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Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

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To: Cllr Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Sian Braun, David Cox, Jean Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

12 February 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 Monday, 18th February, 2019 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1   APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3   MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 23 January 2019.

4   HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (Pages 9 - 50)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To consider the draft Housing Strategy prior to Cabinet approval.

5   HOUSING RENT INCOME (Pages 51 - 56)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

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

6   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 57 - 64)

Report of Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

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

Yours sincerely

Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 JANUARY 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Wednesday, 23 January 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)
Councillors: David Cox, Jean Davies, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Aaron Shotton, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance; Derek Butler, Cabinet Member for Economic Development; and Adele Davies-Cooke

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom attended as an observer

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing; Chief Officer (Housing and Assets); Accountant; Capital Works Team Manager; and Senior Sheltered Housing Officer

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

49. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Palmer declared a personal interest on Agenda Item 4 'Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/20' as he was a Council tenant.

50. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2018 were submitted.

Minute number 37: Communities for Work - Councillor Palmer asked that his comments be included about the need to agree the right terms of reference before appointing a Town Centre Manager/Regeneration Officer to ensure that they were not vilified for not doing the job within the current climate.

Minute number 38: Regional Homeless Strategy and Local Action Plan - Councillor Palmer asked that his comments be included about provision being made available following a relationship breakdown.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. <u>**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2019/20, HRA BUSINESS PLAN NARRATIVE & SUMMARY HRA 30 YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN**</u>

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) introduced a report to consider the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2019/20, HRA Business Plan narrative and the summary HRA 30 year Financial Business Plan.

The Committee received a presentation which covered the following:

- HRA achievements 2018/19
- Council house building programme
- 30 year business plan
- 2019/20 budget
    - Income
    - Service charges 2019/20
    - HRA efficiency proposals and use of one-off funding
    - Proposed HRA investment decisions and cost pressures
- HRA Capital Programme 2019/20
- HRA future activity

Amongst a number of key achievements were the Council's performance on the gas servicing standard and apprenticeships supported through the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP). Delivery of the latter would be further enhanced by the Council's success in attracting Welsh Government (WG) grant funding towards a scheme of affordable apartments in Garden City.

The Accountant detailed key assumptions for 2019/20 including proposed increases of £1 per week for garage rent and £0.20 per week for garage plots. No changes were proposed for service charges whilst public consultation was being undertaken. Explanation was given on changes to HRA funding since the previous year and proposed HRA investment decisions and cost pressures leading to a projected contribution of £0.158m to reserves.

The Capital Works Team Manager provided information on the types of work within HRA Capital Programme where focus on the WHQS was shifting to envelope and environmental works.

The Chairman commended the HRA achievements which had been well received by tenants.

This was echoed by Councillor Shotton who asked that Members be provided with an update on the WHQS. The Chief Officer agreed that the area based programme would be shared once it had been updated. On the request for Members to meet with Housing officers, Councillor Attridge suggested that arrangements be made for a drop-in session after the review had concluded.

In response to questions from Councillor Dolphin, the Chief Officer provided details on the review of garages. He agreed to circulate a response on the number of

Apprentices appointed to full-time positions and investigate reports of a parked Council van in Carmel.

In response to questions from Councillors Dolphin and Hardcastle, the Capital Works Team Manager outlined the various classifications for 'acceptable fails' in the WHQS, advising that checks were undertaken to assess the condition of those properties. The practice of pre-assessment checks helped to identify any medical conditions of the tenant so that works could be co-ordinated in the most appropriate way.

In response to a query from Councillor Reece, it was confirmed that solid brick properties were included in the programme of envelope works.

Councillor Davies commended the work undertaken at Melrose Court. When asked about the outcome of the garage review, Councillor Attridge asked officers to share the programme of works with Members.

On the WHQS, Councillor Palmer asked how many properties had met the Standard and how many were left to complete before 2020. The Team Manager advised that all component upgrades had been completed in around 1,200 properties with the remainder due to be completed by the deadline. He agreed to share the figures which were submitted to WG on an annual basis.

In welcoming the work on garage sites, Councillor Hughes said that this had unfortunately resulted in parking problems in some areas. When asked about the installation of dropped kerbs outside properties, Councillor Attridge advised that private residents were able to arrange for their own contractor subject to meeting the specification available via Streetscene Supervisors.

On the SHARP programme, Councillor Attridge advised that other potential sites were being explored for development, including Buckley. The Chief Officer encouraged Members to come forward with any suggestions for suitable sites.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Committee supports the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and business plan for 2019/20, as set out in the report;

(b)   That the Committee supports the proposed rent increase of up to 2.4% (plus up to £2);

(c)   That the Committee supports a garage rent increase of £1 per week and a garage plot rent increase of £0.20 per week; and

(d)   That the Committee supports the proposed HRA Capital Programme for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix C of the report.

52. SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

The Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) presented a report on the proposed review of sheltered accommodation within the context of an increasing demand for social housing across Flintshire; an increasing number of people with physical disabilities; and the strategic principle in the draft Housing Strategy of making the best use of existing stock.

The Chief Officer summarised the various data underpinning the review including reasons for non-occupation, the establishment of effective transport links and exploring new technology to support residents to live in their accommodation for as long as practicable. Views were sought on the proposal to align the Council's age criteria to that of the Housing Association partners of Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH), ie over 55 years old.

Whilst understanding the reason for changing the age range, Councillor Palmer expressed concerns that this should not be at the expense of those aged 50-55. The Chief Officer suggested that a fair approach would be to review applicants in that age range currently registered on SARTH to avoid them being disadvantaged, before agreeing a cut-off point.

In noting that this was a difficult decision, Councillor Shotton spoke in support of the proposed change. Councillor Attridge said that the SARTH process had improved greatly since its introduction and he gave assurance that older people in most need would be accommodated.

Councillor Dolphin referred to blocks of apartments developed by Wales & West Housing which could be suitable for individuals aged over 50 living alone.

Following a question by Councillor Hardcastle, the Senior Sheltered Housing Officer provided explanation on the recycling of mobility equipment where an adapted property could not be matched to applicants on the specialist housing register.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Committee supports amending the eligibility for all mini-groups and sheltered schemes to age 55 with the intention that they are all brought in line with the Housing Associations and Local Authority SARTH partners, subject to the review of current applicants between the age of 50 to 55; and

(b)   That the Committee supports the scope of an officer review as outlined within the report.

53. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration and the following changes were agreed:

- The specialist housing report to be brought forward from March to the special meeting on 18 February.

- An update on rent arrears to be included for February, with a quarterly update scheduled thereafter.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and

(b)   That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

54.   MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 11.05am)

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Chairman

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COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 18th February 2019
Report Subject	Housing Strategy and Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Strategy builds on the achievements delivered through the previous strategy and sets out the Council's vision:

'to work with key stakeholders to inform and deliver the right type of quality housing and most appropriate support to meet the needs of our population'.

It sets out 3 priorities with key areas for action within in each priority:
Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location through new builds, use of the private rented sector, and better use of existing stock.
Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home through support which will prevent vulnerable people becoming homeless and sustain them in their homes.
Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes including addressing fuel poverty through energy efficiency measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	To note the Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan for 2019-2024 and provide comments for consideration.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	Flintshire's Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan sets out the vision for how the Council with its partners, will deliver our affordable housing needs, provide the relevant support to our residents and ensure we create sustainable homes.
1.02	The previous Housing Strategy delivered on a number of achievements including: • Delivery of circa 300 new Social and Affordable Homes across Flintshire by the Council and our Housing Associations partners; • Worked with the private developers to provide 134 affordable ownership shared equity units for people who were unable to purchase in the open market; • Regenerated Flint Town Centre by demolishing the Maisonettes and replaced by 62 affordable rent and 30 social rented properties; • Established a common allocation policy for social rented units with our partners; and • Delivered a significant part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard on both the Council housing stock and our partner Housing Associations' stock.
1.03	Moving forward, the Housing Strategy will build on its previous achievements within the context of the current challenges we face such as welfare reform, the increase in 'hidden' homeless and limited resources. The Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions for the future in meeting the housing needs of Flintshire's residents. The vision for the Strategy is as follows:- *'To work with key stakeholders to inform and deliver the right type of quality housing and most appropriate support to meet the needs of our population.'*
	The Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan
1.04	The Housing Strategy identifies 3 priorities with key areas for action within in each priority: • Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location • Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home • Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes
1.05	Priority 1 aims to address the lack of supply of affordable housing to meet the demand, which is evident on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) for social housing and on the Affordable Housing Register - Tai Teg. To address this challenge we have identified in the strategy a number of solutions including:

	• Building more new homes; • Improving access to the private rented sector; • Better use of existing stock; and • Strategic acquisitions. The action plan needs to ensure we provide the right type of homes to meet people's needs in the right locations.
1.06	Priority 2 aims to ensure we have the right type of housing related support in place to prevent issues that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless. The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage their accommodation by assessing and developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independent a life as possible. The priority will focus on prevention and intervention, and complements the priorities set out in the Regional Homelessness Strategy and local action plan. It is, however, wider than homelessness and the action plan identifies interventions for different vulnerable groups including disabled and older people.
1.07	Priority 3 aims to improve the quality of existing housing stock and develop innovative, energy efficient new stock to contribute towards the decarbonisation target of 3% by 2020 as set out in the Climate Change Strategy for Wales Delivery Plan for Emission Reduction. The key areas includes: • maximising energy efficiency methods; • improving standards in the private rented sector; • improving the standard of public sector stock; and • address fuel poverty. Importantly this priority includes sustainability of homes and includes the provision of adaptations to allow people to stay in their homes as long as feasible.
	Next Steps
1.08	A workshop is due to be held in February 2019 with key stakeholders to review the action plan, including our Housing Association Partners and other groups with an interest, so as to:- a) Ensure the actions identified under each of the priorities are comprehensive, deliverable and affordable; b) Identify any gaps in terms of the actions listed; and c) Identify outcomes / outputs and lead organisations.
1.09	The aim is for the final version of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan to be available in Spring 2019.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Not as a direct result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The draft Housing Strategy was considered by the Chief Officers Team in December 2018 with a number of comments / amendments provided.
3.02	On 14th January there was a Member's workshop which has provided feedback, comments and observations for consideration and inclusion within the report where relevant.
3.03	A further workshop will take place in February 2019 with key stakeholders to consider the action plan and identify gaps / further actions and outcomes.
3.04	Wider consultation will be undertaken through the Council's website.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	N/A

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Draft copy of Housing Strategy and Action Plan

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. **Contact Officer:** Lesley Bassett, Housing Strategy Manager **Telephone:** 01352 701433 **E-mail:** Lesley.bassett@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	**Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) Policy –** the regional common policy for all major social landlords allocating social housing properties across Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham. **WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standard)** – The Welsh Government's standard for housing in Wales.

Flintshire Housing Strategy & Action Plan

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2019 - 2024

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Foreword

Lead Member for Housing/Chief Officer for Housing

The Council faces significant challenges with reducing resources and delivering 'more for less' but it is nonetheless committed to ensuring there are sufficient quality homes and support to meet demand. To achieve this we will work collaborative with our strategic partners in an intelligent and innovative way to deliver our ambition.
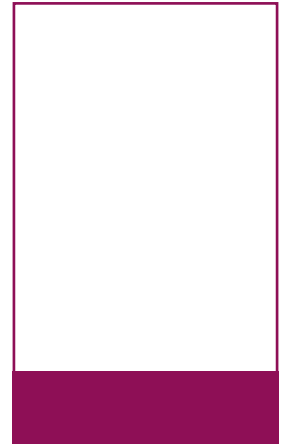
1.Introduction

1.1 Achievements to date

Flintshire County Council and its' partners are proud of what has been achieved collaboratively over the last 5 years including the delivery of 418 additional affordable homes. Below sets out some of the headline outcomes achieved during the period of the previous housing strategy 'A quality home for everyone' (2012 – 2017):

- 138 new social and affordable rent properties delivered through the Council's Strategic Housing And Regeneration Programme (SHARP) as well as 146 new social rented properties delivered through the Social Housing Grant programme by our partner Housing Associations

- 134 Shared Equity homes built for applicants on the Affordable Housing Register

- The 214 Maisonettes in Flint Town Centre have been demolished as part of the Flint Town Centre Regeneration project and created 92 new affordable homes through SHARP.

- The Council's Capital Programme has worked towards achieving WHQS for the Council's stock with 6,700 WHQS compliant kitchens delivered and 6,500 WHQS compliant bathrooms delivered and aims to be complete by 2020.

- Established a common approach to housing access through the North Wales Access to Housing Group's Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) project.

- Established a housing company, namely North East Wales Homes, to increase the accommodation available for local people.

A more detailed breakdown of our achievements against the individual objectives and priorities are set out in Appendix A.

*Delivered between 2011/12 and 2017/18 and includes provision from Flintshire County Council, the Housing Associations and private sector.

1.2 The 2018-23 housing strategy

Going forward the housing strategy for 2018 -2023 builds on previous achievements whilst taking into account the range of challenges we face including the reduction in resources, as well as the opportunities such as the Growth Deal. Importantly however, the Council knows that it can only achieve its strategic aims and priorities set out in this strategy by working in partnership and by combining resources.

We have identified three strategic priorities for the next 5 years, which we believe will provide the right framework for delivering homes, supporting people and promoting sustainability of place. These are:

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location;
Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home; and
Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes.

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1.Introduction

1.3   Principles framing the strategy

The Housing Strategy priorities align with those set out in our Regional Homelessness Strategy and the Local Action Plan, as well as the Regional and Local Commissioning Plans for Supporting People. These strategic documents have been developed in conjunction of each other to ensure all the delivery is complimentary and the delivery principles are shared, including:

- The prevention of homelessness;
- That suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are, or may become homeless;
- That satisfactory support is available for people who are, or may become homeless.

In addition the seven goals set out in the Well-being for Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 has informed the development of the strategy, by ensuring that we consider how we work better with people, communities and other organisations, as well as looking at how we prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach in delivery of the strategy.

The seven well-being goals have provided a framework for housing delivery as identified in the More Better report by Dr Ed Green:

- A globally responsible Wales - Setting higher standards – reduced carbon footprints and energy-positive communities
- A prosperous Wales - Developing an integrated all-Wales supply chain using local resources and a sustainable economy
- A resilient Wales - Future proofing with long term flexibility, adaptability, ecological value and climate resilience
- A healthier Wales - Reduced pressure on the health service through homes that promote physical and mental wellbeing
- A more equal Wales - Eliminating household poverty by delivering affordable housing for all
- A Wales of cohesive communities - Stronger neighbourhoods that support co-housing, self-build and cohesive communities
- A Wales of thriving culture and language - Promoting diversity through Wales' unique cultural heritage, context and landscape

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2. Housing in Flintshire:
The Key Facts

PLACE

- There are 67,090 dwellings in Flintshire (Council Tax data 2017) of which 73% are houses; 17% are bungalows; 8% are flats; and 2% are other types of properties (park homes/caravans etc).

- 73% of all Flintshire housing stock is owner occupied with 16% being affordable housing and 11% private rented properties

- 32% of all social housing is for over 55s or sheltered housing

- 41% of social rented properties are 3 bed houses and 5% are one bed properties

- There were 584 social housing lettings in 2016/17, with a current average wait time of 338 days for a 1 bed home

- There are 260 houses of multiple occupation in Flintshire, equivalent to 0.4% of all the housing stock

- 11% of households rent in the private sector compared with 15% across Wales

- The lower quartile rent in the private sector has risen form £494 in 2010 to £550 in 2017

- The average lower quartile rent in the private sector for a 1 bed flat is £395 per month and the local housing allowance is £353 per month

- An additional 84 affordable homes were built in 2016/17 and 249 in 2017/18

- 49 new affordable homes were delivered through the planning system (16/17)

- There are around 500 empty homes which have been reported to Flintshire County Council

- The median house price has risen from £141,500 in 2007 to £155,450 in 2017 and the income required to be affordable is £39,973 (the median household income in Flintshire is £26,989)

- The affordability ratio of lower quartile household incomes to lower quartile house price is 6.24, higher than the Welsh average of 5.78

- 71% of households living in affordable housing have an income of less than £300 gross each week

- 11.2% of the working age population is in receipt of welfare benefits

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2. Housing in Flintshire:
The Key Facts

PEOPLE

- There are around 1,400 households in housing need registered for social housing, with around a third being under the age of 35 years

- 55% of all social housing applicants require a 1 bed property

- On the affordable housing register there are 188 households registered for affordable rent and 153 for affordable ownership (October 2018)

- 228 additional affordable homes are required each year to meet demand

- There is an identified need for a transit site for the Gypsy and Traveller community

- At the end of June 2018 there were 67 people in emergency or temporary accommodation

- There is a shortfall of temporary and supported accommodation for those groups identified as priority in the Homelessness Strategy: young people; prison leavers; rough sleepers; and those with complex and multiple needs.

- There was an xx% overspend on the temporary accommodation budget last year (2017/18)

- Almost a quarter of all households in Flintshire are pensioner households

- It is projected by 2021 over one fifth of the population will be over 65 years old

- 19.5% of the Flintshire population has a limiting long term illness

- There are 55 people on the Specialist Housing Register requiring a wheelchair accessible property and 13 households in need of larger homes (2018)

- The majority of single households are in the social housing sector, with a shortfall of smaller homes being developed through the open market

- There is a shortfall in support for people with mental health issues and with complex need

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2. Housing in Flintshire:
The Key Facts

QUALITY

- 10.1% of occupied dwellings in the private sector across Flintshire contain a household which is in fuel poverty

- 1.6% of private dwellings do not have central heating

- A quarter of private rented dwellings fail the decent homes standards

- 30% of excess cold hazards can be remedied with an intervention that savings to the NHS will offset within one year

- The tenures with the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with the state of repair of their property is in the Council housing stock and private rented stock (2014)

- The Council and Welsh Government are investing £50m in the Welsh Quality Housing Standards addressing the levels of disrepair in the Council housing stock (due for completion in 2020)

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3. Where housing fits:
the bigger picture

3.1   National strategic context Housing Act (Wales) 2014

The housing act, this aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales. The key elements are:

- The introduction of a compulsory registration and licensing scheme for private sector landlords and letting agents, which will be delivered by Rent Smart Wales.
- A reform of homelessness law, placing a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness and allowing them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector. Authorities must also review their homelessness services and have a homelessness strategy in place by 2018.
- A duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified.
- Empowering local authorities to charge more than the standard rate of council tax on long-term empty properties and certain types of second homes.
- Assistance for the provision of housing by Co-operative Housing Associations.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act is the new law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support. The act recognises the concept of "social value" which aims to quantify the importance and "value" of positive changes to a person's well-being.

The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered with people having more of a say in the care and support they receive. It also requires Councils to promote the services provided by social enterprises, co-operatives, and third sector organisations.

Local authorities and health boards must jointly carry out an assessment of the population to find out the care and support needs in an area. We have used the North Wales Assessment to inform our evidence base.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

As a result of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and further Central Government announcements relating to the welfare and benefits system, households in Flintshire are experiencing significant changes to their finances and entitlements. These include:

- From April 2013, a limit on the amount of housing benefit working age tenants in social housing can claim, now covering the size of property that they are judged to need, (known as the 'bedroom tax'). Similar conditions have been in place in the private sector since 2008.
- From April 2013 the single-room rate entitlement which previously applied to persons aged under 25 was extended to people aged 35 and under.

The Welfare Reform Act introduced Universal Credit which is to replace six of the main means-tested benefits and tax credits, including housing benefit.

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3. Where housing fits:
the bigger picture

Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

This Act aims to make it simpler to rent a home and protect tenants' rights. In general, the Act replaces all current tenancies and licences with just two types of occupation contract; secure or standard. At present it is anticipated that all new and existing tenancy agreements will need to be re-issued. The Act also creates new rights for victims of domestic abuse, for people in shared houses and for tenants needing repairs to be carried out.

Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018

The number of homes lost through the Right to Buy across Wales is equivalent to 45% of the total social housing stock as it was in 1981. This has resulted in longer waiting times for people in housing need, many of whom are vulnerable, to access a home they can afford.

This Act aims to encourage the development of new housing stock and protect recent investment. The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire will end on the 24 March 2018 for 'new homes' which have not been let as social housing for the six months prior to this date. For existing social housing stock, final abolition will take place on 26 January 2019.

Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England & Wales) Regulations 2015

The Regulations 2015 are designed to tackle the least energy-efficient properties in England and Wales – those rated F or G on their Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The Regulations establish a minimum standard of band E for domestic privately rented property, affecting new tenancies from 1 April 2018.

Additional legislative considerations include:
• The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015
• Equalities Act (Wales) 2010
• Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014
• Code of Guidance to Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness, 2016

3.2 Regional strategic context
North Wales Population Assessment

The North Wales Population Assessment is a review of the care and support needs of the population in North Wales, including the support needs of carers. It was produced by the six North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) supported by Public Health Wales, to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 (the act).

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3. Where housing fits:
the bigger picture

3.2 Regional strategic context
North Wales Population Assessment

Some of the key housing related findings for Flintshire include:
- Maintaining the local council care home provision and exploring the development of intermediate care hub focused on preventative and early intervention work.
- An increase (based on projected need from demographic changes) of a further 178 care home placements by 2020.
- Continue to explore and develop housing options to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities in partnership with other organisations.
- Local councils should consider the needs of veterans, as a vulnerable group, in their corporate planning and corporate priority setting.
- Housing Associations and third sector support providers who have experience of delivering services to particular vulnerable groups will have an important role in assisting the efforts of statutory organisations. There will be a continuing need to provide support services that complement the statutory sector, as we anticipate a steady increase in population up to 2020.
- Address the gaps in service / support including:
  - Lack of single person accommodation
  - Limited hostel provision
  - Shortage of specialist provision for individuals with ongoing medical conditions
  - Gaps in support services

North Wales Economic Growth Deal

The six North Wales Local Authorities are working collaboratively on a Growth Deal, with housing as one of the strategic priorities. The proposal is to establish a regional Housing Enabler project that would accelerate the rate of house building and provide support for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) developers across North Wales. The proposed scheme provides support for SME house builders currently experiencing barriers to entering the market; increase the number of housing completions; provide more affordable housing; and increase the number of construction jobs. Outcomes from the project would include 250 affordable housing as part of 1,000 housing programme delivery.

Regional Homelessness Strategy and Local Action Plan

The 6 Local Authorities across North Wales have worked collaboratively to develop a Regional Homelessness Strategy and locally each Local Authority has a Local Action Plan, and will be in place by the end of 2018 as set out in the Housing Act (Wales) 2014. The strategy is aligned with the housing strategy with the primary objective of 'reducing homelessness across North Wales'. The Homelessness strategy has 3 themes and priorities (set out below) and the Local Action Plan identifies key actions to address them.

People	Homes	Services
Youth homelessness; prison leavers; rough sleepers; and people with complex needs.	Improved access to accommodation (supply); temporary accommodation; alternative delivery models; and housing first.	Prevention / intervention; mitigation of welfare reform; health and social care; and communication.

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3. Where housing fits:
the bigger picture

North Wales Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan 2017-2020

The Supporting People Programme is a Welsh Government funded programme that provides housing related support to vulnerable groups, supporting them to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence. The strategy is overseen by the Regional Collaborative Committee (RCC). The regional priority areas identified in the strategy are: domestic abuse; people leaving prison; mental health; learning disabilities; and rough sleepers.

3.3 Local strategic context
The Council Plan (2017 – 2023) Strategic Priorities

Flintshire County Council has identified housing as a key strategic priority as set out in the Council Plan for 2017 - 2023, ensuring its residents have access to:
• Appropriate and affordable homes, through ensuring the supply of affordable and quality council housing of all tenures; and
• Modern, efficient and adapted homes, through ensuring the supply of affordable and quality housing of all tenures.

The Council's aim is to:
• Prevent homelessness
• Meet the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population
• Develop more opportunities for people to access affordable rent and low cost home ownership
• Build the maximum number of Council houses possible as part of the housing supply solution
• Meet the Welsh Government target for all social housing to be brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

Flintshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2015-2030

Flintshire is in the process of preparing its LDP and has produced its Preferred Strategy Consultation Document, which sets out the growth ambition for the County and its strategic policy for meeting housing needs through the planning system. The Preferred Strategy identifies a requirement for 7,645 new houses during the plan period, 2015 – 2030 with a percentage of affordable homes of different tenures to meet the local demand.

Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan

Below the Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan is the Local Commissioning Plan, which will incorporate the regional supporting people priorities as well as those identified in the Homelessness Regional Strategy and Local Action Plan, providing a needs based commissioning framework for Flintshire. This is due to be in place from April 2019.

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4. The challenges we face

Challenges

Supply

- There is a mismatch of supply of social housing to meet the needs on the housing register resulting in long waiting times before being allocated a suitable property.
- There is an increase in demand for single person accommodation as a result of Welfare Reforms but a lack of shared housing (HMOs) which would provide affordable accommodation.
- Increased development costs due to skill shortages and an increase in costs of materials.
- A reduction in the supply of available private rented properties due to tax changes and the implementation of Rent Smart Wales.
- Homes to rent in the private sector are increasingly not affordable.
- Unaffordable housing market for many local people.

Demand

- An aging demographic with people with multiple and complex issues increasing demand on services and housing.
- An increase in demand for adapted properties with insufficient resources to provide the adaptations.
- Increase for the demand for, and subsequent cost of, emergency and temporary accommodation.
- Increase in rent arrears and evictions within the social housing sector impacting on levels of homelessness.
- High levels of fuel poverty across Flintshire.
- A need to improve the housing standards in the private sector to reduce wider costs to the public purse.

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5.Where we want to be

5.1 Our vision

The vision for the Housing Strategy is:

To work in partnership with key stakeholders to inform and deliver the right type of quality housing and the most appropriate support to meet the housing needs of our population.

5.2 Our priorities

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

We have a significant demand for social rented properties through the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and for affordable rented and ownership on the TAI TEG register. To meet these demands we need to consider a range of solutions including building new homes; improving access to the private rented sector; better use of existing stock; or through strategic acquisitions. Importantly we need to ensure we are providing the right type of homes to meet peoples' needs in the right location.

1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments by:

- Influencing the Welsh Government Social Housing Grant programme, managed by the Local Authority, to ensure maximum investment to meet the right type of new build social housing across Flintshire.
- Developing a forward development plan for the Council's new build programme post 2021 - Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).
- Maximising investment for development through North East Wales Homes.
- Maximising the provision of affordable housing on market led sites through negotiations with developers on S106 requirements.
- Exploring innovation across the Construction sector to increase supply whilst reducing development costs.

1.2 To increase the supply through better use of existing social housing stock by:

- Reviewing the Council's housing stock and our partner Housing Association stock to establish whether there is scope to utilise stock in a more effective way to meet local housing needs.
- Developing an Accessible Housing register, identifying all properties which have an adaptation.

1.3 To increase the supply by bringing empty homes back into use through:

- Developing policies which identify options for securing empty properties and bringing them back into use through for example compulsory purchase orders.
- Reducing the number of empty properties identified through the Council Tax system, working collaboratively with key partners to establish a priority list of target properties and focus resources on addressing them, particularly those which are long term empty or that attract complaints.
- The provision of financial support to bring empty properties back into use by utilising existing funding available including through the social housing grant.

5.Where we want to be

1.4 To increase the supply through the private rented sector (PRS) by:

- Ensuring a dedicated PRS team / Officer is available in the Council to co-ordinate and promote the PRS in order to increase availability.
- Developing a dedicated PRS action plan with the aim of delivering an effective service for landlords and tenants across Flintshire.
- Delivering a bespoke landlord offer and working with the Landlord Forum to develop innovative approaches to addressing the challenges faced by landlords and tenants.

1.5 To provide the right type of homes to meet the increased demand for single person accommodation and larger properties for families through:

- The Housing Strategy team informing the Housing Associations and Council's new build programmes of specific housing demands in the area of development for incorporation into schemes.
- Developing innovative approaches to the delivery and management of properties to future proof and ensure sustainability of the properties.
- Considering the use of strategic acquisitions where resources are available.

1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision through:

- Developing an overarching framework for providing the most cost effective and equitable delivery of specialist housing between the Council and its partners, whilst meeting the needs of our communities.
- Using the information gathered through the specialist housing register ensure we provide housing which meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Working with partners in health and social services develop housing provision for people with complex health needs.
- Providing the right type of housing to meet the needs older people now and in the future.

1.7 To provide the right type of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community through:

- Ensuring the need for residential pitches are met in Flintshire working with the community.
- The provision of a transit site within the County.
- Ensuring ongoing effective management of the Council owned site at Riverside.

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5.Where we want to be

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Housing related support aims to prevent the problems that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless. The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage accommodation by assisting in developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.

2.1 To reduce homelessness through prevention by:

- Working across the region with Local Authority partners to deliver the regional homelessness strategy and local action plan.
- Working with all relevant partners in Flintshire to prevent homelessness and support people to sustain their tenancies.

2.2 To reduce the demand for temporary accommodation by:

- Ensuring suitable accommodation is provided to meet the needs of homeless people / families.
- Increasing the supply of suitable move on accommodation, particularly for people with support needs.

2.3 To provide the right type of support for the most vulnerable people with complex needs through:

- Strategic commissioning of support services which will be responsive to the full range of support needs.
- Working with all partners and other teams in the Council to ensure availability and quality of support.

2.4 To provide a range of financial and social support through:

- Ensuring a range of financial products to support people to access and remain in their home.
- Developing a range of innovative support to address key barriers in accessing and remain in their home.

2.5 To provide support for older people to either remain in their own home or move to more suitable accommodation by:

- Reviewing the Single Access Register To Housing (SARTH) and understand the housing needs of older people.
- Developing a wider understanding of housing requirements for older people and developing innovative solutions.

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5.Where we want to be

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Improving the quality of existing housing stock and developing innovative, energy efficient new stock is an important objective to contribute to the decarbonisation by 2020 target set by the Welsh Government and the Council's aim to address fuel poverty.

3.1 Maximising energy efficiency standards and delivery methods through:

- The provision of private sector renewal energy loans.
- Promoting the gas infill programme for social housing properties that are off-gas.
- Retro fitting of energy efficiency measures for social housing stock.

3.2 Improving the quality and standard of accommodation in the private sector through:

- The 'Healthy Homes and Healthy People 2025' project bringing together a voluntary group of concerned people and organisations working with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequality in North Wales.
- Rent Smart Wales implementation.

3.3 Completion of the WHQS programme by 2020 across all social housing stock in Flintshire.

3.4 Adopt a collaborative approach to plan for the increase in demand for adaptations in properties to allow residents to remain in their home by:

- Setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence for delivery by all partners.
- Improving the intelligence on the demand for adaptations and using it to establish resource implications.
- Linking the systems for managing and delivering adaptations.

3.5 Improve the standard of new build properties built by the Council and Housing Associations by:

- Evaluating and delivering the Flintshire House Standard.
- Promoting the Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements (DQR).
- Delivering different construction methods to improve energy efficiency.

3.6 Address fuel poverty across Flintshire through housing by:

- Delivering and promoting the Warm Homes Fund.
- Promoting and delivering the Arbed for Wales programme.

6.Delivering our strategy

6.1 Governance

The Housing Strategy will be overseen by Flintshire's Strategic Housing Partnership which consists of the Chief Executives of our partner Housing Associations, as well as representatives from the Council including the Lead Member for Housing and the Chief Officer for Housing and Assets.

6.2 Monitoring and review

Flintshire's Housing Strategy team will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan against the actions set out in the action plan. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure relevant actions are included to ensure the vision and priorities are met.

6.3 Resources

The actions within the plan will be met through existing funding resources including for example social housing grant, flexible funding grant and ICF etc. The strategy aims to provide a framework for the different funding sources.

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
The RSL Welsh Government Social Housing Grant programme	• Increasing development capacity in Flintshire through zoning additional Housing Associations. • Ensuring maximum number of properties delivered using the available funding. • Ensuring a robust reserve list of schemes. • Ensuring the type and tenure meets local housing needs, primarily social rent properties, informed by the Council's Housing Strategy Team.	Increase number of social rented housing by xx Increase the number of affordable rented homes by xx Increase the number of single person accommodation by xx Increase the number of available private rented sector housing by xx Bring xx empty properties back into use Provide an additional xx specialist housing (accessible and larger family accommodation) Older people / intergenerational homes	
The Council's new build programme: SHARP/ HRA	• Meeting the HRA Business Plan's ambition to deliver 50 new social rent homes per annum up to 2030 in order to meet the demand of the social housing register. • Ensuring the delivery of new builds adds value through addressing the pressures for certain housing types by basing development plans on intelligence. • Utilising Welsh Government's Affordable Housing Grant to support delivery. • Securing a lift in the borrowing cap to enable additional financial resources to meet the Council's delivery ambitions. • Developing a forward delivery plan for the SHARP once 500 new homes target achieved.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
NEW Homes investment	• Supporting the delivery of affordable rented properties through SHARP for NEW Homes. • Ensuring NEW Homes maximises its ability to invest in the delivery of affordable rented properties through using their existing assets.	Increase number of social rented housing by xx Increase the number of affordable rented homes by xx Increase the number of single person accommodation by xx Increase the number of available private rented sector housing by xx Bring xx empty properties back into use Provide an additional xx specialist housing (accessible and larger family accommodation) Older people / intergenerational homes	
Maximising the provision of affordable housing on market led sites through S106 requirements	• Ensuring the new LDP affordable housing planning policy requirements maximises appropriate on-site provision. • Supporting and encourage our delivery partners to utilise private finance and Rent to Own grant to acquire units from developers for affordable rent and rent to own / shared ownership, in addition to the planning requirement. • Working with developers to ensure delivery of affordable ownership models, such as shared equity, where there is demand.		
Exploring innovation across the sector to increase supply and reduce delivery costs	• Working with partners to use off site manufacturing / Modern Methods of Manufacturing • Explore opportunities through the regional growth deal partnership • Considering investing in designs for multi-generational / flexible homes		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.2 To increase the supply through better use of existing social housing stock			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
The Council's housing stock	• Undertaking a review of the stock and tenancies to determine where there is under occupation or where there is capacity to realign the use of the stock • Reviewing the existing use of stock to assess best use • Developing an incentive scheme to encourage movement in the stock where it can be proven to meet a need from the housing register and address under occupation / overcrowding.	Increase number of social rented housing	
Partner Housing Association stock	• NEED INPUT FROM RSLS		
Accessible Housing	• Develop an Accessible Housing Register for all social housing stock to enable better use of adapted stock		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.3 To increase the supply by bringing empty homes back into use			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Developing relevant policies to maximise legal powers	• Develop a policy for Flintshire to maximise legal powers including the potential to compulsory purchase or take ownership on a temporary basis. • Explore potential resources with Welsh Government for compulsory purchase orders • Developing an initiative, in partnership with our Housing Associations, to bring back empty properties into use to meet specific needs such as for larger families.		
Reducing empty properties	• Working closely with partner Housing Associations and the Council Tax Team to identify those properties which are long term empty and are causing issues to the local community.		
The provision of financial support to bring empty properties back into use	• Promoting 'Houses to Homes' loans, which aims to bring empty properties back into use through providing affordable loans up to £25k in the private sector.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.4 To increase the supply through the private rented sector (PRS)			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
A dedicated PRS team / Officer in the Council	• Realign existing staffing resources and expertise to develop an improved PRS offer across Flintshire.		
Develop a PRS action plan ensuring an effective service	• Undertaking a review of the affordability of the sector and explore ways to address them through incentives or interventions if required. • Working with Environmental Health team to improve standards within the sector.		
The delivery of a bespoke landlord offer	• Consulting with private sector landlords through the Landlord Forum to establish a better understanding of the barriers and what the critical success factors would be to provide a successful offer. • Providing a range of offers for Landlords to incentivise their engagement and commitment to the Council including the BOND. • Ensuring the offer is flexible as well as robust and cost effective.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.5 To provide the right type of homes to meet the increased demand for single person accommodation and larger properties for families			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
The RSL's and Council's new build programmes	• Requiring higher numbers of single person accommodation and larger properties as part of all new build developments. • Continuous assessment of priorities and regular updates		
Developing innovative approaches	• Reviewing best practice elsewhere and identifying a range of options that could meet our emerging demands for single person and larger units in a cost effective way. • Identifying innovative delivery models which can provide smaller units which are flexible and can be altered to meet changes in demand in the future. • Considering the appropriateness of different delivery methods such as self build/ custom build and co-operative approaches to meet the need.		
Strategic acquisitions	• Providing a strategic acquisition fund for properties which would meet a very specific need and for small numbers of properties. • Requesting partner Housing Associations to utilise social housing grant to acquire individual properties where there is a specific need which is either urgent or cannot be met through current stock.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
An overarching / strategic framework for determining the most cost effective delivery	• Reviewing the options for delivery i.e. adaptations; acquisition or new build and develop a universal assessment mechanism to determine the most cost effective delivery option within an equality framework. • Reviewing and mapping resources available to meet the increasing demand for adaptations. • Exploring a partnership approach to funding and delivery including Council Housing / DFG teams, HAs Housing teams, Supporting People, Social Services, Occupational Health, Health and ICF partnership. • Lobbying Welsh Government to simplify funding for adaptations across all delivery partners.		
Meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities	• Continuing to deliver as a partnership to meet the needs of people on the specialist housing register. • Maximising the use of adaptations to help sustain tenancies and reduce increased pressure on the housing register. • Considering potential strategic acquisitions to meet the needs of particular complex cases. • Ensuring adapted properties are included on all Housing Association new build developments to meet the needs of the specialist register. • Exploring the delivery of adapted properties on market led schemes.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Meeting the needs of people with complex health needs	• Developing a proactive relationship with the Health sector to improve communication with Housing Strategy around housing needs of those in their care. • Delivering affordable transitional accommodation to reduce delayed transfer of care – Glan y Morfa – through securing funding and undertaking the necessary works. • Working with the Homeless Prevention team to inform provision and identify best practice		
Providing the right type of housing to meet the needs older people	• Understanding the housing needs of the older people. • Exploring alternative and innovative housing models for older people such as intergenerational properties or co-operative models, which help to keep older people active and healthier for longer. • Providing specialist provision such as extra care and supported housing for those older people with care needs including dementia. • Reviewing existing specific older persons social housing stock to ensure they can sustain tenancies. • Exploring potential to include age-friendly properties as part of new build market developments.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location

Priority 1.7 To provide the right type of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Meet the need for residential ptiches	• Increasing the number of pitches in line with Flintshire's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) through market led schemes and the refurbishment of the Council owned site.		
Provision of a transit site within the County	• Identifying and assessing potential sites to deliver a transit site in Flintshire. • Applying for planning permission for transit site and secure Welsh Government grant to deliver provision.		
Management of the Council owned site	• Review different management models for the Council owned site. • Redesigning and delivering the refurbishment of the site to provide modern pitches. • Developing an allocation policy for the site.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.1 To reduce homelessness through prevention			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Work across the region with partners to prevent homelessness	• Working across the region to develop a cross Local Authority Regional Homelessness Strategy, pulling together resources to deliver shared interventions where appropriate and cost effective. • Developing a better understanding of the causes of homelessness to inform the development of the right interventions through collective, regional intelligence gathering.		
Work with partners in Flintshire to prevent homelessness	• Develop a Local Action Plan for homelessness to ensure local issues are addressed. • Develop preventative measures by providing tenancy support and crisis management to enable the people to sustain their tenancies.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.2 To reduce the demand for temporary accommodation			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of homelesss	• Develop different models of delivery such as Housing First. • Develop a 'hub' to provide a range of services for the homeless including emergency beds and support services. • Working closely with Housing Strategy and development partners to inform the delivery of flexible and suitable accommodation.		
Increase availability of move on accommodation	• Undertake a review of the existing stock and explore options for increasing supply of move on accommodation. • Ensure commissioning priorities incorporate the necessary support required to sustain tenancies.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.3 To provide the right type of support for the most vulnerable people			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Strategic commissioning of support services	• Develop the Local Commissioning Plan incorporating the Regional Homelessness Strategy priorities to ensure a joined up approach. • Support the work of the Regional Collaborative Committee. • Commission support for priority groups: Youth homeless; Prison Leavers; Rough Sleepers; and Complex Needs.		
Working with partners and other teams in the Council to ensure available support.	• Working with key stakeholders e.g. health to provide support packages at an early stage through joint protocols. • Working with Social Services and health colleagues to ensure supported living. • Working with strategic delivery partners to ensure capacity and scale of support is available to avoid unacceptable delays in provision for the individual.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.4 To provide a range of financial and social support			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Ensuring a range of financial products to support people to access and remain in their home	• Promote and develop affordable ownership products including Shared Equity; Homebuy and Rent to Own. • Promote private rent support through the BOND. • Develop access to affordable starter furnishing packages. • Provide financial management advice and access to financial products with the aim of reducing the risk of rent arrears / eviction.		
Develop a range of innovative support to address key barriers	• Explore a range of initiatives, based on best practice, which will provide cost benefits in the medium term to the public finances. For example a furniture rental social enterprise.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home

Priority 2.5 To provide support for older people to either remain in their own home or move to more suitable accommodation			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Review the SARTH to understand the housing needs of older people in social housing	• Develop a plan with our Housing Association partners to address the needs of older people on SARTH. • Develop an understanding of demand for adaptations to enable future planning of resources. • Links with Social Services; Residential Care homes; Extra Care and supported housing to scope out move on options.		
Develop an understanding of the wider housing requirements for older people	• Consult with interest groups to identify key issues, barriers and potential opportunities for the an action plan. • Review tenancy support and the potential of incentives to encourage downsizing where appropriate.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.1 Maximising energy efficiency standards and delivery methods			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Private sector renewal energy loans	• Maximise the use of the loan products aimed at owner occupiers to bring properties up to a good standard by making them energy efficient and removing hazards.		
Gas infill programme for social housing properties that are off-gas	• Working with Wales and West Utilities to extend the gas network. HRA properties have been completed, the programme is now engaging the Housing Associations.		
Retro fit of energy efficiency measures for social housing stock	• Identify the strategic sites within communities that need redevelopment		

Priority 3.2 Improving the quality and standard of accommodation in the private sector			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Healthy Homes and Healthy People – 2025 project bringing together a voluntary group of concerned people and organisations working with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequality in North Wales	• Encourage different teams to think more broadly when undertaking their daily roles to improve the homes of people in the private sector.		
Rent Smart Wales	• Work with Landlords to promote Rent Smart Wales and improve the standards of the private rented stock.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.3 Completing the WHQS programme by 2020 across all social housing stock			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
The Council stock	• Complete environmental improvements by 2020 and identify funding to undertake the external works. CHECK SEAN		
Housing Association partners' stock	NEED RSL INPUT		

Priority 3.4 Adopt a collaborative approach to preparing for the increase in demand for adaptations in properties to allow residents to remain in their home			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Set appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence	• Establish a partnership which incorporates all partners with funding for adaptations including: **(i)** The Council's HRA budget **(ii)** Private sector Disabilities Funding Grant; **(iii)** Care and Repair, ENABLE for minor and major adaptations for those in the private sector; **(iv)** Housing Associations can access Physical Adaptation Grants for existing tenants.		
Improve the intelligence on the demand for adaptations	• Pull together a range of data from all partners to establish a better understanding of future demand.		
Link the systems for managing and delivering adaptations	• Collaboratively develop adapted housing policies for all partners as part of the Specialist Housing Group. • Review service standards for adaptations in line with Welsh Government. • Consider how the EHRC toolkit can be utilised in Flintshire.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.5 Improve the standard of new build properties built by the Council and Housing Associations			
Action	**Task**	**Outcome/Output**	**By when / Lead**
Utilising the Flintshire House Standards	• Continually review and evaluate the standards to ensure they are relevant and contribute to the wider energy efficiency agenda. • Consider introducing further requirements such as solar panels / PVs, electric car charging points.		
Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements (DQR)	RSL INPUT • Ensure a consistent standard of quality of internal layout is achieved across a range of standard house types that are as flexible as possible to cater for most residents needs.		
Deliver different construction methods	• Deliver new builds using sustainable materials including timber frame / SIPs, and improve SAP ratings as part of SHARP. • Develop procurement opportunities through collaboration with Housing Association partners to deliver new construction methods. • Develop using off site manufacturing to reduce waste and quicker construction methods.		

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7. Making it happen:
the action plan

In order for the strategy to be delivered and be effective we will utilise a range of resources with the aim of ensuring they meet our strategic priorities as set out above.

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes

Priority 3.6 Address fuel poverty across Flintshire through housing

Action	Task	Outcome/Output	By when / Lead
Deliver the Warm Homes Fund	• The Council has secured £3m to tackle fuel poverty in Flintshire by improving efficiency through for example: fitting new heating systems or accessing the gas network.		
Arbed for wales programme	• A spatially targeted WG programme focusing on windows and doors and external wall insulation, to address fuel poverty in the private sector.		

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Appendices

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COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 18th February 2019
Report Subject	Housing Rent Income
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Scrutiny Members with a further operational update on the latest position for rent income collection following the recent report to Scrutiny Committee in November 2018.
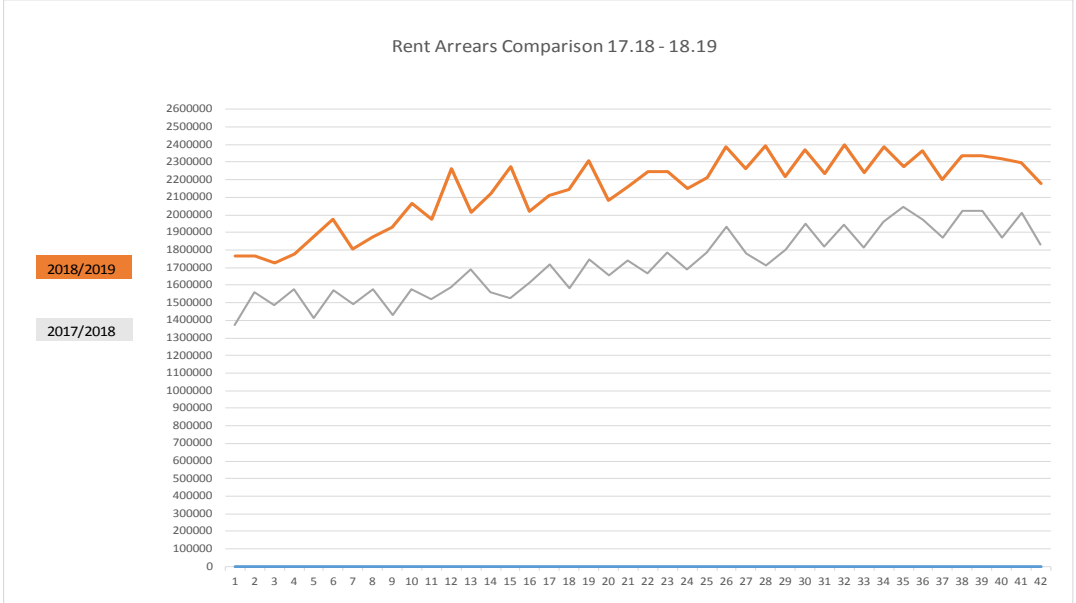
Despite the ongoing challenges of increasing numbers of tenants migrating away from Housing Benefit to the Universal Credit system, the latest collection position shows that by implementing measures through increased resources, early intervention and adopting a 'rent first' approach, collection of rent is starting to stabilise with total rent arrears reducing from £2.22m to £2.14m.

This report also sets out the latest position with the implementation of specialist housing software that will guide the future work of the Rent Enforcement service to ensure rent collection levels are maximised in an ever increasingly challenging environment for collection of rent.
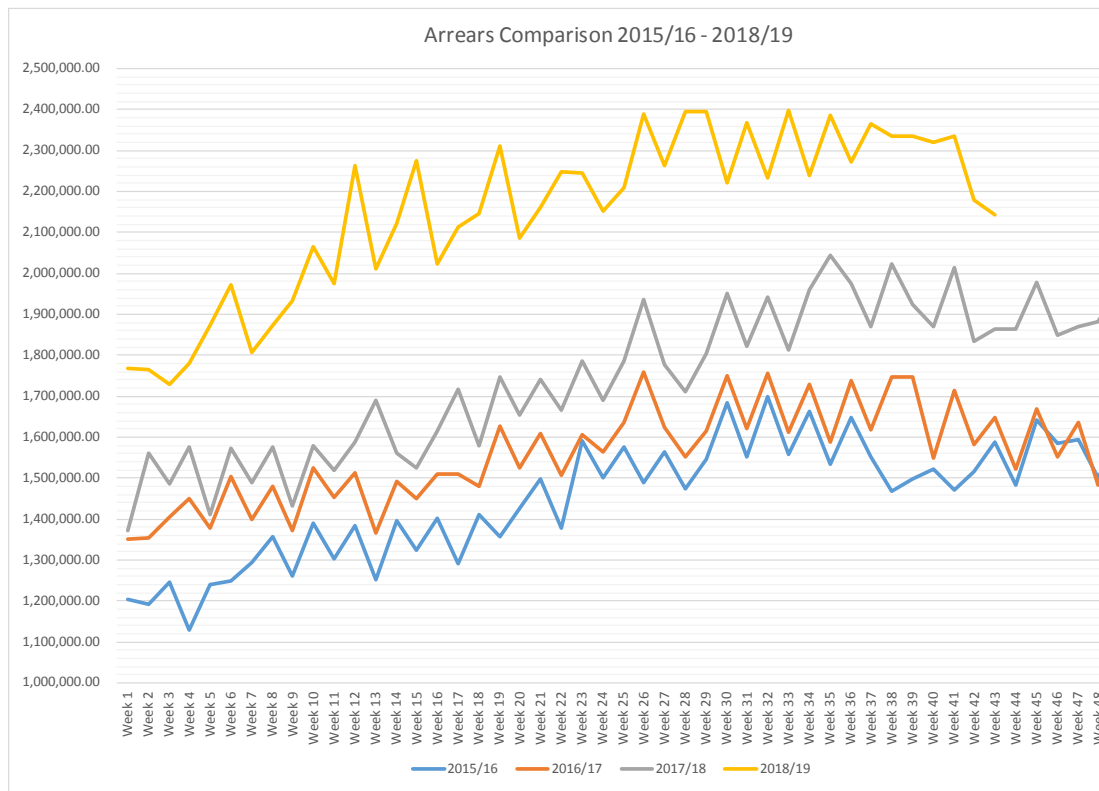
	RECOMMENDATIONS
1	Note the latest financial position for rent arrears in 2018-19 which shows collection of rent is starting to stabilise.
2	Endorse the measures being taken to improve rent collection during 2019-20 through the deployment of specialised software to support a targeted approach to rent arrears recovery.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	**EXPLAINING THE LATEST POSITION OF RENT ARREARS**
1.01	Latest figures for accumulated rent arrears up to week 43, show rent arrears are £2.14m compared to £2.22m as at the time of the last report to Scrutiny in November 2018. In other words, rent arrears have fallen by £80k. This represents a significant improvement against the backdrop of an ever increasing number of tenants migrating from Housing Benefit (HB) to Universal Credit (UC).
1.02	The UC system continues to place an expectation on tenants to manage their own finances and budget to pay rent on time to the Council. UC remains a significant risk to the Council as many tenants, especially those tenants considered to be vulnerable, simply cannot cope with the budgeting obligations of paying rent on time. In many cases, tenants with complex needs fall into arrears.
1.03	Delays in processing UC claims by the Department of Work and Pensions, and the five week average turnaround before payment of UC is typically made continues to exacerbate cash-flow difficulties for tenants, as it does for the Council.
1.04	To mitigate the financial challenges for the Council, the work of the Housing Intervention Teams continues and additional resources are being deployed to ensure tenants who fall into arrears receive help and support at an early stage through a 'fast tracked' approach.
1.05	Rent Enforcement officers are also working intensively to contact by telephone those tenants who fall into arrears, even for relatively small sums. This approach is important to instil the 'rent first' philosophy and to recognise that payment of rent on time is critical to the Council.
1.06	The chart below illustrates the latest position with rent arrears in 2018/19 and which shows the correlation with rent collection in 2017/18. Rent Arrears Comparison 17.18 - 18.19

1.07	The last two years of UC full service rollout have been extremely challenging for the Rent Income service and the chart below plots the latest positon for rent collection. It shows the stark contrast between arrear trends reported in 2016/17 and 2017/18 when UC full service was rolled out across Flintshire.
Arrears Comparison 2015/16 - 2018/19
1.08	Despite the unprecedented additional work generated by UC full service rollout, the Rent Income service is now stemming the increase in rent arrears and the rate with which rent arrears were increasing is slowing down significantly.
1.09	In response to this changing and challenging environment, as part of the Councils recovery strategy for those tenants in receipt of UC, the Council is increasingly applying to DWP for direct payments. The guidance says these arrangements can be made where a UC claimant: • Has at least two months' rent arrears • Has been evicted for rent arrears in the past year or is threatened with eviction The DWP can decide how much to pay to landlords. This will normally be the amount of the claimants UC housing costs element, unless his or her UC is less than this because of, for example, earnings or reductions for sanctions.
1.10	Direct payments are typically only put in place for social and public sector landlords but the UK Government has recently announced a series of measures that will result in private sector landlords also being able to apply for direct payments for private sector tenants.
1.11	Latest statistics show that of the 562 Council tenants in receipt of UC, approximately 247 (equating to nearly 45%) have managed payments set up for DWP to deduct housing costs at source.

1.12	The table below shows the latest rent arrears position for those tenants in receipt of UC as opposed to those still in receipt of HB.

Claim Type	Number of tenants	Total Arrears	Average Rent Arrears Feb 19	Average Rent Arrears Nov 18	Variance (+/-)
Universal Credit	562	£672,933	£1,197	£1,473	-£276
Housing Benefit	2,238	£478,993	£214	£334	-£120

1.13	To ensure rent is paid on time, the Council continues to focus more closely those tenants who fail to pay and who will not engage with support services. Eviction for non-payment of rent is always used as a last resort and latest statistics show that the Rent Enforcement team have undertaken twenty seven evictions up to the of January 2019 for those tenants who will not pay or engage.

Year	Evictions for rent arrears
2018/19 (to date)	27
2017/18	22
2016/17	19
2015/16	22

1.14	To ensure Council resources are targeted to those tenants who need most help to ensure rent is paid on time, a further initiative is being implemented in Q1 of 2019/20 to improve the supporting software systems that guide the work of Rent Enforcement Officers. Feasibility work has been undertaken with a software supplier whose 'Rent Sense' solution is rapidly becoming the housing industry standard for analysing payment variations, risk and escalating which tenants to contact and when. The software uses algorithms to analyse payment patterns, highlight risk and provide predictive intelligence to support a more focused and targeted approach to rent arrears recovery work.
1.15	At present there are 130 social landlords using 'Rent Sense', including 41 Council's and a significant number of social landlords who have low levels of arrears are already deploying 'Rent Sense' within their organisations. Each day the software provider is processing over 1.4m records of tenancy data for the 130+ social landlords using this software.
1.16	An additional service to complement the implementation of 'Rent Sense' will also see the development of text messaging to tenants. The text messaging system will be configured to work with 'Rent Sense' to send rent reminders to specific tenants or even texts asking tenants to call the Rent Income service. In the digital age, texts remain one of the most effective way to communicate quickly. Studies have also shown that 99% of people will open a SMS text message and 90% will read within 3 minutes of a SMS message being

		received.
1.17		The development of this software will modernise the work in the Rent service and help the service to more intelligently focus on those tenants who are more at risk of falling into arrears, free up internal resource capacity which means that housing interventions can be put in place quickly and before arrears escalate.

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	The deployment of additional resources, at a cost of £130k per annum, are still required to tackle the issues of recovering unpaid rent from an increased number of tenants in receipt of UC. The cost of the additional resources is part funded by the Supporting People Fund and part funded through the HRA Business Plan.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	None.

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	To mitigate the risks of increasing rent arrears, losses in collection and increased bad debt impairment, the formation of the HIT team and fast tracking of cases to court, is designed to ensure financial risks to the HRA are minimised.
4.02	The deployment of specialist software in 2019/20 is also designed to increase collection levels and ensure resource capacity is focused on the cases requiring early intervention.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	None.

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	• Housing (Wales) Act 2014 • Welfare Reform Act 2012 **Contact Officer:** David Barnes, Revenues Manager **Telephone:** 01352 703652 **E-mail:** david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk
7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

7.01	**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 combines six legacy benefits for working age claimants.

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 18th February, 2018
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme
Cabinet Member	N / A
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.

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.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows: 1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives? 2. Is it an area of major change or risk? 3. Are there issues of concern in performance? 4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation? 5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?

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

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

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

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Current Forward Work Programme

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

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

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
Wednesday 13th March 2019 10.00 am	**Quarter 3 Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report**	To enable Members to fulfil their role in relation to performance monitoring	Assurance Monitoring	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator	
	Update Report – Disabled Facilities Grant Internal Audit Report 2017	To provide an update on progress in relation to the service control action plan	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)	
	Town Centre Regeneration	To set out the future approach to regenerating town centres in the County	Consultation	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	
	Specialist Housing	To consider how the Council will meet the needs of applicants with specialist needs through specialist housing	Consultation	Customer Support Manager	
Wednesday 1st May 2019 10.00 am	**Welfare Reform Update – Universal Credit Roll Out**	To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire residents	Assurance Monitoring	Benefits Manager	
	Digital Connectivity Development	To update Committee Members on the development of digital infrastructure in North Wales and in Flintshire	Information sharing	Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration	

	New Homes Board	To receive an update on the work of the New Homes Board	Assurance/Monitoring	Housing Strategy Manager	
Wednesday 26th June 2019 10.00 am	**Quarter 4/Year-end Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report**	To enable Members to fulfil their role in relation to performance monitoring	Assurance Monitoring	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator	
	Homeless Local Action Plan Update	To provide an update on progress being made in relation to the Homeless Local Action Plan	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)	
	Update on Housing Rent Income	To provide an update on current Rent Arrears	Assurance Monitoring		

Items to be scheduled to a date

- Update on private sector housing renewal strategy
- Update report on stairwell at Castle Heights Flint – as suggested during the 20th September meeting
- Smart Metres – as suggested during the 16th October meeting.
- Current borrowing conditions and interest rates – as suggested during the 11th September County Council meeting

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

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