

Public Document Pack



Contact Officer:
Sharon Thomas 01352 702324
sharon.b.thomas@flintshire.gov.uk

To:

Councillors: Sian Braun, Helen Brown, David Cox, Jean Davies, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Mared Eastwood, Dennis Hutchinson, Brian Lloyd, Ted Palmer, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger
(plus 1 vacancy for Labour Group)

20 June 2019

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 26th June, 2019 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Purpose: At the Annual Meeting, Council determined that the Labour Group will chair this Committee. The Committee is advised that Councillor Ian Dunbar is the Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Purpose: To appoint a Vice-Chair for the Committee.

3 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

5 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 1 May 2019.

6 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 9 - 18)

Report of Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator -

Purpose: 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.

7 **WELFARE REFORM UPDATE** (Pages 19 - 30)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire residents.

8 **HOUSING RENT INCOME** (Pages 31 - 36)

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

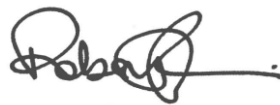
Purpose: To provide an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels.

9 **HOMELESSNESS UPDATE ON LOCAL ACTION PLAN** (Pages 37 - 44)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on progress being made in relation to the Homeless Local Action Plan

Yours sincerely



Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **1 MAY, 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 1 May, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors: Haydn Bateman (for George Hardcastle), and Patrick Heesom (for Ray Hughes)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Sian Braun, David Cox, and Jean Davies

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor: Ian Roberts and Mr John Ennis attended as observers.

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Interim Cabinet Member for Housing; Chief Officer (Housing & Assets); Chief Officer (Governance); Enterprise and Regeneration Manager, Housing Programmes Service Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

68. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

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

69. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager presented a report to set out the future approach to regenerating town centres in the County. He provided background information and advised that the report had been produced in response to the ongoing challenging economic conditions being faced by town centres; a commitment in the 2018/19 Council Plan to develop a response; and concerns over the vitality of Flintshire town centres and the need for the Council to establish a proactive response.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager reported on the key considerations, as detailed in the report, concerning the approach to town centre regeneration and referred to the economic challenges facing town centres across the UK which impacted on their

sustainability. He gave an outline of the proposed responses to increase the diversity of use in towns; to strengthen the role of local stakeholder groups; and to support businesses to adapt and compete more effectively. He also referred to delivery of the North Wales Growth Vision, which through the initial phase of Growth Deal capital projects and wider programmes of work, had the potential to bring significant benefits to town centres. He explained that further specific projects such as digital infrastructure would help to improve business competitiveness and town centre connectivity.

The Chairman commented on the loss of high street banks in town centres and referred to the proposal to impose charges for withdrawing money from cash machines which he felt would have a further detrimental impact on the need for people to visit town centres.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin commented on the impact of street markets in the County and their future viability.

Councillor Paul Shotton spoke about the role of Town Centre Managers and their local knowledge and contacts. He said there was a need for collaborative working between stakeholders, Town and Community Councils, and local communities to develop entrepreneurial opportunities for the future. The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager provided information on the Business Improvement District programme funded by WG which would be focused in Mold but said that it would be monitored to see if it could be rolled out to other Towns across Flintshire.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson expressed a number of concerns regarding the regeneration of Buckley Town Centre and invited the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager to attend a future meeting of Buckley Town Council to discuss a way forward. Councillor Derek Butler accepted the invitation and emphasised that the Council was open to all suggestions for economic improvement. He said all opportunities presented had been robustly explored and commented that a number of major retailers had been approached but, for commercial reasons, had decided not to establish new stores in the area. Councillor Butler also spoke on the issue of limited resources and the conditions which were attached to the small one-off grants received from the Welsh Government for development in areas of deprivation.

Councillor Patrick Heesom said there was a need for improved road network and public transport services into town centres to increase new business, visitors, and footfall. He asked that regular reports on town centre regeneration be presented to future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorses the approach to support the regeneration of town centres in Flintshire.

70. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager introduced a report on the development of digital infrastructure in North Wales and Flintshire. He provided

background information and advised that the report provided an update on the digital work carried out to date by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB), and in particular the development of the Digital Connectivity Strategy for the region. The report also provided an update on the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project being developed to secure funding from UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The Enterprise and Regeneration Manager provided background information and presented the key considerations, as detailed in the report, on the North Wales digital connectivity strategy and local full fibre network programme.

Councillor Ted Palmer asked if new residential developments in Flintshire would benefit from the investment in the fibre network. The Housing Programmes Manager explained that new build Council properties could benefit from improved digital connectivity.

During discussion the Enterprise and Regeneration Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin regarding access to the network and the mapping of key strategic sites for North Wales and 'white' residential properties in North Wales as illustrated on pages 29 and 36 of the report.

Councillor Patrick Heesom spoke of the need for improved access for local communities. In response to the further comments made by Councillor Heesom, the Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the Council continued to provide face-to-face and telephone access to services in addition to online provision. He referred to the benefits of the investment in fibre network and said the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) proposal currently stood at £9m worth of investment in the region. Delivery of full fibre broadband would result in high quality connectivity typically only available in larger urban areas and would improve access in remote and rural locations. The increased connectivity to Council properties through the LFFN programme would also create opportunities to improve services through future-proofed technology.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supports the progress made in creating and implementing an ambitious programme for digital connectivity in North Wales.

71. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration. The Committee agreed the following items scheduled for the next meeting to be held on 26 June 2019:

- Welfare Reform Update – Universal Credit Roll Out
- Quarter 4/Year end Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report
- Homeless Local Action Plan Update
- update on Housing Rent Income
- Modular Homes

The Facilitator explained that she would update the Forward Work Programme to include the further meetings of the Committee to be held during 2019/2020 following consideration of the draft schedule of meetings at the Annual meeting of the County Council on 7 May. The Facilitator also advised that following a pilot by the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee, a report on action tracking would be included as a standard agenda item for future meetings of the Committee. It had also been agreed that the Forward Work Programme would in future be scheduled for consideration at the beginning of meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

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

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

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

73. NORTH EAST WALES (NEW) HOMES BUSINESS PLAN 2019/2048

Councillor Sean Bibby, the Interim Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report to consider the North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2019/2048. He provided background information and advised that the Business Plan sets out key elements of the proposed Development Strategy to increase the number of affordable rent properties over the next three years. He reported on the main considerations, as detailed in the report, and referred to the NEW Homes Business Plans, Development Strategy, and Performance Plan which were appended to the report.

During discussion the Housing Programmes Manager responded to the questions raised by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin regarding provision in the proposed Development Strategy to meet the needs of elderly people in the future. He also responded to the further comments made by Councillor Dolphin concerning the withdrawal by NEW Homes of the managed lettings service for private landlords.

Councillor Ted Palmer commented on discussions he had had with the previous Cabinet Member around the possibility of building single occupancy apartments at the former Ysgol Y Fron site in Holywell. The Housing Programmes Manager said he was not aware of the discussion but would speak to Councillor Palmer following the meeting.

Members congratulated Officers on the achievements gained by NEW Homes to date.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the NEW Homes Business Plan 2019/48; and
- (b) That the Committee support the increase in future Prudential Borrowing through the Council (up to a maximum of £20m) for on-lending to NEW Homes for the purposes of developing or purchasing affordable homes subject to New Homes meeting agreed lending parameters.

74. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.55 am)

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Chairman

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COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 26 th June, 2019
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Cabinet Member	Not applicable
Report Author	Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Community & Enterprise OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702305 E-mail: ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk

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

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
<p>Wednesday 18th September 2019 10.00 am</p> <p>½ hour training session to be held at 9.30 a.m. prior to the start of the meeting</p> <p>Page 13</p>	<p>WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery Review Update</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grants</p> <p>Modular Homes</p> <p>Growth Deal</p>	<p>To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme</p> <p>To consider the revised Policy for Disabled Facilities Grants</p> <p>To receive a report on the concept and options available in using modular homes to increase the supply of Council properties.</p> <p>To provide an update on the North Wales Growth Deal.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)</p> <p>Benefits Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	
<p>Wednesday 6th November 2019 10.00 a.m.</p>	<p>NEW Homes Board</p> <p>Update on Housing Rent Income</p>	<p>To receive an update on the work of the New Homes Board</p> <p>To provide an update on current Rent Arrears</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Housing Strategy Manager</p> <p>Revenues Manager</p>	

	Private Sector Homes Improvement Loans	To provide an update on the programme and the loan products following a relaunch.	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
Wednesday 18th December 2019 10.00 a.m. Page 14	Welfare Reform Update – Universal Credit Roll Out	To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire residents	Assurance Monitoring	Benefits Manager	
	Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on current Rent Arrears	Assurance Monitoring	Revenues Manager	
	Domestic Energy Programmes	To provide an update on the Domestic Energy Programmes	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
	Tourism Update	To provide information on Tourism across the County.	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
Wednesday 22nd January 2020 10.00 a.m.	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2020/21	To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and Budget for 2012/21	Consultation	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)	
	Town Centre Regeneration	To provide an update on the approach previously agreed to regenerate Town Centres in the County.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	

	Flintshire in Business	To provide information on the Flintshire Business Week 2019.	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
Wednesday 11th March 2020 10.00 a.m. Page 1	Quarter 3 Council Plan 2019/20 Monitoring Report	To enable Members to fulfil their role in relation to performance monitoring	Assurance Monitoring	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator	
	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on current Rent Arrears	Assurance Monitoring	Revenues Manager	
	Employability Programmes	To provide information on the Employability Programmes available.	Information Sharing	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
Wednesday 29th April 2020 10.00 a.m.					
Wednesday 17th June 2020 10.00 a.m.	Quarter 4/Year-end Council Plan 2019/20 Monitoring Report	To enable Members to fulfil their role in relation to performance monitoring	Assurance Monitoring	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator	
	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on current Rent Arrears	Assurance Monitoring	Revenues Manager	

REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	Performance Reporting	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Six monthly	Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Benefits Manager
Six monthly	Update on North East Wales Homes & Property Management	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Service Manager – Housing Programmes
Annually – September	WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update	To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. Report to include information around the use of local labour and number of apprentices and school leavers.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Quarterly	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Revenues Manager

ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
01.05.2019	4. Town Centre Regeneration	Cllr Dennis Hutchinson invited Cllr Derek Butler and Niall Waller to a future Buckley Town Council meeting to discuss the best way forward for Buckley Town Centre. Both Cllr Butler and Niall Waller accepted the invitation.	Niall Waller	Cllr Derek Butler and Niall Waller due to attend Buckley Town Council meeting on 18 th June, 2019.	
01.05.2019	4. Town Centre Regeneration	Cllr Patrick Heesom asked that regular reports on Town Centre Regeneration be presented to the Committee at future meetings.	Niall Waller / Ceri Shotton	Town Centre Regeneration item added to Forward Work Programme for 22 nd January, 2020.	Completed
01.05.2019	7. North East Wales (NEW) Homes Business Plan 2019/2048	Cllr Ted Palmer commented on discussions with the previous Cabinet Member around the possibility of building single occupancy apartments at the site of the former Ysgol Y Fron, Holywell. Mel Evans agreed to speak to Cllr Palmer on this following the meeting.	Mel Evans	Mel Evans met with Cllr Palmer on site following the meeting and also visited another site he was aware of.	Completed.

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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 26 June 2019
Report Subject	Welfare Reform Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
Report Author	Chief Officer – Housing & Assets
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welfare Reform will, by 2020, have reduced expenditure on social security benefits available to low income working-age households by around £31¹ billion per annum.

Since 2012, Flintshire County Council, together with its partners, have attempted to mitigate the full impacts of the reforms from falling upon vulnerable Flintshire residents and the report considers how to continue managing the impacts of the reforms introduced under the provisions of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

This report provides an update to Cabinet on the impacts that Universal Credit 'Full Service' and other welfare reforms are having on Flintshire residents and the work that is ongoing to mitigate and support these households. It also includes details of plans for the work that is required to support Flintshire residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny 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.
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REPORT DETAILS

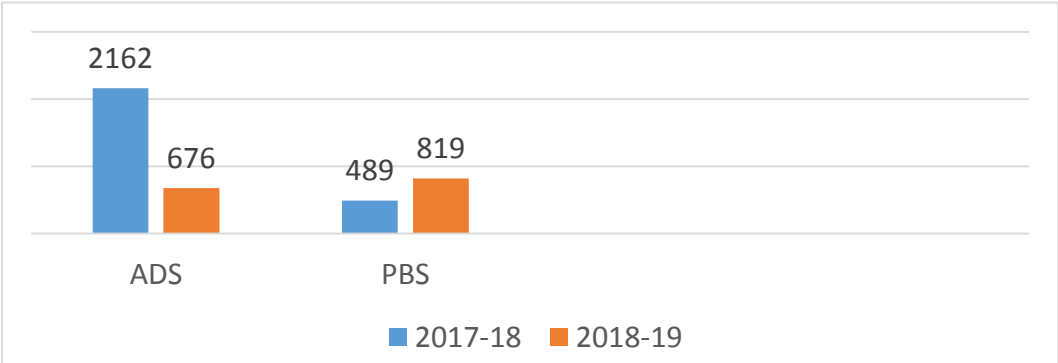
¹ The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced reforms that reduced expenditure on social security benefits by £19 billion pa and the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 is introducing reforms which will reduce expenditure by a further £12 billion pa.

1.00	EXISTING WELFARE REFORMS – THE WALES PICTURE
1.01	<p>Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (Flintshire specific is referred to later in this report). – More commonly referred to as the Bedroom Tax, this reform relates to restrictions to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit where the claimant is under occupying the property. The restrictions are:</p> <p>14% reduction to the eligible rent where a person has one or more “spare bedroom” 25% reduction to the eligible rent where a claimant has two or more “spare bedrooms”</p>
1.02	According to a Welsh Government Report – “Impact of welfare reform on households in Wales 2019” (link at 6.02), as at August 2018, 25,890 (12 per cent) recipients of Housing Benefit in Wales had a reduction to their weekly award.
1.03	The majority of those affected recipients (81 per cent) in Wales were deemed to be under-occupying their property by one room. The means weekly spare room reduction amount in Wales in August 2018 was £15.83 per person.
1.04	Benefit Cap (Flintshire specific is referred to later in this report)
1.05	At August 2018, 2,870 households in Wales had their Housing Benefit capped; 90 per cent of those had between 1 and 4 children and 10 percent of those had 5 or more children. 77 per cent of households in Wales that had their Housing Benefit capped at August 2018 were single-parent families.
1.06	All of the households in Wales that had their Universal Credit (UC) capped as at August 2018 were households with children. At August 2018, the majority (71 per cent) of households in Wales that had their UC capped were capped by the equivalent of £50 or less a week.
1.07	Universal Credit (Flintshire specific is referred to later in this report).
1.08	As at February 2019 the DWP confirmed 87,000 customers in Wales were in receipt of UC of which 34% were working. The number of customers working are comparable with those working in the rest of the United Kingdom.
1.09	Welfare Reform Impact – Flintshire
1.10	Bedroom Tax

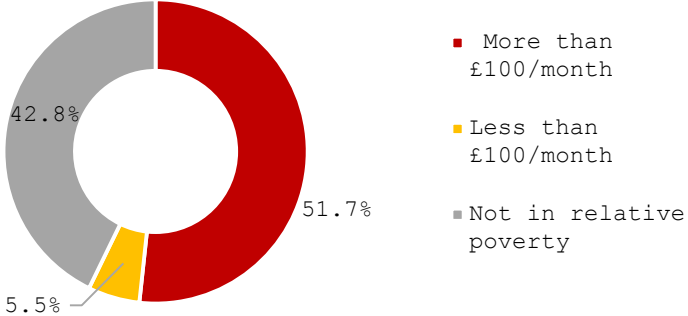
1.11	<p style="text-align: center;">Households Affected by "Bedroom Tax"</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>14% Reduction</th> <th>25% Reduction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>LA</td> <td>405</td> <td>118</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RSL</td> <td>124</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boarders</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	14% Reduction	25% Reduction	LA	405	118	RSL	124	25	Boarders	5	0
Category	14% Reduction	25% Reduction											
LA	405	118											
RSL	124	25											
Boarders	5	0											
1.12	<p>At March 2019, a total of 677 households were impacted by the Bedroom Tax as detailed below:-</p> <p>534 households are affected by a 14% reduction. These households comprise of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 405 LA properties totalling a weekly reduction of £5508.84; • 124 Registered Social Landlord households totalling a weekly reduction of £1798.13 and; • 5 private boarders totalling a weekly reduction of £88.37. <p>The above deduction is at a cost of £7395.34 per week and equates to £384,557.68 per annum.</p>												
1.13	<p>143 households are affected by a 25% reduction. These households comprise of :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 118 LA properties with a weekly reduction of £2933.21 and; • 25 Registered Social Landlords households with a weekly reduction of £629.91 <p>The above deduction is at a cost of £3563.12 per week and equates to £185,282 per annum.</p>												
1.14	<p>Below shows the Flintshire locations with the highest proportion of this welfare reform impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 LA properties within CH4 • 99 LA properties within CH5 • 71 LA properties within CH6 • 79 LA properties within CH7 • 100 LA properties within CH8 												
1.15	Benefit Cap												

1.16	<p>The total amount of annual 'out of work' benefit income which a 'working-age' household can receive is set at (figures for households outside of greater London):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £20,000² for couples and lone parents (£383.56pw) ▪ £13,400 for single claimants (£256.99pw)
1.17	<p>Comparing data from June 2017 to December 2018, the number of households affected by the benefit cap has reduced by 18% from 114 households to 93 households. (This reduction is likely to be due to customers having a change in their circumstances that may provide them with an exemption from the Cap, such as starting work or entitlement to a disability related benefit) However, those who are affected by this reform tend to experience a greater reduction in their weekly income.</p>
1.18	<p>49 of these households have been identified as being at financial risk and there is support available by the Welfare Reform Response Team within the Council, to ensure where possible, they don't reach crisis point.</p>
1.19	<p>Universal Credit</p>
1.20	<p>As at April 2019 the caseload for Flintshire customers in receipt of UC was 5,790 compared to a caseload of 3,623 in June 2018 which equates to a 59.81% increase.</p>
1.21	<p>In Flintshire the current UC caseload confirms 41.39% of those customers (3,623) are working which is slightly higher than the national average which stands at 34%.</p>
1.22	<p>There has been a decrease of 8% in the total caseload for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction (CTRS). This is likely to reflect households moving onto UC and not claiming CTRS.</p>
1.23	<p>However to mitigate against the reduction in CTRS claims we are actively promoting CTRS and there is a working group focused on this area. This group is working on a range of activities such as cross referencing Free School Meal data to identify any potential entitlement, the creation of promotional material, leaflets, the use of Social Media, attending community events etc. to promote CTRS. The results of this campaign will be available later in the year.</p>
1.24	<p>As at April 2019 there were 546 Flintshire Council House tenants in receipt of UC and the total amount of rent arrears for these tenants was approximately £567,000.</p> <p>As Flintshire was a pilot area for UC the impacts of this change have been more pronounced at an early stage when compared with other areas that moved onto UC later in the rollout programme. This reflects changes to UC as it was being developed in a 'live' environment, as such these impacts are likely to be more pronounced for the early pilot areas.</p>

² For information - in Greater London area the benefit cap is set at £23,000 for couples/lone parents and £15,410 for single claimants.

1.25	The impacts on rent arrears are also being experienced by other Social Landlords. One Housing Association confirmed that as at the end of March 2019, 760 tenants were in receipt of UC and that the arrears for these tenants was around £321,000.									
	Update on Our Continuation of the Local / Internal Service									
1.26	Without prior announcement, on 1 st October, DWP published their decision that from 1 st April 2019 they would no longer fund Local Authorities to provide Universal Support (which consisted of personal budgeting and digital assistance) but instead Citizens Advice (England and Wales) and Citizens Advice Scotland would take on the responsibility for delivering the replacement service which is called “help to claim process”.									
1.27	<p>The provision in Flintshire is being delivered by neighbouring Chester West Citizens Advice for 18.5hrs per week as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Monday</td> <td>Mold Job Centre</td> <td>9.30 to 2.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday</td> <td>Shotton Job Centre</td> <td>9.30 to 2.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday</td> <td>Flint Job Centre</td> <td>9.30 to 2.30</td> </tr> </table> <p>These sessions are to provide face to face, telephone and webchat support.</p> <p>This support does not include the personal budgeting support element and is only available to customers up to the date they receive their first full UC payment</p>	Monday	Mold Job Centre	9.30 to 2.30	Tuesday	Shotton Job Centre	9.30 to 2.30	Wednesday	Flint Job Centre	9.30 to 2.30
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1.28	<p>There are concerns about this model due to the limited support that is available to customers specifically around the support required with personal budgeting, which in UC is particularly significant to customers who may be entering work for the first time, or have been in receipt of benefits for some time, and for whom moving to one combined monthly payment poses a real challenge.</p> <p>Since the start of UC, the council has seen unprecedented demand on services in relation to managing their finances, navigating the UC online systems and supporting customers to understand their claims and challenge where necessary.</p> <p>The chart below shows the volumes of customers supported with personal budgeting and with their online claim (not limited to the beginning of their UC journey) since 2017.</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Service</th> <th>2017-18</th> <th>2018-19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ADS</td> <td>2162</td> <td>676</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PBS</td> <td>489</td> <td>819</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Service	2017-18	2018-19	ADS	2162	676	PBS	489	819
Service	2017-18	2018-19								
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1.29	Work will be carried out to assess any negative impacts of this change and where possible services will be provided to address the gaps in provision.																
1.30	Welfare Reform Response Team																
1.31	The Welfare Reform Response Team has been in place for the last two years and combines the administration of discretionary housing payment with both financial and holistic support for those customers impacted by Welfare Reforms.																
1.32	We have analysed the impact of Welfare Reforms for Flintshire residents. This detailed analysis has modelled impacts 'as is' and as it would be in 2020, both under the current benefit system and Universal Credit.																
1.33	The analysis has identified a number of households that continue to be highly impacted by welfare reform, and has evaluated individual circumstances using two measures of living standards; relative poverty (based on the UK Poverty Line) and financial resilience.																
1.34	This data and information is being used to form a proactive action plan for the welfare reform response team to target support to these households in order to help alleviate the impacts and also assist households to plan and prepare now for future changes.																
1.35	<p>The team support customers who have wide and varied issues and as a measure the table below provides this in more detail:</p> <p>Table 1</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Safeguarding tenancy/prevent homelessness</td> <td>337</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Immediate Needs, DAF, Foodbank, Advance</td> <td>243</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Money Advice</td> <td>218</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Benefit check/maximise income</td> <td>204</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority bills/debts</td> <td>234</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non Priority bills/debts</td> <td>208</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total outcomes</td> <td>1445*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total number of customers</td> <td>396*</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>*This reflects customers being supported with multiple issues</i></p>	Safeguarding tenancy/prevent homelessness	337	Immediate Needs, DAF, Foodbank, Advance	243	Money Advice	218	Benefit check/maximise income	204	Priority bills/debts	234	Non Priority bills/debts	208	Total outcomes	1445*	Total number of customers	396*
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1.36	According to our current analysis as at December 2018, 51% of Flintshire residents (equating to 5,879 households) who currently receive either Housing Benefit and/or CTRS are in relative poverty by more than £100 per month. The chart below provides more detail in relation to household poverty status.																

	<p style="text-align: center;">Flintshire residents by relative poverty status</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>More than £100/month</td> <td>51.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than £100/month</td> <td>5.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not in relative poverty</td> <td>42.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	More than £100/month	51.7%	Less than £100/month	5.5%	Not in relative poverty	42.8%
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1.37	<p>Due to the ongoing challenges of welfare reform and the impact on other services the Welfare Reform Response Team will continue to focus on supporting residents impacted by welfare reform and facing poverty to achieve financial savings and improve resilience.</p>								
1.38	<p>The Welfare Reform Team consider that their objectives include but are not exclusive to providing support to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those in crisis by improving income and employment opportunities • Providing advice about reducing expenditure by Discretionary Housing Payment application and maximising income/benefit entitlement. • Help to provide short term solutions such as Discretionary Housing Payments to move home (where circumstances are appropriate). • Assist those with longer term solutions through budgeting advice and access to specialised support. 								
1.39	<p>Using the analysis, future work planning has been identified and the Welfare Reform Response Team are currently focussing support on two groups of Flintshire households who are impacted by recent changes in Welfare Reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 Mixed aged couples who are eligible for Pension Credit but are not claiming; • 28 lone parents whose youngest child will turn 5 in the next 6 months. 								
1.40	<p>Further plans have been identified which include providing targeted support to the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted employment support to 5,218 households who are out of work with low barriers to work of which 111 households in crisis have been identified as potentially benefiting from Discretionary Housing Payments. • Encourage take up of available support for free childcare to 129 households in Flintshire who are eligible. • Target support to 101 households with two children who are at risk of losing support if they have a 3rd child. 								

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target support to 38 households at financial risk who are affected by the two-child limit. • Following changes to work allowances within Universal Credit, identify 194 households who are in self-employment and not already on Universal Credit who may face reductions. • Focus on households (equating to 1,487) who are, or will be, worse off under Universal Credit. • Target support to 93 households subject to the Benefit Cap.
1.41	Proactive work is undertaken by the Welfare Reform Response Team for cases where Discretionary Housing Payments are due to end this is to review whether ongoing continued support is required.
1.42	Flintshire's response to the implementation of Universal Credit has been seen as a model of good practice by other Welsh Local Authorities and the Welsh Government and the Benefit Department have been providing support and advice to other Welsh Local Authorities ahead of the roll out in their respective areas.
1.43	Flintshire are actively engaged with Registered Social and private landlords, Financial Inclusion Forum and Flintshire's Tackling Poverty Group to help provide support and advice for households affected by Welfare Reform.
1.44	DWP announced in March that Harrogate was going to be the pilot area for a major trial of 'managed migration' due to its diverse range of customers. We anticipate that learning from this pilot area will be shared in advance of 'managed migration' being introduced in Wales so that the team can support those customers in readiness for the move to Universal Credit.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Reduction in the Discretionary Housing Payments Fund provided by DWP of £38,851 for 2019-20 means there is less DWP funding for residents in need of assistance (for HB and UC). This will be monitored in year to highlight any potential pressures which will be reported through budget monitoring processes.
2.02	Delivery of Personal Budgeting Support is no longer funded by DWP. However, Welfare and budgeting support will continue to be provided by the Welfare Reform Response Team due to the extra resources that have been secured for the next two years and a further financial pressure has been highlighted for year three.
2.03	The latest welfare reforms will impact on new Flintshire households, for example, working households, who may also seek advice and support on how to manage their loss of income.

2.04	To manage the increased demand from Flintshire households experiencing social welfare problems, the Council has supported the development of the Flintshire Local Advice and Housing Support Gateways.
2.05	Both Gateways aim to reduce pressures on internal and external providers by effectively triaging referrals to ensure a person is referred to the most appropriate service provider.
2.06	The team will, with the additional resources, be able to identify, plan support and undertake pro-active activities to assist residents in order to mitigate welfare reforms in 2019/20.
2.07	There are clear risks to the Council around increasing rent and council tax arrears.
	Financial Implications
2.08	From April 2019, the DWP no longer fund the Council to provide Universal Credit customers with Personal Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support.
2.09	Demand for budgeting support continues to increase and will continue to be provided by the Welfare Reform Response Team to all residents who are affected by Welfare Reform not just those receiving Universal Credit.
2.10	Flintshire Connects will continue to respond to ongoing demand for digital support for Universal Credit customers.
2.11	<p>There are concerns with the Help to Claim model surrounding the date of contact versus date of claim. As previously the date the customer made contact with the Local Authority could be taken as the start date for Universal Credit entitlement. However, under the revised model this provision does not exist. The implication here could be an increase in rent arrears, access to food banks, pay day lenders etc.</p> <p>We will be monitoring the impacts of this model and will share our findings with both DWP and Welsh Government.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Not applicable with this report.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	For some Flintshire households the financial impacts of Universal Credit is yet to be fully felt in terms of the time taken to receive the first payment of Universal Credit. However, the activities that have taken place and are underway to mitigate the negative impacts, as far practicably possible, have been noted in the main report.

4.02	The increase in the Welfare Reform Response Team will assist residents in dealing with the financial pressures felt as a result of the implementation of Universal Credit. The team work to directly target advice and support for households throughout Flintshire whom, due to the impact of the ongoing welfare reforms, are at most risk of losing household income, those facing increasing difficulties in maintaining their rent payments, and those at an increased risk of homelessness.
4.03	The team will, with the extra resources be able to identify, plan support and undertake pro-active activities to assist residents in order to mitigate welfare reforms in 2019/20.
4.04	<p>The DWP announcement regarding the removal of funding for the Local Authority to provide Universal Support from 1st April 2019 will put the work of the team at risk in terms of providing “wrap around” support from a single point of contact from this date.</p> <p>It is too early at this stage for an assessment to be made in relation to this change.</p> <p>However, the Welfare Reform Team will work proactively to identify the gaps in provision and provide the support to mitigate the impacts on the customers.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/impact-of-welfare-reform-on-households-in-wales.pdf
6.02	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/citizens-advice-to-provide-support-to-universal-credit-claimants?utm_source=4f4a9ae5-2d1e-4c58-acad-f05b19d5849e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate
6.03	<p>Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths Telephone: 01352 – 702929 E-mail: Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Eligible Rent – this is the amount of rent (net of any ineligible services) that a claim for housing benefit or universal credit is calculated from.

7.02	<p>Financial Resilience - A household's financial resilience is measured by comparing its income with its costs, which are based on figures taken from the Living Costs and Food survey for low income households. Each household is grouped into one of four categories based on their income after costs are accounted for.</p> <p>Coping = income after costs is more than £100 per month</p> <p>Struggling = income after costs is between £0 and £100 per month</p> <p>At risk = household costs exceed income</p> <p>In crisis = a household's income is less than their rent</p>
7.03	<p>Housing Benefit - helps tenants pay all, or part of their rent if they have a low income. Housing Benefit is administered by Local Authorities.</p>
7.04	<p>Ineligible Services – These are charges that may be included in rent that are not eligible for support through either housing benefit or universal credit. Such as: heating; lighting; hot water; meals</p>
7.05	<p>UK poverty line - Each year, the UK Government publishes a survey of income poverty in the UK called Households Below Average income (HBAI). ... In other words, if a household's income is less than 60 per cent of this average, HBAI considers them to be living in poverty.</p>
7.06	<p>Spare Bedroom – in the context of the spare room subsidy (or bedroom tax) this is where there are more bedrooms in the property than the household need. For example, a single person living in a two bedroom house would be deemed as having one “spare” bedroom.</p>
7.07	<p>Universal Credit (UC) – is an integrated means-tested benefit for people of working age whose income is below a specified minimum amount. UC can be claimed by working age people in and out of employment.</p>
7.08	<p>UC Full Service – in a full service area, UC will be claimed by all working age claimants who make a new claim for a means-tested benefit.</p>
7.09	<p>UC Live Service - access to UC within a live service area is controlled by an ‘eligibility gateway’ which, predominantly, restricts new UC claims being made unless the claimant is a newly unemployed single person.</p>
7.10	<p>Universal Support – Helps claimants through every step of making a UC claim. Offers people comprehensive and practical support they need to get their first payment on time and be ready to manage it when it arrives. It has a focus on personal budgeting advice and digital support.</p>
7.11	<p>Working Age – for social security benefits ‘working age’ ends for both men and women at the female statutory retirement pension age. In May 2016 this is 63 years old. The female statutory retirement age is gradually increasing to equalise with men (65 year old) in October 2018. The pension age for both men and women will then increase to 66 in 2020.</p>

7.12	Welfare Reforms – changes being introduced to a range of social security benefits and tax credits, which aim to ensure that the United Kingdom has an affordable benefit system.
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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 26 th June 2019
Report Subject	Housing Rent Income
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Scrutiny Members with a further operational update on the 2018/19 year end position for rent collection, including the latest position for the current financial year, following the last update report to Scrutiny committee in February 2019.

Rent arrears for 2018/19, as at 31st March 2019, reduced to £1.88m compared to the previous reported position of rent arrears of £2.14m as at February 2019, a reduction of £0.26m.

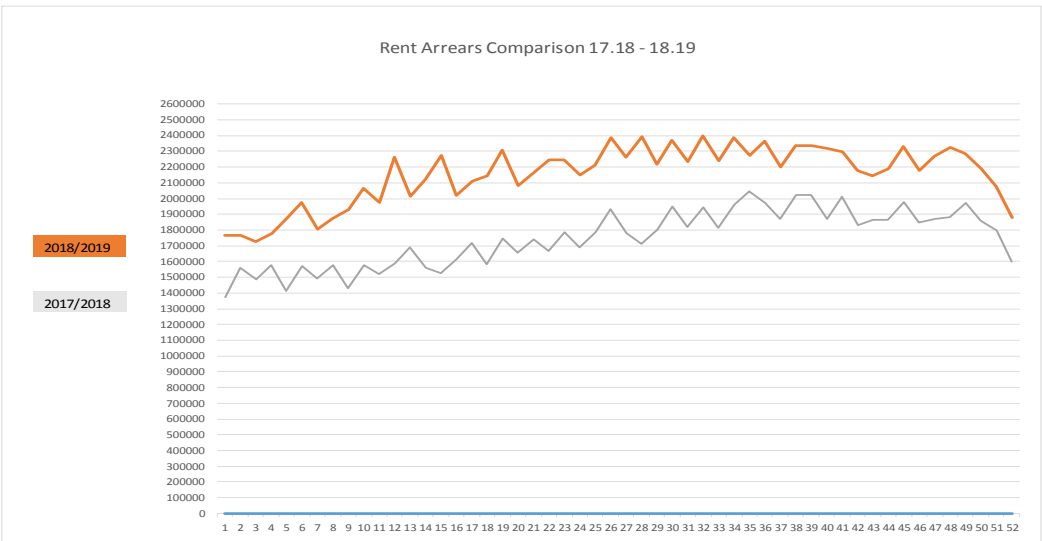
Rent arrears are starting to stabilise and being brought under control, and the measures introduced to tackle rent arrears through early intervention with tenants, but where necessary, also escalating cases to court quickly for those tenants who fail to engage or pay are starting to have a positive impact.

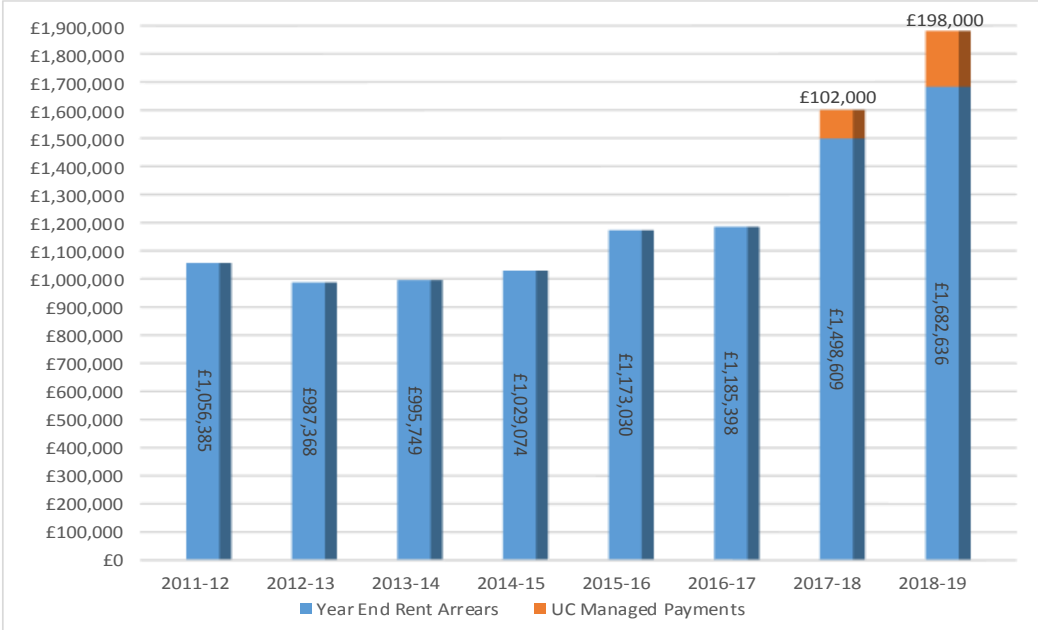
To ensure the rent recovery process is more efficient to meet the challenges of the future, the investment and 'go-live' deployment of the Mobyssoft Rent Sense solution in July 2019 will allow the Rent Income service to track and monitor rent arrears much more quickly through systems that will offer predictive analytics, trend-analysis and risk profiling, meaning that officer time will not be wasted on cases that do not require contact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Note the £1.87m year-end position for rent arrears in 2018-19 which shows collection of rent is starting to stabilise.
2	Endorse the ongoing measures being taken to improve rent collection during 2019-20.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE LATEST POSITION OF RENT ARREARS																																																						
1.01	The Rent Income service collects rent from around 7,100 occupied properties with an in-year rent collection yield of £38.1m in 2018/19.																																																						
1.02	Not all rent is paid on time and some tenants fall into rent arrears. Rent arrears are defined as the amount of rent due but not paid to the Council on time and the arrears position for the Council is expressed as the accumulated running total amount due across all years which has not been paid.																																																						
1.03	<p>Latest figures show accumulated rent arrears as at the end of 2018/19 were £1.88m compared to £1.60m for the previous financial year. Although rent arrears at year end have increased by £280k compared to the previous year, the £1.88m final outturn in 2018/19 showed rent arrears fell by £260k compared to the £2.14m of accumulated rent arrears up to week 43 reported at Scrutiny Committee in February 2019.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Annual Gross Rent Yield</th> <th>Year End Rent Arrears</th> <th>Rent Arrears as % of Rent Yield</th> <th>Movement in Arrears (£)</th> <th>Movement in Arrears (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018-19 *</td> <td>£38,086,058</td> <td>£1,880,636</td> <td>4.9%</td> <td>£280,027</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017-18 *</td> <td>£36,153,000</td> <td>£1,600,609</td> <td>4.4%</td> <td>£415,211</td> <td>0.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>£34,293,000</td> <td>£1,185,398</td> <td>3.5%</td> <td>£12,368</td> <td>-0.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>£32,857,000</td> <td>£1,173,030</td> <td>3.6%</td> <td>£143,956</td> <td>0.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>£31,452,000</td> <td>£1,029,074</td> <td>3.3%</td> <td>£33,325</td> <td>0.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>£30,859,000</td> <td>£995,749</td> <td>3.2%</td> <td>£8,381</td> <td>-0.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012-13</td> <td>£29,222,000</td> <td>£987,368</td> <td>3.4%</td> <td>£-69,017</td> <td>-0.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011-12</td> <td>£28,097,000</td> <td>£1,056,385</td> <td>3.8%</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Denotes the period of Universal Credit full service rollout in Flintshire</p>	Financial Year	Annual Gross Rent Yield	Year End Rent Arrears	Rent Arrears as % of Rent Yield	Movement in Arrears (£)	Movement in Arrears (%)	2018-19 *	£38,086,058	£1,880,636	4.9%	£280,027	0.5%	2017-18 *	£36,153,000	£1,600,609	4.4%	£415,211	0.9%	2016/17	£34,293,000	£1,185,398	3.5%	£12,368	-0.1%	2015-16	£32,857,000	£1,173,030	3.6%	£143,956	0.3%	2014-15	£31,452,000	£1,029,074	3.3%	£33,325	0.1%	2013-14	£30,859,000	£995,749	3.2%	£8,381	-0.2%	2012-13	£29,222,000	£987,368	3.4%	£-69,017	-0.4%	2011-12	£28,097,000	£1,056,385	3.8%	-	-
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1.04	<p>The graph below illustrates the year-end position with rent arrears for 2018/19 compared to the previous year:</p>  <p>The graph shows weekly rent arrears for two financial years: 2017/2018 (grey line) and 2018/2019 (orange line). The y-axis represents the amount of arrears in pounds, ranging from 0 to 2,600,000 in increments of 100,000. The x-axis represents the week number from 1 to 52. The 2018/2019 line is consistently higher than the 2017/2018 line, indicating higher arrears throughout the year. Both lines show a similar pattern of fluctuation, with a notable peak around week 25 and a decline towards the end of the year.</p>																																																						

1.05	The year-end position for 2018/19 is reflective of yet another difficult year for the collection of rent but the early intervention measures and investment in additional resources that were implemented in mid 2018/19 are now helping to stabilise collections.																											
1.06	The unprecedented additional work generated by the launch of Universal Credit (UC) full service rollout from April 2017 continues to create a changing and challenging rent collection environment but on a positive note, the increasing reliance of managed/direct payments through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is helping to stabilise the increase in rent arrears by ensuring those in receipt of UC are able to meet their obligations to pay rent.																											
1.07	The increased migration from Housing Benefit (HB) to Universal Credit (UC) will inevitably always create cash flow problems as the Council struggles to play 'catch up' with those tenants who wait for their first UC payment and ensuring rent is paid on time thereafter.																											
1.08	Latest statistics show that around 486 tenants have managed payments set-up for DWP to deduct housing costs at source and the Council now receives, on average, £193k per month from DWP in respect of ongoing rent and retrospective rent arrears.																											
1.09	As a social landlord, the Council receives managed payments in arrears. In other words, we receive managed payments each month in respect of deductions from previous months. This inevitably has an impact on the stated year end position and in real terms the year end arrears of £1.88m were overstated by £198k as a result of the Council not receiving the latest managed payment file until April 2019 in respect of March payment deductions from tenants.																											
1.10	<p>In real terms, the more accurate rent arrears position if managed payments had of been received by the Council within the month of deduction, would be £1.69m as opposed to £1.88m. This is illustrated in the graph below which shows the impact of received delayed payments:</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Year End Rent Arrears</th> <th>UC Managed Payments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2011-12</td> <td>£1,056,385</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012-13</td> <td>£987,368</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>£995,749</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>£1,029,074</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015-16</td> <td>£1,173,030</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016-17</td> <td>£1,185,398</td> <td>£0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017-18</td> <td>£1,498,609</td> <td>£102,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018-19</td> <td>£1,682,636</td> <td>£198,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Year End Rent Arrears	UC Managed Payments	2011-12	£1,056,385	£0	2012-13	£987,368	£0	2013-14	£995,749	£0	2014-15	£1,029,074	£0	2015-16	£1,173,030	£0	2016-17	£1,185,398	£0	2017-18	£1,498,609	£102,000	2018-19	£1,682,636	£198,000
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1.11	<p>The table below also shows the latest rent arrears position for tenants in receipt of UC as opposed to those still in receipt of HB or not in receipt of either benefit:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Claim Type</th> <th>No of Tenants</th> <th>No of tenants in Arrears</th> <th>Total Arrears (£)</th> <th>Average Rent Arrears April 19 (£)</th> <th>Average Rent Arrears Feb 19 (£)</th> <th>Variance (+/-) (£)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Universal Credit</td> <td>546</td> <td>442</td> <td>567,086</td> <td>1,283</td> <td>1,357</td> <td>-74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Benefit</td> <td>3,621</td> <td>1,765</td> <td>409,497</td> <td>232</td> <td>214</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non Benefit</td> <td>2,924</td> <td>1,945</td> <td>1,099,002</td> <td>565</td> <td>423</td> <td>142</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Claim Type	No of Tenants	No of tenants in Arrears	Total Arrears (£)	Average Rent Arrears April 19 (£)	Average Rent Arrears Feb 19 (£)	Variance (+/-) (£)	Universal Credit	546	442	567,086	1,283	1,357	-74	Housing Benefit	3,621	1,765	409,497	232	214	18	Non Benefit	2,924	1,945	1,099,002	565	423	142
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1.12	<p>To ensure more robust recovery measures are taken against those tenants who fail to engage and fail to pay, the latest year-end statistics show that the Rent Enforcement Team evicted 30 tenants for non-payment of rent during 2018/19. Of these, 11 were introductory tenancies and 19 were secure tenancies.</p>																												
1.13	<p>Put into context, the number of evictions is small in comparison with the total number of tenancies, but notwithstanding this, there is a 36.4% increase in the number of evictions compared to the previous financial year.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Number of Evictions for rent arrears</th> <th>% Increase / Reduction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>30</td> <td>36.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017/18</td> <td>22</td> <td>15.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>19</td> <td>-13.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>22</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Number of Evictions for rent arrears	% Increase / Reduction	2018/19	30	36.4%	2017/18	22	15.8%	2016/17	19	-13.6%	2015/16	22	-													
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1.14	<p>The recovery of unpaid rent brings a requirement to strike the right balance between supporting tenants to stay in their homes and ensuring tenants keep to the terms of their tenancy agreements</p>																												
1.15	<p>Each case that leads to eviction has its own history and complexities but typically rent arrears build up over a period of time and tenants are always provided with extensive opportunities which will have been provided prior to the legal process. Even when the legal process is taken through the courts, the judicial process is lengthy and it always provides further safeguards and ample opportunity for tenants to pay or engage, even at a late stage, to prevent the eviction from being carried out.</p>																												

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The continued deployment of four additional officers, consisting of two Rent Income officers and two advice/support officers, is necessary to manage

	additional caseloads and to recover unpaid rent as quickly as possible from an increased number of tenants who now receive Universal Credit as opposed to Housing Benefit.
2.02	The ongoing cost of the additional resources at an annual cost of £130k per annum is partly funded through the Supporting People Fund and partly funded through the HRA.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	To mitigate the financial risks to the HRA through potential losses in collection and increased bad debt impairment, the Council has introduced new approaches to tackling rent arrears. These measures now provide offering out early intervention to those tenants who fall into rent arrears, the deployment of additional resources to cope with increasing service demands and fast tracking cases to court whenever tenants fail to engage or pay their rent on time.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 • Welfare Reform Act 2012 <p>Contact Officer: David Barnes, Revenues Manager Telephone: 01352 703652 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Universal Credit: is an integrated means-tested benefit for people of working age whose income is below a specified minimum amount. UC can be claimed by working age people in and out of employment and UC combines six legacy benefits, including Housing Benefit, into one single payment which is administered by the Department of Work and Pensions</p> <p>Welfare reform: these are wide-ranging changes which were introduced by the UK Government to reform a range of social security benefits and tax</p>

credits which aim to ensure that the UK has a more affordable benefits system

Housing Revenue Account (HRA): The Council is required to keep a HRA account to record all income and expenditure relating to the provision of local authority social housing. All rental income must be held within a ring fenced HRA account. This means that HRA income from rents can only be used for council housing purposes and not for other general council expenditure. This also allows the rental income to be invested back into council housing to help improve the standard of the stock council housing stock and also build new council homes.



COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 26 June 2019
Report Subject	Homelessness Update on Local Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer Housing and Assets
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Wales' councils have together developed a regional strategy and action plan.

The Homelessness Strategy objectives are to prevent homelessness and ensure suitable accommodation and satisfactory support is available for those who are homeless. The region has agreed to the common themes of People, Homes and Services.

Each council has developed its own local action plan based on the themes within the regional strategy but which reflect local priorities. The local plan in Flintshire has identified priority actions to tackle and prevent homelessness in the county.

The purpose of this report is to update Community and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress on our Local Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Scrutiny members to support the updates provided against the Local Action Plan for Homelessness.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	The Local Action Plan for Flintshire follows the Regional Homelessness Strategy with three main themes People, Homes and Services. Each theme is broken down further into priorities:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People - Youth Homelessness, Rough Sleepers, Complex Needs and Prison Leavers • Homes - Housing First, Improved access to accommodation supply and Temporary accommodation • Services – Prevention / Intervention, welfare reform and health
1.02	<u>People</u>
1.03	<p>Youth Homelessness In 2018/19, 244 young people (age 16 to 24) presented to Flintshire’s Housing Solutions Service either homeless or threatened with homelessness. Work is currently underway to further analyse this data to understand the reasons behind these presentations.</p>
1.04	Work is also underway with colleagues in Youth Services to develop a theatre production for schools so as to raise the profile of the risks of homelessness for young people.
1.05	Flintshire’s Housing Solutions Team currently have a Youth provision within the service consisting of a dedicated Housing Solutions Officer and a Children’s Services worker. Working with colleagues in Education, a joint funding bid has been submitted to also include a Youth Worker to the team. This will enable us to create a more integrated youth provision to enable wider support to youth’s that are faced with homelessness and enable a more joined up service that is seamless for the young person with one point of access and a wide range of support options available to them.
1.06	<p>Rough Sleepers In December 2018 Flintshire County Council piloted an Emergency Bed provision to help those who were rough sleeping. This pilot has been successful and provision was extended until March 2020. Work is underway to evaluate all the findings from this project to inform a more permanent provision in terms of both support needs and premises.</p>
1.07	<p>Flintshire has also commissioned an Outreach Worker to work with those who are street homeless or accessing the Emergency Bed Provision and this is working well. The Outreach workers key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a more flexible service with support being available outside of normal working hours including weekends. • Link in with residents who are accessing the emergency bed provision to offer support and assistance to reintegrate into mainstream services. • Conduct regular welfare checks where rough sleepers have refused assistance. • Monitor and conduct regular reviews of hot spots to enable to service to provide assistance at the earliest point.
1.08	Flintshire’s outreach worker is now signed up to Streetlink. This service enables members of the public to report people rough sleeping to local services that can support them. If a person is concerned about someone they have seen rough sleeping they can use Streetlink to make the initial report.

	<p>The details provided are sent direct to Flintshire Outreach worker to help them find the individual and connect them to support.</p> <p>When a report is made the person reporting will receive confirmation that the report has been received and information on what will happen next and a further update if possible/appropriate.</p> <p>https://www.streetlink.org.uk/</p>																												
1.08	<p>One of the actions in the local action plan was to gain a better understanding of why tenancies are ending and the reasons behind homelessness in our County. The statistics show that the reasons behind homelessness or risk of homelessness for cases closed in 2018/19 were as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>14.49%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>7.25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent</td> <td>9.14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent</td> <td>11.59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Violence or harassment</td> <td>2.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)</td> <td>2.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings</td> <td>2.79%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears on Private Sector Dwellings</td> <td>4.79%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Loss of rented or tied accommodation</td> <td>23.19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current property unaffordable</td> <td>1.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current property unsuitable</td> <td>3.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prison Leaver</td> <td>8.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, army etc.)</td> <td>1.67%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)</td> <td>6.80%</td> </tr> </table>	Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	14.49%	Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	7.25%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent	9.14%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent	11.59%	Violence or harassment	2.56%	Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	2.34%	Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings	2.79%	Rent arrears on Private Sector Dwellings	4.79%	Loss of rented or tied accommodation	23.19%	Current property unaffordable	1.00%	Current property unsuitable	3.68%	Prison Leaver	8.70%	In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, army etc.)	1.67%	Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)	6.80%
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1.09	<p>Prison Leavers</p> <p>As you can see from the above, last year 8.70% of homelessness was directly linked to prison leavers.</p>																												
1.10	<p>The Regional Homelessness Strategy Group have increased resource across the region and created a Regional Prisoner Pathway which aims to relieve homelessness for prison leavers. Flintshire has a dedicated worker that works with Prisoners before their release to reduce the risk of them becoming homeless on release. There are many barriers to finding suitable accommodation for this client group but figures are showing that this work is providing some good outcomes.</p> <p>In 2018/19 Flintshire worked with 42 applicants that would otherwise be homeless on their release without intervention, of these 42:</p>																												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Clients went straight from custody directly into their own tenancy • 10 Clients went from custody to approved premises or family then onto their own accommodation
1.11	<p>Complex Needs</p> <p>One of the main areas of focus in this area has been on clients with mental health. In 2018/19, just over 41% of triages completed indicated the applicant had mental health concerns. The service is working with colleagues in Adult Social Services to secure the provision of a Mental Health Worker in the Housing Solutions Team. This will help the service to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand the issues our customers are faced with; • Understand how this may impact the way we deliver our services; • Provide better support to those suffering a mental health issue and faced with homelessness; • Create better integration with Health and primary care services where required.
1.12	<p><u>Homes</u></p>
1.13	<p>Housing First</p> <p>Work has commenced on securing funding for a Housing First Pilot in Flintshire and a bid for additional funding has also been submitted to enhance this.</p>
1.14	<p>There are many good practice projects across Wales and The Homeless and Advice Team Manager and Housing Strategy Manager will be visiting some of these in the coming months to identify good practice and where strategic partners have contributed. This will enable the completion of a draft business model for Flintshire's Housing First pilot.</p>
1.15	<p>Improved access to accommodation</p> <p>This covers a wide spectrum of work including the Council's commitment to building more social housing, and in doing so, increasing the availability in the private rented sector.</p>
1.16	<p>One of main areas to update on for this area is that the contract with HAWS commenced in May 2019. HAWS will be working with The Housing Solutions Team on a number of key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of applicants currently in temporary accommodation and assistance to move onto suitable accommodation; • Introduce Landlord drop in sessions for Flintshire's Private Landlords to understand what the reasons behind the barriers our clients face in accessing Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation; • Develop a PRS policy and suite of incentives to encourage buy in from this sector; • Increase access to PRS in Flintshire.
1.17	<p>Temporary Accommodation</p>

	<p>This year there will be a full review of temporary accommodation used by the Housing Solutions Team for homeless applicants to include:</p> <p>Leased PRS accommodation – The Council leases a number of Houses in Multiple Occupation's (HMO) and individual properties from private Landlords. This review will look at each of these leases to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effectiveness • Location of property • Terms of lease • Quality of accommodation • Outcomes for individuals accessing this accommodation
1.18	<u>Services</u>
1.19	<p>Prevention / Intervention, Welfare Reform and Health</p> <p>To be able to improve the outcomes for clients who become homeless or are at risk of homelessness through the breakdown of relationships with parents/family (21.75% in 2018/19) mediation services can prove very effective as a prevention tool. Training is being arranged for The Housing Solutions Team to ensure staff are skilled in this area for all cases where this is appropriate.</p>
1.20	<p>The Preventing Evictions pilot was launched in November 2018 to prevent as many evictions as possible through early intervention on low level arrears and more collaborative working between rent collection and support teams to resolve rent arrears and prevent escalation via notice of possession/eviction. This has proven very successful and of the 93 cases reviewed last financial year only 21.50% were escalated within the collection teams processes. The remaining 78.50 were all resolved through a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed repayment plan • Payment in full • Benefit awards • DHP applications • Third party deductions • Ongoing support where necessary
1.21	<p>As a result of this successful work, this way of working will now be rolled out to all of the Income Team and Supporting People Team to ensure the success of the pilot is shared across services and becomes an established way of working.</p>
1.22	<p>As described previously in this report, steps are being made to bridge gaps between Housing Services and Social Care services such as the collaborative working to provide a Mental Health Worker based within Housing Solutions.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	None at this time
3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	N/A
4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	N/A
5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Jenni Griffiths Job Title: Homeless and Advice Team Manager Telephone: 01352 702415 E-mail: jenni.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk
7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Housing Solutions This is the service that carried out the statutory homeless functions and supports customers facing homelessness.
7.02	Housing First Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.
7.03	Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO) House in Multiple Occupation: Houses in Multiple Occupation (including self-contained flats where relevant) provide small, affordable, flexible and safe accommodation for a wide variety of people including single people, students, low paid and seasonal workers, those on short term contracts and are an essential part of the housing market. They can also offer temporary accommodation for people who are saving to purchase a home. Houses that provide accommodation for at least 3 people who are not all members of the same family are known as 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' (HMOs).
7.04	Private Rented Sector (PRS) The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is a classification of housing in the UK. The basic Private Rented Sector definition is: property owned by a landlord

	and leased to a tenant. The landlord, in this case, could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor.
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