage and potential usage, especially National Trails, national and promoted footpaths and published trails (e.g. the Clwydian Way and the Wales Coastal Path)
3	Ways that are suitable for those who are less agile, wheelchair users and the visually impaired.
4	Multi-use and bridleway circular routes and those identified in liaison with the British Horse Society
5	Walks, rides and other activities for health
6	Link Paths off the National Trail and promoted trails
7	Paths published by community councils, including accesses to school
8	Circular and other routes published by Flintshire County Council, including accesses to school.

Timescales for responding to requests

Written/e-mailed requests from the public will be acknowledged within 5 working days, the aim is to respond in full within 15 working days from the date of receipt.

The response will contain a unique reference number if the communication has been added to the Countryside Access Management system (CAMS) for tracking purposes and the contact details for the Officer responsible for dealing with the issues raised.

Biodiversity Statement

In undertaking all functions relating to Public Rights of Way, regard will be given to Section 6 of the Environment Act (Wales) which places a duty on Public Authorities to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In so doing, Public Authorities must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'.

Definitive Map Issues

Introduction

The Definitive Map and Statement is a legal document and records the line and legal status of all recorded public rights of way. Public rights of way are highways over which members of the public have the legal right of passage across someone else's land.

If a public right of way is included on a Definitive Map, it is conclusive evidence, in law, that the public have the right of passage, even though there may not be any visible evidence on the ground that a right of way exists. The Statement that accompanies the Definitive Map is a brief written description of the recorded public right of way.

The Authority has a duty to keep this record under continual review by processing modification orders and consolidating the map and statement at regular intervals.

There are four types of public right of way recorded on the current Definitive Map and Statement:

<i>Public Footpath</i>	The right of passage is on foot only. A dog is considered as a usual accompaniment, but must be on a lead or under close control at all times. A pram is also considered to be a usual accompaniment, if the surface is suitable. Footpaths may be waymarked with yellow arrows.
<i>Public Bridleway</i>	The right of passage is on foot, bicycle or on horseback. Bridleways may be waymarked with blue arrows.
<i>Byway Open to All Traffic</i>	The right of passage is on foot, bicycle, on horseback or By motor vehicle. Byways may be waymarked with red arrows.
<i>Restricted Byway</i>	The right of passage is on foot, bicycle, on horseback or horse-drawn vehicles. Restricted Byways may be waymarked with burgundy arrows.

The hierarchy setting out the relative importance the Council will attach to public path and definitive map orders falls into seven categories, with 'Number One' the highest priority, 'Number Two' the second, and so on. It was devised to rank highly those issues that were likely to be most urgent: hence, the highest priority given to paths that are in imminent danger of being 'lost' through development and schemes that have been targeted for grant-aid. Also ranking highly are those paths that have been obstructed by long-term residential development. The footpaths may have not been open to the public for many years, but they still legally exist and can act as a blight on any potential property sale.

More consideration will be given to ways that, once opened, will lead to wider improvements to the rights of way by, for example, making a greater length of PROW available to the public or by increasing accessibility for other classes of users, such as horse-riders and cyclists and those with mobility problems.

Priority no.	Response/ action
1	Ways that are in danger of being lost through imminent development (i.e. at the planning application stage)
2	Orders affecting ways that are targeted for external funds, whose expenditure is time-limited and where the proposals are achievable within that time frame.
3	Path(s) that are obstructed by housing, which require an order or orders to resolve the situation.
4	Applications for modification orders
5	Mapping anomalies
6	Public path orders that are wholly or primarily in the public's interest
7	Public path orders that are wholly or predominantly for the benefit of private individuals

Anomalies

Policy

Occurrences of error or irregularity on the Definitive Map and Statement will be investigated and a resolution sought which benefits the network and the implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 (ROWIP). However, due to the often complex history of such anomalies, combined with limited staff capacity, this area of work will be given low priority unless linked to other initiatives.

Procedure

Once an anomaly is identified the details will be recorded and entered onto the digital copy of the Definitive Map. The Authority will check these records for possible resolution prior to any Public Path Order or improvement scheme being considered.

Authorising Gates/Stiles

Policy

The Authority will only authorise the installation of gates and stiles for stock control purposes. The Authority takes the view that any gate/stile present at the time of the 100% condition survey of 2010 is authorised. New infrastructure will be recorded on the consolidated Definitive Map and Statement.

Procedure

If the Authority is providing the gate/stile, it will be to the current British Standard. The Authority will issue an approval decision by letter. If the request is approved, the details of the new gate/stile will be recorded on the Countryside Access Management System.

Charges

Policy

The Authority will seek to recover all costs from the Applicants except in exceptional circumstances, such as correcting historical errors or when the landowner provides a series of improvements to the network.

The Policy of the Authority is to make an appropriate charge for certain types of legal orders with a 3% inflation rise each year:

- Temporary closures and extensions by Order. £1,670.00
- Closure by notice. £500.00
- Permanent closures and diversions £1,500.00 plus advert cost
- Follow up Property Search queries £70.00 per request
- Authorisation for Rallies £100.00 per request
- Landowners who require orders to be made which are primarily for their own benefit will be charged the full cost of the order. However If the change to the path in question has significant public benefit, then the Council may decide to share the cost of making the order.

Consolidations

Policy

The Definitive Map and Statement will be reviewed at regular intervals and a Consolidation Order will be made at 10 yearly intervals following the adoption of the ROWIP 2018-2028. The next consolidation process will commence following the adoption of the ROWIP 2018-2028.

Consultation Process

Policy

During the Order-making process the Authority will consult with the Town/Community Council and local Council representative for a 6 week period. This may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

Procedure

The Authority will liaise with the recommended list of statutory consultees prior to the processing of a Public Path Order. Consultation will also be held with user groups, Utility Companies and the Local Access Forum. Where issues relate to cross boundary matters, discussion will be held with the relevant adjoining Authority.

Creation Agreements

Policy

The Authority will only enter into Creation Agreements where there is a significant benefit to the network or where it assists in the implementation of the ROWIP. The landowner/occupier must ensure the route is at an acceptable standard prior to a creation agreement being made.

Procedure

A request to create a Right of Way by agreement will be investigated by officers to determine the suitability of the proposed route. A list of any necessary works will be provided to the landowner to bring the route up to an acceptable standard. Officers will inspect this work prior to the agreement being signed. Once the agreement has been signed, the details will be entered onto the Definitive Map and Statement and waymarked on site.

Creation Orders

Policy

The Authority will only consider the making of a Creation Order when it has been identified that a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway needs to be created to significantly enhance the rights of way network for the benefit of the public at large. A Creation Order will only be considered after it has been determined that this aim cannot be achieved by a Creation Agreement made under Section 25 of the Highways Act, 1980.

Procedure

A request to create a Right of Way by Order, will be investigated by officers to determine the suitability of the proposed route. A list of any necessary works to bring the route up to an acceptable standard will be compiled. If, in the opinion of officers, the addition of the route justifies the cost of the recommended works, the making and advertising of the Order and any compensation payment, the request will be put to the Chief Officer Planning, Environment and Economy. Once the Order has been confirmed, the route will be added to the Definitive Map and Statement and details of the recommended works will be added to the maintenance tasks.

Deposits & Declarations

Policy

A schedule of deposited land and declarations will be maintained regularly and be made available to the public via the Rights of Way pages of the Authority's website.

Procedure

The Authority will compile a digital and hardcopy register of all applications, deposits and declarations affecting the Definitive Map and Statement. This will be systematically updated and available for public inspection via the Authority's website and by e-mail or hardcopy upon request.

Developments

Policy

Where a proposed development affects the rights of way network the Authority will work closely with developers and the Planning Department to ensure routes are not obstructed. The Authority will seek improvements to routes affected by developments.

Where possible, developers will be advised to incorporate the existing route of the right of way into their design, at planning application stage. If a diversion is required to facilitate the development, the landowner is required to divert the route under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. The application will be processed as a priority. The landowner must assist in any negotiations with consultees or the public, to ensure the legislative process is followed without delay to the development.

Diversions

Policy

An Order to divert a right of way will be considered by the Authority. The Authority will recover the cost of the making and confirmation of the Order from the applicant.

Procedure

Once the administration process commences, the Authority will liaise with the landowner to ensure that the legal requirements for the application are fully met. The applicant must ensure that the proposed new route is of an acceptable standard. Details of the application will be forwarded to the relevant consultees, with a response deadline of 6 weeks. The Authority will discuss any responses from the consultees with the landowner with the aim of satisfying any issues raised. The item will be put to the Access & Natural Environment Manager with a recommendation from the Access Officer. If the Access & Natural Environment Manager resolves to make the Order, Notices will be duly advertised. If there are no objections, Notices will be advertised and a Legal Event Order will be prepared. If there are objections, the matter will be referred to the Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy, who will determine whether to forward the application to the Welsh Government.

Diverting obstructed Routes

Policy

Applications for public path orders relating to diversions will not be considered unless the existing route of the path involved is unobstructed. Exceptions will be considered when it is unreasonable to require the removal of substantial obstructions. A substantial obstruction is defined as a habitable or large agricultural building or an obstruction which, if removed, would result in severe, adverse, economic or environmental consequences.

Extinguishments

Policy

An Order to extinguish a right of way will be considered by the Authority. The Authority will recover the cost of the making and confirmation of the Order from the applicant.

Procedure

Once the administration process commences, the Authority will liaise with the landowner to ensure the legal requirements for the application are fully met. Details of the application will be forwarded to the relevant consultees, with a response deadline of 6 weeks. The Authority will discuss any responses from the consultees with the landowner with the aim of satisfying any issues raised. The item will be put to the Access & Natural Environment Manager with a recommendation from the Access Officer. If the Access & Natural Environment Manager decides to make the Order, Notices will be duly advertised. If there are no objections, Notices will be advertised and a Legal Event Order will be prepared. If there are objections, the matter will be referred back to the Chief Officer for Planning, Environment and Economy, who will determine whether to forward the application to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Local Access Forum

Policy

The Authority is committed to considering the advice and developing the work of the Joint Flintshire/Wrexham Local Access Forum by encouraging an active membership, supporting the need for and publicising the role of the Forum. The Authority will recommend a change of Chair at the end of every term.

Modification Orders (Discovery of Evidence)

Policy

Modification Orders which are required to be made in respect of minor matters, such as the resolution of anomalies between the Definitive Map and the Definitive Statement, shall be pursued by the Access Officers without the need to refer them to the Council for approval.

Modifications to the Definitive Map and Statement by usage will be considered by the Council.

Modification Orders (User Evidence)

Policy

Definitive Map Modification Order applications will generally be processed chronologically by order of receipt. However, priority will be given in circumstances:

- where the public will significantly benefit
- where an order is claimed on 20 year use

Where a claimed route is unavailable on the ground for example due to a building or environmental issues the County Council will consider the use of concurrent public path orders to assist with the establishment of the route.

Procedure

When an application to modify the Definitive Map and Statement is submitted under the 20 year rule, officers will investigate the evidence supplied and interview witnesses where appropriate. The Authority will seek the comments of the landowners involved before making a recommendation to the Access & Natural Environment Manager. Applications to add a right of way by usage will only be accepted where there is a clear challenge to public usage.

Motoring Events

Policy

The Authority may co-operate in the administration of sanctioned motoring events in relation to rights of way and an appropriate charge will be made.

Procedure

Motoring event organisers will be required to provide details of the activity at least 3 months prior to it being held. The date and details of the event will be advertised on the Authority's website.

Notices will be erected on site at any location where a right of way needs to be closed for the duration of the event.

The event organisers are required to marshal any location where the route of the event crosses a right of way.

Permissive Path Agreements

Policy

The Authority will enter into Permissive Path Agreements with landowners/occupiers where there is a benefit to users of the network. The maintenance liability and public liability for permissive paths rests by default with the occupier. Permissive Path Agreements may be included as supporting evidence for public path orders.

Procedure

Where a landowner enters into a Permissive Path Agreement, the Authority will provide permissive path way markers. The route, and date of the agreement, will be recorded on the digital version of the Definitive Map. However the landowner has the right to withdraw permission for access.

Statement of Priorities

Policy

Definitive Map issues will be processed chronologically, but if a backlog exists they will be prioritised as follows:

<u>High Priority</u>	Town & Country Planning applications following granting of planning permission Where there is a clear benefit to the public (e.g. crime, claimed routes, erosion) Where it helps to fulfil targets set out in the ROWIP Where there would be a significant cost saving for the Authority
<u>Medium Priority</u>	An additional link, higher status or new route is dedicated which has a significant impact on the network Where there is slight benefit for the public
<u>Low Priority</u>	Where there is only a benefit for the landowner

Temporary Closures

Policy

Temporary Closure Orders will only be made in circumstances where they are necessary for justifiable reasons (e.g. Health and Safety). Where such orders are made, a temporary diversion will also be made, unless this is not possible. Closure times must be kept to a minimum and should not coincide with public or school holidays unless unavoidable.

Procedure

Applications for the temporary closure of a right of way will be processed if adequate notice is given and there is no alternative temporary diversion.

An Access Officer will inspect the site prior to the closure to record the current condition of the route. On completion of the works, the Access Officer will re-inspect the route to ensure it has been reinstated to a satisfactory condition.

Applicants are required to adequately secure the site during the closure period and erect bilingual 'footpath closed' signs at each end of the affected closure.

The Authority will erect Legal notices at each end of the closure and will periodically inspect and replace them as required.

The applicant will be required to cover all reasonable costs incurred.

Widths

Policy

Where there is no defined width recorded in the Definitive Statement, the Authority recommends that there shall be a minimum width of 2 metres for footpaths and 4 metres for Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways. This is to be the minimum acceptable width for routes which are created by Public Path Orders or dedications. Widths of new or amended routes will be recorded on the Definitive Statement.

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Introduction

Under Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 Flintshire County Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to assert and protect the public right to use the highways in its administrative area, and this includes public rights of way. In particular, it has a duty to ensure that public rights of way are not obstructed by the wilful action of landowners or other parties, and there are a number of powers which it can use to secure the removal of obstructions if negotiation fails to resolve the problem.

Flintshire County Council has always regarded the removal of obstructions as a very important statutory duty, and this commitment has been reinforced by amendments to the Highways Act brought in by the CROW Act 2000. Any person may now serve a notice on the Highway Authority to require the removal of some of the more common obstructions, and if the Authority fails to comply with the notice, that person can refer the matter to the Magistrates Court. The Court has the power to order the Authority to remove the obstruction within a reasonable period of time which can be specified in the order.

Obstructions on public rights of way vary greatly in scale and nature, and actions taken by the Authority to open up the paths have to be appropriate to the circumstances in each case. Physical obstructions may take many forms and include broken stiles, fences, encroaching vegetation, warning notices and sometimes buildings.

Aggressive Dogs

Policy

Complaints in relation to a dog impeding the free use of a public right of way by behaving in a threatening manner and frightening users is classed as a public nuisance under common law. It may also be an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 because it constitutes an obstruction to the highway.

Procedure

Flintshire County Council will visit the location of the complaint to gather any suitable evidence and then inform the Police of any reported incidents of dog attacks against users of a public right of way. The Police will issue an Incident Number and an Investigating Officer will be assigned to the report, this will be noted and the Authority will then liaise with the Police. The details of the incident will be retained by the Authority for future reference. It should be noted that Authorities may also consider the powers available to them under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in relation to irresponsible dog ownership.

The Authority's Dog Warden will be informed of any incident regarding intimidating dogs and dog attacks.

Agricultural/environmental Schemes

Policy

The Authority will share information with the Welsh Government on request on issues relating to cross compliance and rights of way to ensure that land managers meet the requirements of the agricultural and environmental schemes.

Barbed Wire

Policy

Flintshire County Council, as Highway Authority, has the power to require the removal of barbed wire adjacent the highway if it causes a danger or nuisance to users.

Procedure

Under Section 164 of the Highways Act 1980 Flintshire County Council may serve notice in writing upon the occupier of land adjoining a highway where barbed wire is likely to injure persons or animals lawfully using the highway. Such a notice should require the occupier to abate the nuisance caused by the barbed wire within a stated time (between one and six months from the date of the notice). If the owner / occupier fails to comply with the order within a reasonable time, the Authority may do whatever is necessary to remove the nuisance and recover all expenses incurred in doing so.

Bulls, including Cattle

Policy

Complaints regarding bulls in a field crossed by a right of way will be investigated within one working day of receipt. Legislation states that it is an offence under section 59 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for an occupier to permit a bull to be at large in a field or enclosure crossed by a public right of way except where:

- The bull does not exceed the age of 10 months; or
- The bull is not a recognised dairy breed and is accompanied by cows or heifers.

Procedure

Officers will gather evidence from site and make all reasonable effort to locate the landowner. If the landowner is known, they will be informed of Health and Safety requirements and requested to remove the bull immediately.

A repeated offence by the owner will result in the information being passed to the Health and Safety Executive without prior communication.

Cattle grids

Policy

The Authority will serve a notice on a landowner where a cattle grid impedes a bridleway. Where a footpath crosses a cattle grid the Authority will liaise with the landowner in order to install an appropriate alternative crossing.

Procedure

When a bridleway is obstructed by a cattle grid, the Authority will request a suitable bypass gate is provided. If, after no more than 2 months, the landowner fails to install a suitable means of crossing the boundary, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring action to be taken within a specified timescale. Should the cattle grid remain in place without alternative means of crossing, the Authority will employ contractors to fill in the surface of the bridleway and recharge all costs to the landowner.

Dangerous Land adjoining the Highway

Policy

From time to time the Authority encounters unfenced dangers on adjoining land which present hazards to path users. The Authority has a duty to protect path users from such dangers and will in the first instance enter into dialogue with the owner of the adjacent land to urge him or her to remove or adequately fence the danger. The Authority can require the owner of the dangerous land to carry out the necessary works by service of notices. If the owner does not comply with the notice the Authority may carry out the work and recover the costs from the owner.

Procedure

Where the safety of the public is threatened by dangerous land adjoining the highway, the Authority will contact the landowner, if known, and recommend suitable remedies. If, after no more than 3 months, the landowner fails to act upon this advice, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring action to be taken within a specified timescale. Should the situation remain, the Authority will employ contractors to make the highway safe for the public and recharge all costs to the landowner.

Dangerous Trees

Policy

Flintshire County Council, as Highway Authority, has the power to require the removal of a dangerous tree, hedge or shrub adjacent the highway if it causes a danger or nuisance to users.

Procedure

Under Section 154(2) of the Highways Act 1980, Flintshire County Council may serve notice on a landowner or occupier to remove any hedge, tree or shrub which is dead, diseased, damaged or insecurely rooted that is likely to cause damage to the highway by virtue of its condition. If the landowner or occupier does not comply, the Authority may carry out the work itself and recover from them the cost of doing so.

Electric Fences

Policy

Electric fences across a highway should be appropriately signed with appropriate means of crossing, or an insulated handle to assist passage.

Procedure

Landowners will be advised of the options available to allow free passage. If no action is taken by the landowner within a specified period (no longer than 2 weeks) the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the issue is not resolved after the specified period, the Authority will undertake the required works and recharge all appropriate costs to the landowner.

Encroachment

Policy

The Authority will inspect and enforce encroachment issues according to the severity of the inconvenience to the user. This policy covers things deposited on the highway and overhanging vegetation.

Procedure

When the Authority receives a complaint about encroachment of a path an inspection will be carried out to determine the severity of the case. If the encroachment is slight, Officers will inform the landowner of the complaint and monitor the situation to ensure it does not worsen.

If the encroachment is deemed by officers to hinder the public use of the route, the landowner will be advised of the complaint and asked to resolve the situation. If, after no more than 1 month, the path remains inconvenient, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the issue is not resolved after the specified period, the Authority will undertake the required works and recharge all appropriate costs to the landowner.

Enforcement Complaints

Policy

In order for there to be an auditable trail in respect of each alleged obstruction, only written complaints / requests will be considered. These may be in the form of letters or emails. Only in emergency situations will verbal complaints / requests be considered.

Fences

Policy

When a landowner wishes to erect a fence across a right of way it is their responsibility to apply for authorisation for a gate or stile. Once permission has been granted the landowner must, at their own expense, install the structure to an acceptable standard.

Procedure

If the Authority has evidence to suggest the obstruction has been in place during the 2010 condition survey, the Authority will provide materials for a new gate or stile. The landowner must collect the materials from stock and install within a specified period, being no longer than 1 month.

If the landowner fails to collect or install the stile/gate, the Authority will serve the appropriate notice requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the fence remains impassable after the specified period, the Authority will undertake the works and recharge all reasonable costs to the landowner.

If the Authority does not have evidence to suggest the obstruction has been in place during the 2010 condition survey, the Authority will contact the landowner and request an appropriate crossing is installed within a specified period (being no longer than 1 month). If the issue is not resolved within this period, the Authority will serve the appropriate notice requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the fence remains impassable after the specified period, the Authority will undertake the works and recharge all reasonable costs to the landowner.

The Authority reserves the right to remove a sufficient section of the obstruction to allow free passage without prior consultation.

Firearms

Policy

The Authority will inform the police of any reported incidents involving firearms on or across public rights of way.

Procedure

If any firearms issues are reported the Authority will advise the complainant to inform the police. Once an Incident Number and Investigating Officer have been assigned to the report, this should be given to the Authority who will then liaise with the Police. The Authority will visit the location of the complaint to gather any suitable evidence. The details of the incident will be retained by the Authority for future reference.

Illegal Diversions

Policy

If a route has been diverted without the due legal process being followed, the Authority will, if appropriate to the circumstances, give the landowner the option to apply for a Public Path Diversion Order (at their expense) or to enter into a Permissive Path Agreement.

Procedure

When a landowner alters the route of a public right of way without legal permission, the Authority will request that route (as shown on the Definitive Map) is re-opened. Advice will be provided on alternative routes, by Order (at the landowners cost) or by Agreement. If, after no more than 6 months, the landowner has failed to resolve the issue, or is not in the process of diverting the route, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring the original route to be re-opened within a specified timescale. If the route remains obstructed after the specified period, the Authority will reinstate the original route and recharge all costs to the landowner.

Failure to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the Access Officer, will result in the Authority taking enforcement action against the landowner to ensure the public right of way is re-opened.

Intimidation

Policy

Complaints of intimidation will be investigated and the information collated will be given to the Police. Repeated incidents may result in legal action.

Procedure

Intimidating behaviour is also used to deter path users, instances where a landowner (or occupier) challenges a member of the public by shouting or ejecting them from land, effectively deterring or preventing them from using the public right of way, the Authority could be requested to fulfil their duty under section 130 of the Highways Act 1980 to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoy public rights of way. Should this challenging conduct continue, it could be dealt with as an obstruction under section 137.

Where it appears that a public order offence has occurred, or could occur, Authorities should consult their local Police Authority to assist in resolving the issue. However whenever a path is obstructed, the Authority will in the first instance attempt to negotiate with the person responsible, and will only resort to the use of legal powers if this approach fails. Experience has shown that this approach is likely to produce the quickest and most cost effective results.

If a landowner/ occupier commits a further rights of way offence within a three-year period of being contacted by the Rights of Way Team about any rights of way offence on their land, notice may be served without further communication or more serious enforcement action taken.

Landowners

The Authority will make all reasonable attempts to locate the landowner to inform them of the complaint, their obligations, and possible outcome if legal action is pursued.

These may include:

Land Registry search

Town and Community Council

Electoral Register

Planning/Tir Gofal Applications

Notices posted on site

In the event that, following all reasonable attempts, the landowner cannot be identified or located, the Authority will consider appropriate action.

Locked/Tied Gates

Policy

The Authority will serve a notice when a locked gate impedes access to the public. However, in some cases, the Authority may remove the lock without prior warning. Tied gates which are not easily undone are obstructions will be resolved in the same manner as a locked gate.

Procedure

When a report of a locked gate is received the Authority will make all reasonable effort to locate the offending landowner. If the landowner cannot be determined, a notice will be attached to the gate requesting the removal of the lock. If the gate remains locked after the specified period, no longer than 2 weeks, the Authority will remove the lock.

When a landowner is identified, the Authority will request that either the lock is removed, or an alternative boundary crossing is provided. If, after no more than 1 month, the landowner has failed to remove the lock, or request authorisation for a stile or gate, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the gate remains locked after the specified period, the Authority will remove the lock.

The Authority will remove the lock without any notice period on the reoccurrence of the offence. If the landowner continues to impede access to the public, the Authority will seek an injunction.

A complaint about a gate which is not deemed to be easily undone by officers will be resolved by the above procedure.

Misleading Signs/Notices

Policy

Any notice or sign placed on a public right of way containing false or misleading information that is likely to deter people from using a public right of way is an offence under the Highways Act 1980. The Authority has the power and will generally remove misleading signs erected on a public right of way.

Procedure

Officers will seek advice from the Authority's Legal Department to ascertain the legality of the sign/notice.

If the sign/notice is believed to be misleading in any way, the Authority will contact the landowner and request its removal. If, after no more than 1 month, the landowner has failed to remove the sign/notice, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. If the sign/notice remains in place after the specified period, it will be removed by the Authority and any incurred costs will be recovered accordingly.

Obstructions

Policy

The law requires the Highway Authority to ensure that the highway is clear of all unlawful obstructions and encroachments. In many cases a problem can be resolved with a simple request to the landowner to remove the obstruction. However, where co-operation is not forthcoming the Authority has a wide range of powers to secure the removal of the obstruction, and recover any costs incurred in doing so. The Authority may also prosecute in instances of non-compliance.

Examples of obstructions and nuisances are:

- materials deposited on the highway;
- projections from buildings;
- overhanging vegetation;
- restriction by the planting of trees;
- soil being washed onto the path;
- water discharging onto the path;
- barbed wire;
- electric and other fences;
- structures;
- cattle grids.

Ploughing/Cropping

Policy

If a right of way has been ploughed or planted the Authority will seek to resolve the matter in accordance with the timescales set out in the Highways Act 1980.

Where the occupier of land has ploughed or otherwise disturbed the surface of a footpath or bridleway, the path must be reinstated to not less than its minimum width, so as to make it reasonably convenient for the public to use. The line of the path must also be made apparent on the ground in doing so.

Procedure

When a surface offence comes to the attention of the Highway Authority, the Authority will advise the landowner that whilst occupiers of land are permitted under section 134 of the Highways Act 1980 to plough footpaths and bridleways that run across arable land. Byways open to all traffic and restricted byways may not be ploughed, nor may footpaths and bridleways that run along the edges of a field or enclosure (headland paths). The right to plough or otherwise disturb the surface of a path that crosses arable land is subject to the path being reinstated for public use. Furthermore, the right only extends to circumstances where "it is not reasonably convenient in ploughing, or otherwise disturbing the surface of, the land to avoid disturbing the surface of the path or way"

If, after no more than 14 days the route has not been reinstated, the Authority will serve a notice on the landowner requiring appropriate action to be taken within a specified timescale. Failure to act upon the notice will result in the Authority employing contractors to carry out the necessary works. All appropriate costs will be recharged to the landowner.

If the width of the right of way is unrecorded, Schedule 12A of the Highways Act 1980 makes provision for the "minimum width" for reinstatement by the occupier, which varies depending on the circumstances (see below). If the occupier fails to reinstate to the minimum standard and the Authority undertakes the work itself, a maximum width for the reinstated surface is also set by Schedule 12A.

These minimum and maximum widths are:

- **For cross-field paths:**
 - Footpath: minimum width 1 metre and maximum width 1.8 metres.
 - Bridleway: minimum width 2 metres and maximum width 3 metres.
- **For field-edge (headland) paths:**
 - Footpath: minimum width 1.5 metres; maximum width 1.8 metres.
 - Bridleway: width must be 3 metres.
- **For other highways:**
 - Byways, Restricted Byways and others: minimum width 3 metres; maximum width 5 metres.

The minimum width is the absolute minimum acceptable for path users. For crops such as oil seed rape, which are prone to collapse across a cleared way as they reach maturity, it will be necessary to clear the plants to a greater width than the minimum to ensure convenient passage. These minimum widths only apply in relation to the reinstatement of a public right of way following ploughing or disturbance and are not general widths to be applied in other circumstances.

Priorities for Enforcement

Policy

All enforcement issues will be prioritised according to a combination of the path category (1-8) and the level of danger presented to the public by the obstruction. In addressing an enforcement issue, priority will then be given to addressing any other enforcement / maintenance issues on the same right of way.

Prosecution

Policy

The Authority may take legal action where there is a realistic prospect of a conviction and such action can be shown to be in the public interest.

Protection of Identity

Policy

The personal details of customers will be protected under the Data Protection Act 1998. GDPR

Recovery of costs

Policy

The Authority will always aim to remove obstructions, in the first instance, by informal discussions with the landowner/occupier. If the obstruction is not removed within a satisfactory timescale, formal legal notice will be served. After this time the Authority will arrange for the removal of the obstruction and recover reasonable costs where default enforcement action is carried out.

Repeat offenders will be served enforcement notices without prior warning and may face prosecution.

Procedure

Appropriate costs will be recovered and the Enforcement Officer will record:

- Officer time - preparation of paperwork, attendance on site.
- Travel - time and mileage to and from the location of the obstruction.
Mileage charged at the Authority's standard rate for casual car use.
- Contractors - All costs.
- Materials - All costs.
- Administration - Relevant administration costs.

Section 63 of the CROW Act 2000

Information

Section 63 CROW Act 2000 is a section of legislation which enables members of the public to serve Notices on the Authority enforcing the duty to prevent obstructions.

The procedure for dealing with a S.63 notice is clearly laid out in the Welsh Assembly Government guidance notes dated 2004.

MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Introduction

Most public rights of way are “maintainable at the public expense”. It is the duty of the Highway Authority to maintain the surface of rights of way to a suitable standard for ordinary use. To fulfil this duty, the Highway Authority must ensure that surface vegetation is under control, the route is adequately signposted and waymarked, and that any Authority-owned structures (walls, bridges, ditch crossings, handrails and barriers) are in an acceptable condition.

The landowner is responsible for maintaining any structure that exists purely for their benefit, i.e. gates, stiles, some bridges and ditch crossings, walls and fences. The landowner is also responsible for ensuring that overhanging vegetation does not impede with the public enjoyment of the right of way.

3rd Party Maintenance Schemes

Policy

Flintshire County Council has an obligation to maintain the rights of way network within the County, and partnership-working will be developed further including working with other internal departments, Town and Community Councils, Ramblers Association etc. to formulate action plans, improve local maintenance regimes and pursue maintenance agreements with landowning organisations.

Procedure

The Authority will liaise with the relevant groups to discuss potential works. Once the proposal and estimate have been agreed by the Authority, work may be undertaken. The Authority may pay for materials or, on completion, and on receipt of the appropriate invoice and work details, the Authority may arrange payment for works. The Authority will undertake random inspections throughout the year to ensure that work is being carried out to an acceptable standard.

If quotation / estimate approval has not been received prior to work, or work is carried out on routes not shown on the Definitive Map or work is substandard, the Authority reserves the right to refuse to accept responsibility for payment.

Access for All

Policy

In managing and developing the Public Rights of Way network, the needs of all sectors of the community will be considered. In particular the principle of least restrictive access will be implemented, whereby consideration will be given, as appropriate, to replacing stiles with gates, or removing furniture altogether in favour of gaps.

Bridges, Culverts & Structures

Policy

The highway authority is normally responsible for bridges crossing natural features such as rivers and streams. Bridges over man-made features, such as drainage ditches etc may be maintainable by the landowner.

Where a landowner creates a new ditch that crosses an existing right of way he/she must provide a suitable bridge or structure which can accommodate all legitimate users safely and without restriction.

Drainage & Flood Alleviation

Policy

Problems relating to natural watercourses and flooding will be monitored as and when necessary.

Procedure

Environmental issues and best value will help determine what course of action will be taken.

Maintenance of Stiles/Gates

Policy

The law requires stiles and gates on footpaths and bridleways to be maintained by the landowner in a safe and usable condition, unless an agreement to the contrary exists. Landowners are entitled to claim at least 25% of the maintenance of stiles and gates from the Highway Authority. However, many Authorities either provide materials in lieu of this contribution or extend funding to 100% by doing the work themselves. This is the case in Flintshire, where stile kits are provided free of charge, but the landowner is normally expected to install them.

If an owner/occupier of land wishes to install additional stiles and gates they must apply for permission to do so. The Highway Authority can only grant such permission if the gate or stile is on land in use for agriculture, forestry or the keeping of horses, and necessary in order to prevent ingress or egress of animals.

Public Rights of Way Maintenance Priority for Works

Policy

High priority will be given to signposting of rights of way where they leave a metalled road, and where they are passable.

All other maintenance works will be prioritised according to a combination of the path Priority (1-8) and the level of danger presented to the public by the problem. In addressing a maintenance issue, priority will then be given to addressing any other enforcement / maintenance issues on the same right of way.

Repair of Byways

Policy

Public rights of way are all highways, and Flintshire County Council (FCC) as Highway Authority has a duty to maintain them in a suitable condition for the public to use, whilst also protecting the rights of the public to their use and enjoyment. Below is a list of types of public right of way and their legal uses. Although these are the legal users, the location of a right of way means that the level and purpose of use will vary.

- Public footpaths – used by pedestrians.
- Public bridleways – used by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.
- Restricted byways – used by pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and carriage-drivers.
- Byways open to all traffic – used by pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists, carriage-drivers and motorised vehicles.

There are over 672 miles of public rights of way in Flintshire County Council, the vast majority being pathways in rural locations. FCC's maintenance budget is limited and must be spread across this large network.

Public rights of way serving as access to private property or land

Where a public right of way forms the access to properties or adjacent land, there may be a relatively large amount of wear and tear on the surface as a result of these additional uses. FCC's responsibility remains the same, however, and it will be obliged to ensure that the surface of the right of way is safe and suitable for the public users. Most of these rights of way are rural tracks (or form easy access to rural areas), and so the standard of maintenance would be very basic:- ensuring they are safe whilst at the same time protecting the rights of the public to enjoy a rural environment.

It is important to note that FCC has a responsibility towards public users only. It therefore has no duty to provide suitable access for any users of a right of way which are not listed above. For instance, if a public footpath or bridleway forms part of a vehicular access to land or property, FCC has no duty to ensure it is suitable for vehicles, because a public footpath or bridleway carries no public vehicular rights.

In such instances, residents or landowners possessing private rights of vehicular access are entitled to make this access useable for their purposes, but all works must be approved in advance by FCC, and only suitable contractors may be used, because the right of way is a highway. Many residents / landowners accept they have a responsibility towards upkeep and may actually prefer the access to remain fairly rough, as this reduces speeding and is rural in character. Some public rights of way are also 'private streets', which are public highways which must be maintained privately, i.e. by the residents.

Procedure for repair and maintenance

Should a complaint be received about the condition of the surface of a right of way used as access to land or property, FCC will inspect the right of way and assess its safety and suitability for the public users. Should the assessment deem that work is required, then basic repairs will take place – for instance, basic regrading of the surface or filling of potholes. Where wear and tear is clearly primarily as a result of vehicular access to property or land, the residents will be asked for a contribution but there is no legal obligation to pay.

Should residents / landowners request a higher standard of maintenance, then this will have to be provided at their own cost. Because rights of way are highways, the County Council may have to stipulate certain specification details which are suitable for public highways. FCC will contribute to work only where it would have been obliged to carry out basic repairs itself, and the amount of this contribution will equate to the cost of such basic repairs.

Residents / landowners may be asked to source a quotation themselves from suitable contractors, but FCC must approve the quotation and proposed specification prior to work taking place (this also has the added benefit that FCC can check that the quoted rates are reasonable). If approved, FCC will then authorise the repair and request that residents/ landowners obtain from the contractor an invoice to FCC for FCC's proportion of the contribution. Alternatively, FCC may order the works and invoice a representative of the residents/ landowners, who may then in turn recoup the other contributions.

FCC must inspect and certify the work on completion, in order to avoid any future liabilities resting on residents/landowners. The contractor must have **£5m** public liability insurance and be registered on the Streetworks Qualifications Register, if they are to work on a public highway. Risk Assessments, method statement and traffic management proposals must also be submitted and approved by FCC in advance of the works being undertaken. For works up to £10K, the minimum requirement is one verbal or written quotation, although where practical competition is required. Where only one quote is requested, the manager still has a responsibility to ensure and be able to demonstrate that value for money has been obtained.

Sometimes, residents / landowners wish to repair the surface physically themselves. They will not be liable whilst work is taking place, but FCC must inspect and certify the work on completion, in order to avoid any future liabilities resting on residents / landowners. Another method of dealing with repairs is for FCC to order materials and arrange for the aggregate company to deposit them on site, at a location to suit the residents/ landowners, and FCC's financial outlay is restricted to the purchase and delivery of the material. The residents /landowners then arrange to lay the material, but such an arrangement should be restricted to a temporary filling of potholes, because residents /landowners would rarely possess the machinery required to incorporate and compact the material across the whole surface. In both cases, the proposed work must be approved in advance by FCC.

If residents /landowners are able to set up an association, it is possible to enter into a legal agreement with the County Council under Section 278 of the Highways Act

1980, whereby the Council carries out agreed works and the association reimburses an agreed sum to the Council.

Notes on suitable materials and specifications

When ordering the materials, it is necessary to be sensitive to the local conditions e.g. sandy aggregate is more appropriate than limestone for acid areas such as commons. Limestone is suitable for chalk areas.

FCC will only authorise a surface which is consistent with its duty under Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980: "it is the duty of the Highway Authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which it is Highway Authority". In practice, this means that the County Council will need to consider both the amenity value and the ease of use the public right of way. A hard sealed surface such a tarmacadam is usually considered inappropriate in most circumstances, especially where there are public equestrian rights of way. Such sealed surfaces can be very costly to maintain once they begin to break up, and may produce hazardous hard edges when deteriorating. The best alternative would be a graded aggregate, suitably shaped to shed water, and compacted, because this is much more easily re-worked to restore a suitable surface. Sometimes, all that is needed to restore an old potholed aggregate surface is a redistribution of the surface material. However if the proposal is to tarmac a bridleway, then stone mastic asphalt (SMA) is not to be used and the Authority should take safety implications and the enjoyment of current users, including riders, into consideration.

Routine Inspections

Policy

The Authority will undertake a 33% inspection of the rights of way network each year consistent with staff levels and will consider input of partners and volunteers. In addition to this, reported issues will be inspected.

Procedure

When Officers undertake inspections of rights of way, the whole route will be inspected where possible. The date of this inspection will be recorded together with any defects found on the inspection.

Section 56 Highways Act 1980

Information

Section 56 HA1980 is a section of legislation which enables members of the public to serve Notices on the Authority enforcing the duty to maintain. The procedure for dealing with a S.56 notice is clearly laid out in the Welsh Government guidance for Local Authorities on Public Rights of Way dated 2016.

Signposting and Waymarking

Policy

The Highway Authority is required to signpost all rights of way where they leave a metalled road. The sign must indicate the status of the right of way, i.e. whether it is a footpath, bridleway etc. Signs may also include a destination and/ or a distance.

Authorities are also required to place signs, such as waymarkers, at other locations where they consider it necessary to assist people that are unfamiliar with the locality.

Procedure

Authorities need not erect signposts at the junction of a way with a metalled road where the town or community council has been consulted and agrees that it is not necessary.

Way marking will be kept to a reasonable minimum. Newly installed stiles and gates will be way marked. Permissive way markers will be provided for agreed permissive routes. The provision of destination signage will also be considered in appropriate circumstances.

Vegetation

Policy

A strimming contract will be undertaken on paths listed on the Authority's strimming schedule. Additional routes may be added to the schedule where there are regular complaints of overgrowth. Town and Community Councils will be encouraged to undertake local management of vegetation through the Community Maintenance Scheme.

Glossary of Terms

ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
ROW	Right(s) of Way
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order
PPO	Public Path Order
HA1980	Highways Act 1980
CROW 2000	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000
WCA1981	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
TCPA1990	Town & Country Planning Act 1990
LAF	Local Access Forum

Community Councils.

Members have considered the revised ROWIP for 2018/19 and at this stage would like to add the following comments to be taken into consideration please:

- Open access/active travel are more important now taking into consideration the latest reports on climate change.
- On active travel the importance of developing the link between the coastal path and the Greenfield Valley along the old railway line for active travel for work, schools, recreation and town centre is a must.
- The importance of developing active travel routes and new open spaces into the final draft of the local development plan.
- Planning should make sure that all adopted sites where appropriate connect to the present network or develop new routes to work, schools etc.
- The importance of new open spaces for example, children's play areas should be developed with safe active travel routes to those open spaces. Finally the present walkway should be improved and maintained.

Response

Please pass on my thanks to your Council Members for their comments, they have been noted and I'm confident the majority will be picked up within the new revised ROWIP. The remainder form part of Active Travel and Safer Routes to Schools, and whilst these are constantly being reviewed by Streetscene, it's something the new Access Team will also be considering to promote Walking for Health.

Incidentally, the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on Local Authorities to plan for, improve, and promote routes for walking and cycling for every day journeys and this is high on our list of priorities.

Thank you again for taking the time to E-mail your comments.

3.1.3 ease of use- path infrastructure. We assume the low 3.3% failure rate due to surface issues was due to summer time surveying and perhaps this should be clarified.

Action - Update ROWIP page 12 point 3.1.3.1 Current to say:
'From the non-random 2017 survey results.....' This survey was carried out in July 2017 and there may be seasonal variations that impact the results.

3.3 priority of maintenance issues

- We believe that maintenance and repair should also include routes within the AONB as priority 2 (in table 3.3). With the AONB attracting over 700,000 visitors each year then all PROW within the AONB should be promoted and prioritised.

Action - Update ROWIP page 16 table 3.3 to add **AONB** to Priority No. 2 and remove 'Clwydian Way'.

- Should specific consideration on the maintenance for BOATS not be detailed within this table and in the wider policies and protocols?

Comment noted, however it was considered that this is covered in Table 3.3 'Priority of Maintenance Issues' under multi use in Priority No 4, Page 16 of the ROWIP.

- Is there an intention to add specific consideration to the maintenance standard for byways?

It was not considered necessary to give specific consideration to the maintenance standard for byways due to the minimal number of kilometres of byways within the County with varying usage. The maintenance of the byways will therefore be assessed on a case by case basis.

5.1.4 Nannerch CC can confirm that problems with dogs is often reported but as we're in the AONB these complaints are made direct to the AONB wardens. Any assistance for policing and education under this Plan would be welcome.

The Policing aspect is included within the Policy document, it sets out the procedure in relation to dogs impeding the free use of the Public Right of Way and how the Access Team will liaise with North Wales Police.

With regard to education, social media is now used by the Access and Natural Environment Teams to engage with interested parties, sharing information and to promote the work undertaken on the Rights of Way network. The Access Team will post something on social media in an attempt to raise awareness.

However notwithstanding the above, should the Community Council have specific areas of concern that are not necessarily on the PROW network, then they can report these to Streetscene Enforcement. Telephone 01352 701234.

We also believe that opportunities to link footpaths and bridleways should be a priority and explored further. The majority of PROW within Nannerch are parallel with the road network and it is difficult to create circular walks without utilising narrow lanes. Bridleways often terminate at a dead end.

This is covered on Page 51 under 1.4 in the statement of action.

We believe that a small amount of time educating Community Councils into the responsibility of both the County Council and landowners may help report and escalate issues quickly. This should deliver a far greater and accurate report on the state of the county footpaths. The definitive routes are already available on an interactive map. If Community Councils were reminded of this link and asked to locally inspect based on simple criteria or technique (possibly following a half day training event?) then much more of the network could be opened. Nannerch are happy to be part of any trial.

This is in the Statement of Action page 59 5.3.

There is a mechanism for recording complaints on the website and it is working well.

We are beginning to forge closer relationships between the Access Team and Town and Community Councils and we will continue to do so.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect please do get back in touch.

Detailed response to Flintshire County Council's Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 – 2028 and accompanying Policies and Procedures Document

The County Council's draft RoWIP for the ten-year period to 2028 was circulated by the Committee at a special meeting held on 7th December 2018. The Committee also considered the accompanying document setting out the Council's rights of way policies and procedures.

The Committee noted that these were thorough and comprehensive documents and paid particular attention to chapter six of the draft RoWIP which provides a detailed evaluation of both future needs and the opportunities and threats which the County Council faces in fulfilling its important legal duties.

The Committee was pleased to see that the Council had engaged consultants to evaluate the effectiveness of the previous RoWIP which had been in place since 2008. It was noted that the consultants had been robust and had identified a number of uncompleted tasks over that period, which were well known to members of the Committee. In fairness, many strengths and completed tasks had also been highlighted which the Committee was happy to acknowledge.

It was noted that a new team structure was now being put in place which would change the way in which the rights of way function would be managed and operated. There was some confidence that the previous reactive approach would be replaced by a far more dynamic way of identifying and solving problems.

In broad terms the Committee was content with the approach outlined in the draft and felt that the policies and procedures document would provide a strong foundation provided it was properly implemented.

There were several more detailed comments and recommendations that emerged from the wider discussions which took place which, it was agreed, should accompany the Committee's broad support for the Programme These are set out as follows -

- The Committee was concerned to emphasise that the most important word in the document should be "improvement". There were many ways in which this could be realised including making currently usable rights of way more accessible for a wider range of users. Most importantly though was the need to bring key parts of the network currently obstructed back into satisfactory condition;
- It was noted that current revised team management arrangements, whilst welcomed, did not provide for a dedicated enforcement role. The Committee remained of the view that this was an essential part of reclaiming long obstructed footpaths and bridleways for public use. It is suggested that the team staffing structure be reviewed after two years of the programme to test the efficacy of the currently agreed arrangements;

Whilst these comments have been noted, enforcement is a key duty within the roles of the team.

- The Committee was conscious that a crucial component of an effective right of way function was access to prompt and professional legal advice, Assurances are sought that this is in place as part of the new arrangements;

See Page 24, 3.4, 3.4.1 Paragraph with regards to legal. An assurance has been given by the Legal Team that legal advice will be available as it is required.

- The Committee welcomed the intention to ensure close “partnership” working with other relevant FCC departments and services, particularly Countryside and Street Scene as well as the Trunk Road Authority. This was important generally and especially in pursuit of important Council objectives such as health and well-being and active travel;
- The importance of collaboration with other user groups such as cyclists and horse riders is supported, especially in relation to improved crossings of the A55/A494;
- The Committee commended the role of FCC’s footpath inspectors and felt that more resources should be made available to direct work in the field whilst recognising the difficulty of achieving this in the present economic climate;
- The Committee sought clarity over who had the lead role on rights of way in that area of Flintshire which fell within the AONB. The AONB does not have a dedicated rights of way team and the Committee is uncertain as to how responsibilities would be exercised in the communities concerned;

See p4 of the ROWIP.

“Denbighshire Countryside Service, takes general responsibility for the day to day management of PRoW with the AONB, although Flintshire County Council, as the Local Highway Authority, retains overall responsibility for the paths in its area and leads on non-routine issues such as any definitive map questions”.

- The Committee commended the successful implementation of the CAMS system but wished to see further improvements, especially in relation to feedback on registered complaints.

First ROWIP published October 2008 and covered period until end of September 2018
The initial aims were to secure improvements to the management, maintenance, protection and recording of the (public rights of way) network, to ensure that it becomes more open and accessible to the public.'

A clear and comprehensive ROWIP that provides the Executive Summary to the first ROWIP 2008 in Annexe A providing an open overview of both the issues and positives which include

- funding costs
- resources – staffing/finances
- review of management and performance
- partnership working
- improving accessibility
- continued development of Wales coast programme
- policies and procedures – management and protection of ROW
- removing obstructions backlog with regular inspections/increased provision of sign and waymarks/annual performance indicator
- publication of an annual report

In second ROWIP priority areas will be identified and there will be new style Statement of Actions

Thoughts individual to respond and therefore open to question and challenge

The document is excellent in terms of its detail and information and the open and transparent review of the initial ROWIP very laudable

Outlined below are both general and specific observations taken from the report that may /may not give rise to concern

Q: How much of the Plan, realistically, is achievable? Certainly a document that aims high but referencing first Plan where 7/22 aims completed should this be narrowed down?

Whilst the Plan is comprehensive and aspirational, its aim is to try to capture everything that is achievable and can be prioritised. However it is a dynamic document and will inevitably be subject to change during its 10 year lifespan.

Q: Given the current Flintshire budget- with continued cutbacks, austerity how will this be financed?

Annually evaluate the budget.

Seek help from Town/Community Councils.

Flexibly working in partnership.

Investigate and develop opportunities for sourcing external funding.

Utilising volunteers for maintenance and improvement works.

Create and implement a volunteering strategy, including considering collaborative opportunities.

The ROW network comprises footpaths, bridleways, boats and look at Ease of Use/
Infrastructure

Page 11 onward – “there is no longer routine monitoring of network. Based on accurate record keeping of Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) with occasional baseline surveys of all or part of the network.”

A full network survey of furniture ie: stiles, signs, kissing gates, gaps, gates, bridges undertaken 2010 with a further one in 2017 when a 33 percent of areas surveyed. This did not cover Penyffordd

2016 policies adopted by Flintshire to guide priorities given re maintenance issues – Table Page 13 High, Medium, Low

Q: Who determines this and what, if any, is the input from the public using these ROW

The public can raise issues on CAMS and then the Access Officer will decide whether it is a high, medium or low priority, based on the hierarchy as set out for maintenance, repair or enforcement within the ROWIP. However should there be a need for an overall decision then this can be taken by the Team Leader for Access.
See Page 16.

A similar approach used with enforcement issues and note made that
“the approach adopted will vary from officer to officer and case to case.”
“enforcement remains subject to individual approaches and therefore inconsistencies.”

See table on page 17 (Priority of enforcement issues)

Q: Definitive Map and Statements Page 24 of the ROW (documents that define the legal existence of ROW highlight this as a changing resource that is subject to continuous review – modification, change of routes and requires additional staffing to resource this area effectively. What priority is being given to this important area again given the budget constraints of the Authority?

Equal consideration will be given on each case in hand.

Page 27 3:5 Promotion and Information

There has been NO active promotion of new routes by Flintshire Council since the Rural Walks in Flintshire book published in 2006 – an excellent book supporting and encouraging public usage of the network

Page 28 3.5.5 Active Travel Routes

Flintshire has published a series of 16 Active Travel existing Route maps (ERM)- this includes Penryffordd and has an Active Travel Integrated Network Map – a 15 year vision to improve infrastructure for walkers and cyclists across the County. Show links between communities and provides opportunities for improvements to ROW – footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths. Will be an early priority

Q: All of the above is positive and welcome information but would query future development of local routes. Will there be the opportunity to link more closely/collaborate with local developers as shown in wepre Park/David Wilson published route map? 15 maps

Should the Authority receive a planning application for a residential development, then the Access Team will investigate opportunities for improvements to the Public Rights of Way network in and around the development site to improve access, possibly through the developer undertaking the improvement work or by securing Section 106 money.
Improvement works to upgrade routes for Active Travel will be down to what grant money we receive in the next three years.

Budget Page 30 Investment from Flintshire remains high - £397698

ROW Volunteer scheme invites/encourages users to this Page 31 through range of schemes
Strategies overview of PROW network and policies Page 33 provides clear feedback from all stakeholders and provides comprehensive view of continuing challenges

Page 36 outlines legislation since first ROWIP that impact on the Plan

-The Well Being of Future Generations Act – 2015 The Planning Act (Wales) - 2015

The Environment Act 2016

and shows clearly the links between the Flintshire Council Plan and Local Development Plan . Pages 36 – 43 show comprehensively the link to the bigger picture and are commendable and provide a clear insight

Q: Some of the above are from Government Acts (WAG) Does the Authority and ultimately ROW receive additional funding to address these

The Access Team doesn't receive additional money as a matter of course, however the Access Team will always try to source extra funding to carry out work on the network.

Of particular note is the Countryside and Rights of way act 2000 (CROW) – a measure designed to provide landowners with surety that they will not face unexpected claims for newly discovered rights of way based on historical evidence, that is evidence from before 1949. When and if passed by WAG the measure would effectively extinguish any unrecorded historical rights on

1st January 2026 when it comes into force or a date up to five years later

Q: Are we in danger of losing historic routes and if surveys have not been undertaken how are do we ensure these routes have been noted?

Yes, there is a possibility that historic routes could be lost as we wouldn't necessarily know about them until we are informed. There is guidance on the Welsh Government website on how to make a claim on a footpath.

Q: what funding again will be put in place to cover additional workload

None. Unless the Welsh Assembly Government make provisions for this work, there is no additional funding available.

Page 45 – 48 Section 6 Evaluation of future needs and opportunities – the nitty gritty of the document provides a summary of the key points from assessment of ROWIP 1 delivery and stakeholder perceptions.

A plan, do, review approach which is heartening and encouraging in informing the second plan.

Page 49 – end of document highlights the new version of the ROWIP Action Table and notes each aspect under the headings

-What have we got?

-What do we want?

-How can we achieve it?

-Priority given to aspect of High, Medium or Low

Interestingly the Action Table looks at the specifics aspect, the actions and how these can be achieved but does not, probably cannot, define resources to support this or provide a timescale. It is encouraging that out of 34 aspects (on paper should be 35 but 5:5 of Strategic Working is missing from Plan)

17 are highlighted High priority

9 as Medium

8 as Low

Within those noted as Low whilst there are understandable reasons why they are noted as such. Nevertheless there are some important issues. For example Section 2:1 A Definitive Map and Statement, 2:2 anomalies across the network – is this not a crucial element?

Q: What is the plan for those areas given less priority? Will we see as with ROWIP 1 these marked as not completed?

Yes, there is a possibility that some of the areas given less priority will not be completed and it is impossible to predict what will be achieved of this plan within the 10 years. However the priorities will be periodically evaluated during the course of the Plan to ensure that the level of prioritisation is appropriate and some priorities may go up and some might go down.

Perhaps a clearer definition of the priority areas would be useful

Thanks should be extended to all involved in the production of so comprehensive, detailed and useful document that will inform future plans for the continued use and enjoyed across the Flintshire Rights of Way Network.

At the Northop C.C. meeting earlier this month members considered a response to the consultation on the Improvement Plan and Policies Booklet and agreed to comment as follows:

- Northop Community Council support the Plan.
- The statistics show a steady improvement in provision and actions over the past few years.
- The priorities of maintenance and responsiveness were hard to fault and it was felt that by and large the current Plan is on target.
- If the aims of the Plan can be delivered it will be significant benefit.

There were no adverse comments.

Comments from scrutiny;

Request for different colours on the tables in the documents as it is not clear to people who are colour blind.

The colours in the table have been altered, however if they are still difficult for people who are colour blind to distinguish between, then they can be altered again.

Issues raised on CAMS.

The CAMS upgrade is now complete, and a member of the Access Team can offer training if it's required.

More working relationships with different Authorities such as Cheshire.

This is something the Access Team intend to do particularly when it's considered that liaisons would benefit the Authorities.

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EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS – DECISIONS TAKEN

Streetscene and Transportation

- **The Flintshire County Council – (A5104 Corwen Road, Ffordd YRhos Treuddyn) (40mph and 50mph Speed Limit) Order 201x**
To advise Members of an objection received for the proposed 40mph and 50mph speed limit on the A5104 Corwen Road, Ffordd Y Rhos, Treuddyn.

Housing and Assets

- **Bistre Youth and Community Centre, Buckley Community Asset Transfer of the Building and Demised Area**
The Community Asset Transfer of the building and surrounding land KNOWN AS Bistre Youth and Community Centre to be developed to provide sports coaching, indoor training facilities for year round use; a cafeteria.

Specific fitness classes will be added to the current hall areas when not in use by current occupying parties. Former classrooms converted into meeting and educational / briefing rooms.

Copies of the Delegated Powers reports are on deposit in the Team Leader's Room, Committee Services.

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**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS
COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY
1 June 2019 TO 30 November 2019**

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
June					
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Chief Executive's	Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 To receive for endorsement the annual revision of the Annual Governance Statement.	Strategic	
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Governance	Internal Audit Annual Report To inform Members of the outcome of all audit work carried out during 2018/19 and to give the annual Internal Audit opinion on the standard of internal control, risk management and governance within the Council.	All Report Types	
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Governance	Internal Audit Progress Report To present to the Committee an update on the progress of the Internal Audit Department.	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Governance	Action Tracking To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Audit Committee meetings.	All Report Types	
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Governance	Internal Audit Charter To outline to Members the updated Internal Audit Charter.	All Report Types	
Audit Committee	5/06/19	Governance	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Internal Audit Department.	All Report Types	
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/19	Social Services	Marleyfield House Expansion progress update To provide members with a progress report in relation to the extension to Marleyfield House Care Home.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/19	Social Services	Annual Directors Report To consider the Annual Directors Report for Social Care Services for 2018 / 19	Operational	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/19	Social Services	Third Sector update Annual review of the social care activities undertaken by the third sector in Flintshire	Operational	Cabinet Member for Social Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme (Social & Health Care) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Operational	Not Applicable
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/19	Governance	Council Tax Collection Rates To provide Members with statistical information on the latest Council Tax collection rates, arrear levels and comparisons with other local authorities in Wales.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/19	Chief Executive's	Council Plan 2019/20 To update on the actions to complete the review of the Council Plan 2019/20 in readiness for recommendation to Council for adoption.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/19	Chief Executive's	Workforce Information Report - Quarter 4 2018/19 To provide members with an update of 2018/19 organisational performance and trends.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Action Tracking To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	
Cabinet	18/06/19	Housing and Assets	North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2019/2048 To approve the North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2019/2048.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	18/06/19	Education and Youth	Discretionary Transport Policy Review – Outcome of consultation To provide feedback on the outcome of the consultation on the review of discretionary school & college transport policy and to consider the options available.	Strategic	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

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Cabinet	18/06/19	Housing and Assets	<p>The Councils Closed Circuit Television Service and a Shared Service with Wrexham</p> <p>To consider proposals for joint working with Wrexham County Borough Council regarding the merging of the County Councils CCTV monitoring service with that of Wrexham.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Cabinet	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	<p>Aura Annual Business Plan</p> <p>To review progress of Aura since establishment in 2017.</p>	Strategic	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Cabinet	18/06/19	Streetscene and Transportation	<p>NEWydd Catering and Cleaning Ltd – Progress Review and Revised Business Plan for 2019-2022</p> <p>To provide a review of performance against the 2018/19 Business Plan and seek approval for the Business Plan for 2019/20 to 2021/22.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Cabinet	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	Pay Model and Pay Policy To provide a progress report on (1) pay modelling for the implementation of the second year (2019) of the two year National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement (2018/19-2019/20) and (2) maintenance of structural design and terms of employment following the Single Status Agreement (2014).	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Cabinet	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	Council Plan 2019/20 To seek endorsement of Part 1 of the Council Plan 2019/20 prior to County Council adoption.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Cabinet	18/06/19	Social Services	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment To note the findings from the All Wales Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Cabinet	18/06/19	Social Services	Social Services Annual Report To approve the draft report prior to publication in July 2019.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Social Services

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Cabinet	18/06/19	Planning, Environment and Economy	Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 To approve the final Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 following the statutory three month consultation.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Cabinet	18/06/19	Housing and Assets	Review of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy To endorse changes to the current policy for Corporate Debt Recovery to take account of latest working practices and amendments in the law.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Cabinet	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	Theatr Clwyd Trust Model To receive the recommendation of the Theatr Clwyd Board of Governors on its recommended model of future governance.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

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Cabinet	18/06/19	Housing and Assets	<p>Communal Heating Charges 2019/20 To seek agreement for the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2019/20.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Flintshire County Council	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	<p>Theatr Clwyd Business Plan 2019-2021 To receive a presentation on the work of the Theatr, based on the business plan.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cabinet Member for Education
Flintshire County Council	18/06/19	Chief Executive's	<p>Council Plan 2019/20 Purpose: to adopt on the recommendation of the Cabinet Part 1 of the Council Plan 2019/20.</p>		
Flintshire County Council	18/06/19	Governance	<p>Review of Political Balance To enable the council to review political balance following the formation of a new political group.</p>		

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Flintshire County Council	18/06/19	Governance	Review of the Council's Planning Code of Practice As part of the rolling review of the Constitution, to approve the updates to the Planning Code of Practice.		
Flintshire County Council Page 441	18/06/19	Governance	SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION FOR 2019/20 For Council to approve the schedule of remuneration for elected and co-opted Members for 2019/20 for publication, now all appointments have been made.		
Flintshire County Council	18/06/19	Governance	Officers Code of Conduct As part of the rolling review of the Constitution, to approve the updates to the Officers Code of Conduct.		
Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26/06/19	Housing and Assets	Welfare Reform Update – Universal Credit Roll Out To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire residents	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26/06/19	Housing and Assets	Housing Rent Income To provide an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets, Cabinet Member for Housing
Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26/06/19	Housing and Assets	Homeless Local Action Plan Update To provide an update on progress being made in relation to the Homeless Local Action Plan	Operational	Cllr Dave Hughes
Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19	Operational	Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Cabinet Member for Housing

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Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	26/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Community & Enterprise) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	Not Applicable
Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education
Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/19	Education and Youth	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, and update on how the new model is being received and embedded.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

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Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Education & Youth) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	Not Applicable
Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/07/19	Housing and Assets	Holywell Leisure Centre Community Asset Transfer To review progress during 2018/19 and to consider the plans for 2019	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education

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Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Organisational Change) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	Not Applicable
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 9 of 145	9/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Environment) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	Not Applicable

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Audit Committee	10/07/19	Chief Executive's	Annual Improvement Report of the Auditor General for Wales To receive the Annual Improvement Report from the Auditor General for Wales and note the Council's response.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Action Tracking To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/07/19	Finance	Revenue budget monitoring 2019/20 (Interim) This report provides known key risks and issues to the revenue budget outturn position for 2019/20 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account.'	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/07/19	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring - 2018/19 (Outturn) This report provides the revenue budget outturn position for 2018/19 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Operational	
Cabinet	16/07/19	Education and Youth	21st Century Schools and Core Schools Capital Programme To provide reconciliation with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as key decisions are required from Cabinet in order for a programme to progress.	Strategic	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Cabinet	16/07/19	Housing and Assets	Welfare Reform Update To support the report and the ongoing work to manage the impacts that Welfare Reforms has and will continue to have upon Flintshire's most vulnerable households	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	16/07/19	Housing and Assets	Homelessness Update on Local Action Plan To support the updates against the Local Action Plan for Homelessness	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	16/07/19	Housing and Assets	Housing Strategy and Action Plan To approve the Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan 2019-24.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	16/07/19	Governance	Flintshire County Council Procurement Strategy To agree the updates to the document and to support the twin aims of increased collaborative contracts with Denbighshire County Council and more local purchasing.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Cabinet	16/07/19	Chief Executive's	Prudential Indicators - Actual 2018/19 To provide Members with 2018/19 (actual) Prudential Indicator figures as required under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Cabinet	16/07/19	Chief Executive's	Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2018/19 To receive the Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2018/19 and provide an overview of progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Cabinet	16/07/19	Governance	Joint Procurement Service A performance update report on the Joint Procurement Service (JPS) with Denbighshire County Council.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets

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Cabinet	16/07/19	Planning, Environment and Economy	Food Service Plan 2019-20 for Flintshire County Council Members are requested to agree the Food Service Plan 2019-20	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Cabinet	16/07/19	Chief Executive's	Capital Programme 2018/19 (Outturn) To provide the outturn capital programme information for 2018/19.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/19	Social Services	Integrated Autism Service To provide members with a progress report of the local implementation of the Integrated Autism Service	Strategic	
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/19	Social Services	Comments, Compliments and Complaints To report to members the number of complaints received by Social Services during the period 18 – 19 including their broad themes and outcomes and any lessons learned	Operational	Cabinet Member for Social Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/19	Social Services	BCUHB & Welsh Ambulance Services NHS To maintain regular meetings and promote partnership working.	All Report Types	Not Applicable
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report 2018/19 To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19	Operational	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/19	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Social & Health Care) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	Not Applicable
August					
September					

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
October					
November					
Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/11/19	Housing and Assets	Housing Rent Income To provide an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing

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