

# Public Document Pack

**Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr**  
Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



Contact Officer:  
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To:

Councillors: Helen Brown, Geoff Collett, David Cox, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Ian Dunbar, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Brian Lloyd and Kevin Rush

10 June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING**  
**COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, 16 JUNE, 2021 at 10.00 AM**

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Robins'.

Robert Robins  
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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

## 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 5 - 8)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May, 2021.

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

Report of Community and Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

**Purpose:** To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

### 7 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (Pages 19 - 34)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Deputy Leader of the Council (Governance) and 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 - YEAR END OUTTURN AND LATEST POSITION FOR 2021/22** (Pages 35 - 40)

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

**Purpose:** To provide the Year end outturn for 202021 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2021/22.

9 **WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD (WHQS) UPDATE** (Pages 41 - 52)

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

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the WHQS specific to environmental works.

10 **COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES 2021/22** (Pages 53 - 56)

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

**Purpose:** To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2021/22 prior to Cabinet approval.

11 **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 57 - 70)

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

**Purpose:** To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.

***Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours***

## **Procedural Note on the conduct of meetings**

The Chair will open the meeting and introduce themselves.

The meeting will be attended by a number of Councillors. Officers will also be in attendance to present reports, with Democratic Services officers acting as hosts of the meeting.

All attendees are asked to ensure their mobile phones are switched off and that any background noise is kept to a minimum.

All microphones are to be kept muted during the meeting and should only be unmuted when invited to speak by the Chair. When invitees have finished speaking they should go back on mute.

To indicate to speak, Councillors will use the chat facility or use the electronic raise hand function. The chat function may also be used for questions, relevant comments and officer advice and updates.

The Chair will call the speakers, with elected Members addressed as 'Councillor' and officers addressed by their job title e.g. Chief Executive' or name. From time to time, the officer advising the Chair will explain procedural points or suggest alternative wording for proposals, to assist the Committee.

If and when a vote is taken, the Chair will explain that only those who oppose the proposal(s), or who wish to abstain will need to indicate, using the chat function. The officer advising the Chair will indicate whether the proposals are carried.

If a more formal vote is needed, this will be by roll call – where each Councillor will be asked in turn (alphabetically) how s/he wishes to vote

At County Council and Planning Committee meetings speaker's times are limited. A bell will be sounded to alert that the speaker has one minute remaining

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

## **COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **19 MAY 2021**

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Wednesday, 19 May 2021

### **PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)**

Councillors: Ron Davies, Mared Eastwood, Veronica Gay, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson and Kevin Rush

**SUBSTITUTES:** Councillors: Sean Bibby (for Geoff Collett), Rob Davies (for Helen Brown) and Patrick Heesom (for Brian Lloyd)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor David Wisinger was present as an observer

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Dave Hughes (Cabinet Member for Housing); Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets), Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager - for minute number 56 and Managing Director of NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd - for minute number 58

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

### **53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **54. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 were approved as a correct record, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Kevin Rush.

The minutes of 10 March 2021 were also approved as a correct record, as moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Mared Eastwood. On minute number 48, Councillor Patrick Heesom said that some communities were also affected by tenants of private rented accommodation failing to maintain their properties. His request for a future item on this would be actioned by the Facilitator.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

## **55. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the latest Forward Work Programme for consideration, including changes since the previous meeting. Meeting dates for the 2021/22 municipal year would be populated once the Schedule of Meetings had been agreed by Council. All actions arising from previous meetings had been completed.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Ron Davies.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (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; and
- (c) That the progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

## **56. COMMENCEMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

The Strategic Policy Advisor introduced a report on the Council's preparations for the commencement of the socio-economic duty. This was a statutory requirement upon relevant public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager gave a joint presentation covering the following:

- What is the Socio-economic Duty and what does it do?
- Key terms
- Inequalities of outcomes
- Examples of poverty
- Demonstrating due regard - audit trail
- Meeting the duty - what we are doing
- Better outcomes
- Case study

The Benefits Manager welcomed the legislation in helping to support work on tackling poverty which was one of the priority areas in the Council Plan. The presentation highlighted the additional obligations required across the public sector in discharging the Duty which did not necessarily incur extra costs. Early consideration and consultation was key in ensuring that voices were heard and evidence gathered.

The Chairman thanked officers for the presentation and in response to a question was provided with information on the consultation process to collate and understand data to inform service delivery.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor Patrick Heesom expressed his concern that the Duty had not been prioritised by the Welsh Government for earlier implementation. His view was shared by Councillor Ron Davies who seconded the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee is assured of the Council's preparedness in meeting the new duty.

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

Exclusion of the press and public was moved and seconded by Councillors Patrick Heesom and Ron Davies.

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**58. NEWYDD CLEANING & CATERING**

The Managing Director of NEWydd Catering & Cleaning Ltd presented an update on the impact of the emergency situation on the Business Plan for NEWydd Cleaning & Catering Services.

In providing an overview of performance in 2020/21, the significant pressures arising from the national emergency situation were highlighted along with the development of new service delivery models to meet the needs of service users and ensure the safety of employees. An updated business plan was shared to support business recovery and rebuilding for future years.

The Chairman thanked the Managing Director for his detailed report.

Councillor Patrick Heesom said that the report reinforced the challenges arising from the emergency situation. In referring to the importance of maintaining supply of free school meals, his request that local Members be kept informed of any changes was noted by the Managing Director.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Ron Davies and Patrick Heesom.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee notes the changes made to the Business Plan and Strategic Objectives of the business which have been severely impacted by the pandemic; and
- (b) That the Committee notes the achievements of NEWydd during this most difficult year and supports the business through its recovery phase and onwards towards the plans for growth in future years.

**59. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 11am and ended at 12 noon)

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**Chairman**





## COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
<b>Report Author</b>	Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
<b>Type of Report</b>	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 Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Community Housing & Assets 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**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING</b>
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"><li>1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?</li><li>2. Is it an area of major change or risk?</li><li>3. Are there issues of concern in performance?</li><li>4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?</li><li>5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?</li><li>6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?</li></ol>
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.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None as a result of this report.

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

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Community Housing & Assets OSC.

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

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>Improvement Plan:</b> 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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COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
<p><b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</b></p> <p><b>Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on the ongoing work to improve the service</p> <p>To provide an update on the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 following it becoming fully enacted.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p> <p>Chief Officer (Housing &amp; Assets)</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b></p> <p>Page 13</p>	<p><b>Empty Homes</b></p>	<p>To provide an overview of the work undertaken by the Empty Homes Service, and outline the new approach Welsh Government is promoting in respect of this area.</p>	<p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Public Protection Manager – Community</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 2pm</b></p>	<p><b>Mid-year Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures</b></p>	<p>To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing &amp; Assets)</p>	

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

<p><b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Rent Income – Mid-year outturn and latest position for 2022/23</b></p>	<p>To provide the Mid-year outturn for 2021/22 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2022/23.</p>	<p>Monitoring Assurance</p>	<p>Revenues Manager</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2022</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</b></p>	<p>To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2022/23 and the HRA Business Plan.</p>	<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing &amp; Assets)</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2022</b></p>					
<p><b>Wednesday 9 March 2022</b></p>					
<p><b>Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 2pm</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Rent Income - Year end outturn and latest position for 2022/23</b></p>	<p>To provide the Year end outturn for 2021/22 and an operational update on rent collection and current arrear levels for 2022/23.</p>	<p>Monitoring Assurance</p>	<p>Revenues Manager</p>	

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	<b>Welfare Reform Update</b>	To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire Residents.	Monitoring Assurance	Benefits Manager	
<b>Wednesday 6 July 2022</b>	<b>Year-end Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures</b>	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)	
	<b>Communal Heating Charges 2022/23</b>	To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2022/23 prior to Cabinet approval.	Consultation	Corporate Finance - Accountant	

**Items to be scheduled**

- **Sheltered Housing Review** – Reports to be submitted to Committee meetings as appropriate as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.
- **Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) System Update** – Update reports to be submitted annually to the Committee starting September 2022 following implementation on the new system, as agreed at the Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2021
- **De-carbonisation Strategy** – Briefing session to be arranged for Members to enable a better understanding of the De-Carbonisation Strategy, when appropriate.

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME  
**REGULAR ITEMS**

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Six monthly	<b>Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit</b>	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Benefits Manager
Six monthly	<b>Update on North East Wales Homes &amp; Property Management</b>	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Housing Strategy Manager
Annually – September 2016	<b>WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update</b>	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)
Six monthly	<b>Update on Housing Rent Income</b>	To provide an update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Revenues Manager



**ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Action Officer(s)</b>	<b>Action taken</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
19.05.2021	3. Minutes	Cllr Patrick Heesom referred to page 12 of the minutes and the comments made by Cllr Brian Lloyd. He said that some communities were also affected by tenants of private rented accommodation failing to maintain their properties. It was agreed that his request for a future item on this would be actioned by the Facilitator.	Ceri Shotton	Relevant Officers contacted to enquire what powers the Council has and whether a briefing note for the Committee could be provided.	On-going

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## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Welfare Reform Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council, together with its partners, have been working to mitigate the full impacts of welfare reforms from falling upon vulnerable Flintshire residents. This report considers how we will continue to manage the impacts of reforms introduced under the provisions of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

The report provides an update on the impacts that welfare reforms continue to have on Flintshire residents and the work that is ongoing to mitigate this and support these households.

Vulnerable households have been impacted significantly by COVID-19, the report also provides information around a range of measures that have been developed to help those affected by the current pandemic and the support provided to residents to help mitigate the negative impacts.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

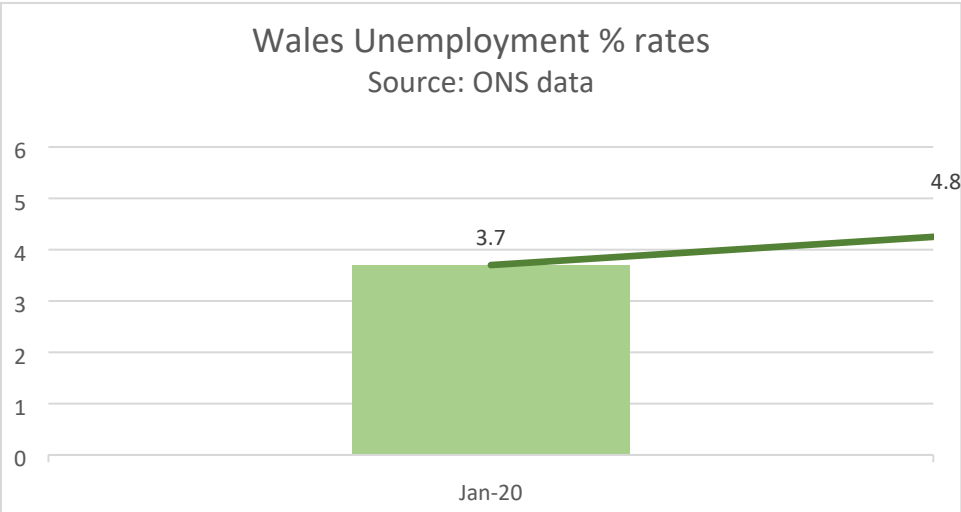
1	Support for the report and the ongoing work to manage the impacts that welfare reform has and will continue to have upon Flintshire's most vulnerable households.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE WELFARE REFORM UPDATE</b>									
1.01	<p><b>Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy</b>– More commonly referred to as the <b>Bedroom Tax</b>, this reform relates to restrictions of 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 living in a social landlord property, has one or more “spare bedroom”                  25% reduction to the eligible rent where a person living in a social landlord property, has two or more “spare bedrooms”</p>									
1.02	<p>According to latest statistics provided by the Department for Work &amp; Pensions (DWP) as at November 2020 155,884 recipients of Housing Benefit in Wales had a reduction to their weekly award. No equivalent data is currently published for Universal Credit customers.</p>									
	<b>Impact in Flintshire</b>									
1.03	<p>Currently, a total of 515 households in Flintshire are subject to a reduction in their housing benefit payments as a result of the Bedroom Tax.</p>									
1.04	<p>Residents Subject to Underoccupancy Reduction May-21</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="331 1413 1257 1518"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>LA</th> <th>HA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>14%</td> <td>301</td> <td>101</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25%</td> <td>94</td> <td>19</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		LA	HA	14%	301	101	25%	94	19
	LA	HA								
14%	301	101								
25%	94	19								
1.05	<p>113 households in Flintshire are subject to a 25% reduction in their weekly housing benefit payments and 402 households are subject to a 14% reduction in their weekly housing benefit payments.</p>									
1.06	<p>The reduction in Housing Benefit for people who are subject to the Bedroom Tax in Flintshire is around £9,200 per week which is around £480,500 per year.</p>									
1.07	<p>This means that tenants affected by this restriction have to find this extra money to pay their rent.</p>									

1.08	The data here is limited to those tenants who still claim housing benefit. The Bedroom Tax is a restriction that also is applied to Universal Credit (UC), however, the council does not have access to this data to be able to report on this position.
1.09	An indication of the number of tenants affected in UC can be shown by the number that have been supported via a Discretionary Housing Payment, which for 2020/21 this was 577.
	<b>Benefit Cap</b>
1.10	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): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £20,000<sup>1</sup> for couples and lone parents (£383.56pw)</li> <li>• £13,400 for single claimants (£256.99pw)</li> </ul>
1.11	At May 2021 a total of 8,611 households in Wales were subject to a reduction in their housing benefit or UC as a result of the benefit cap being applied.
	<b>Impact in Flintshire</b>
1.12	At May 2021 there were 26 households in Flintshire which were subject to a reduction in their housing benefit or UC as a result of the benefit cap being applied. This is a total loss of income for these residents of around £1,618 per year.
	<b>Universal Credit</b>
1.13	At March 2021 the DWP confirmed 282,272 customers in Wales were in receipt of UC of which 33% were working, this is comparable to the percentages for the rest of the United Kingdom.
	<b>Impact in Flintshire</b>
1.14	At February 2021 the caseload for Flintshire customers in receipt of UC has increased to 11,983 compared to 9,798 in April 2020. This represents a 22% increase.
1.15	In Flintshire the current UC caseload confirms 39% of those customers (4,721) are working which is above the average in Wales which is 35%
	<b>Unemployment in Wales</b>

<sup>1</sup> For information - in Greater London area the benefit cap is set at £23,000 for couples/lone parents and £15,410 for single claimants.

1.16	<p>The latest Labour Market Statistics, published April 2021, show that Wales' unemployment rate rose significantly when comparing January 2020 to January 2021:</p>  <p>The graph shows a line representing the unemployment rate in Wales. The y-axis is labeled from 0 to 6 in increments of 1. The x-axis has two points: 'Jan-20' and 'Jan-21'. A green bar is shown for Jan-20 at a value of 3.7. A green line connects this point to a point for Jan-21 at a value of 4.8.</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Wales Unemployment % rates</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Unemployment Rate (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jan-20</td> <td>3.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jan-21</td> <td>4.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Unemployment Rate (%)	Jan-20	3.7	Jan-21	4.8
Month	Unemployment Rate (%)						
Jan-20	3.7						
Jan-21	4.8						
	<b>Unemployment in Flintshire</b>						
1.17	<p>Based on the latest available national statistics, Flintshire's unemployment rates at 3.2% remain lower than the Welsh average of 3.7%. This is based on information up to December 2020.</p>						
	<b>Help to Claim Service</b>						
1.18	<p>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 DWP withdrew funding to 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 have taken on the responsibility for delivering the replacement service which is called "help to claim process".</p>						
1.19	<p>As the Help to Claim model does not include the personal budgeting support element and is only available to a limited group of customers up to the date they receive their first full UC payment. The council continues to provide this support to our residents via the Welfare Reform Team.</p>						
1.20	<p>Since April 2020 the provision has moved to a national call centre which operates a telephone service.</p>						
1.21	<p>Since the start of UC, the council has seen high demand for services in relation to managing household finances, navigating the UC online systems and supporting customers to understand their claims and challenge where necessary.</p>						
	<b>UC "Managed Migration"</b>						

1.22	Managed migration is the transfer of existing legacy benefit claims to Universal Credit, where there has not been a change of circumstances that has resulted in a 'natural' transfer to Universal Credit.
1.23	<p>In March 2019 DWP announced that Harrogate was going to be the pilot area for a major trial of 'managed migration' due to its diverse range of customers.</p> <p>Being part of the pilot is optional for customers and only those who consent to moving to UC are being included.</p> <p>Harrogate was selected as it was one of the first areas to implement UC. The pilot will run for a minimum of 12 months so at the earliest this was due to end in July 2020. Due to the pandemic the pilot remains paused.</p>
1.24	It is anticipated that the learning and evaluation once this pilot is reinstated will be shared in advance of 'managed migration' being introduced in the whole of Wales so that the Council can be prepared to support those customers in readiness for the move to Universal Credit. An update can be provided once the findings are released.
	<b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)</b>
1.25	Welsh Government have recognised that there has been a national trend in reducing caseloads and expenditure for CTRS in recent years.
1.26	<p>However this was not the case in the last financial year with expenditure and caseloads rising due to the pandemic.</p> <p>This will be tracked and monitored during 2021/22 to identify whether this continues to be the case as we move into recovery.</p>
1.27	<p>There may be longer term impacts due to the effects of three lockdowns resulting in consequential economic impact and potential job losses. Furlough is currently still in place but the risk of job losses could result in more residents requiring financial support and applying for CTRS.</p> <p>Aside from the current situation, we are aware that the introduction of UC has likely impacted the previously declining caseloads on the basis that there is a requirement to claim CTRS separately to UC rather than in one claim.</p>
1.28	The council has been actively promoting the scheme to remind people of its aim to support residents who are finding making payments to their council tax a struggle because they are on low income or receiving benefits (including UC).
1.29	Work is being undertaken through a combination of proactive and reactive methods with the aim of helping as many residents as possible for example there is ongoing work linking with Council Tax to ensure we support residents at the earliest opportunity, with the introduction of signposting to support with reminder notices.

	<p><b>Job Retention Scheme</b></p>																																								
<p>1.30</p>	<p>The Job Retention Scheme was initially due to end 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 but has been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.</p> <p>As at May 2021, according to HM Revenue &amp; Customs a total of 29,600 people are being paid through the Job Retention Scheme in Flintshire.</p> <p>It is expected that ongoing financial support and welfare advice will continue for those who may face redundancy or who are subject to reduced income through the Job Retention Scheme.</p>																																								
	<p><b>NHS Track and Trace Isolation Support Grant Payment</b></p>																																								
<p>1.31</p>	<p>The Self Isolation Support Scheme introduced in Wales in November 2020 provided a £500 payment for those who cannot work from home and must self-isolate, and for parents and carers on low incomes with children who are self-isolating.</p> <p>The scheme is to be reviewed June 2021.</p> <p>In order to receive the payment, residents are required to fulfil all four of the following criteria:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Residents are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-based Employment and Support allowance, Income-Based Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit;</li> <li>2. Are employed or self-employed;</li> <li>3. Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result ;</li> <li>4. Have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either for 10 or 14 days.</li> </ol>																																								
<p>1.32</p>	<p>Latest statistics provided by Welsh Government show that Flintshire is following the Welsh trend.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Track &amp; Trace – Flintshire</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <caption>Track &amp; Trace – Flintshire Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Received</th> <th>Processed</th> <th>Pending</th> <th>Approved (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3.2.21</td> <td>420</td> <td>60</td> <td>360</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17.2.21</td> <td>100</td> <td>150</td> <td>290</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.3.21</td> <td>100</td> <td>150</td> <td>240</td> <td>45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17.3.21</td> <td>80</td> <td>160</td> <td>170</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>31.3.21</td> <td>50</td> <td>140</td> <td>70</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14.4.21</td> <td>20</td> <td>50</td> <td>30</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28.4.21</td> <td>10</td> <td>40</td> <td>20</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Received	Processed	Pending	Approved (%)	3.2.21	420	60	360	30%	17.2.21	100	150	290	15%	3.3.21	100	150	240	45%	17.3.21	80	160	170	42%	31.3.21	50	140	70	48%	14.4.21	20	50	30	35%	28.4.21	10	40	20	25%
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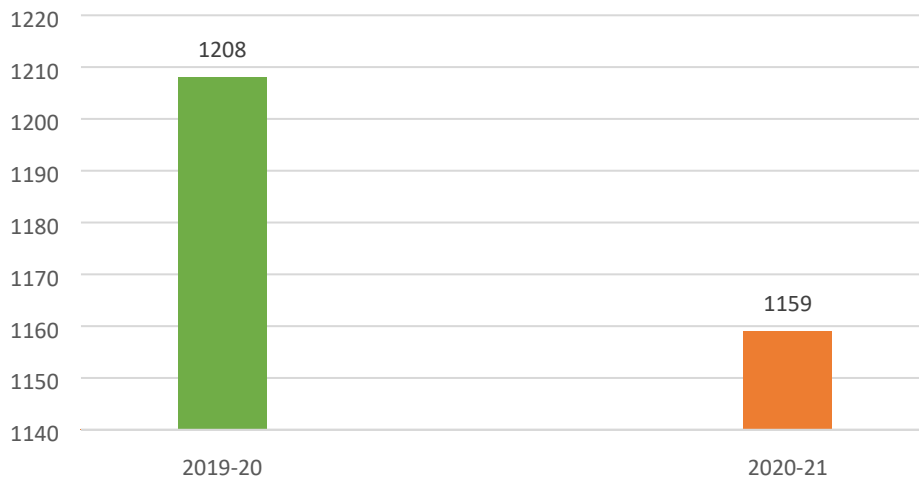


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	<b>Carer's Bonus Payment</b>																																								
1.33	On 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2020 Welsh Government committed to pay a £500 bonus to care workers for their work during the Covid-19 Pandemic.																																								
1.34	<p>In July 2021 Welsh Government are committed to also pay a bonus of £500 to the following staff; support workers in commissioned emergency/temporary accommodation, supported housing, floating support workers and homelessness outreach workers are included for payment with the team manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local authority housing staff providing outreach service to homeless people and working within emergency accommodation.</li> <li>Ancillary staff in large 'hostel' type settings (providing all meals catering, large communal areas) – security, kitchen and domestic staff.</li> </ul>																																								
1.35	<p>As the bonus is to be treated as earned income, this will result in a reduction in HB/CTRS for the period for which it covers. If this is due for a past period will result in an overpayment of HB and CTRS</p> <p>Current volumes are not yet known, however work has been undertaken to minimise the impact on residents Flintshire have made a local decision to write off any related overpayments through the Bad Debt provision.</p>																																								
	<b>Support Services</b>																																								
1.36	The Welfare Reform Team combines the administration of discretionary housing payment with general financial and holistic support for all customers inclusive of whether or not they are being impacted by Welfare Reforms and their objectives include:																																								

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Poverty and vulnerability agenda</li> <li>• Contribute to building community and financial resilience</li> <li>• Provide interventions to residents with financial, fuel and child poverty concerns</li> <li>• Provide a range of supportive measures to mitigate the impacts of poverty and vulnerability.</li> </ul>
1.37	<p>Assistance is offered and provided to residents who may be struggling to re-align their finances, e.g. assistance to navigate which benefits they could claim and help to access other support that may be available.</p> <p>As part of the drive for the holistic approach to supporting residents, partnership and collective working arrangements have been created with organisations such as; Warm Wales; and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC)</p> <p>Working with and developing partnerships is key to successful outcomes for our residents.</p>
1.38	<p>This work is critical now and will provide an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of support and partnerships which will enable these services to be available to flexibly respond to emerging issues in the future.</p>
1.39	<p>Flintshire, are represented and play an active role in the Welsh Governments Regional Advice Network. North Wales Regional Advice Network priorities for 2021 are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider mapping, directory and awareness for referral</li> <li>• Shared approach for referrals and referral portal</li> <li>• Understanding and overcoming rural barriers</li> <li>• Shared training for providers</li> </ul> <p>The network aims to provide links between Welsh Government and local services which will support the development of a strategic approach to the provision of social welfare advice and information services across the region, by working collaboratively with other providers, funders and relevant stakeholders.</p>
1.40	<p>Flintshire manage and coordinate the work of the Tackling Poverty Partnership, this group has representatives from all sectors and its aim is to coordinate, influence and where possible align advice provision in the county in order to mitigate the negative impacts of Welfare Reform, identify need from within the communities and support our residents by tackling poverty and promoting well-being.</p>
1.41	<p>The Bevan Foundation's latest work on the Welsh Benefits System finds that schemes such as Free School Meals, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Discretionary Assistance Fund require review to ensure accessibility and simplifying of benefits to help more families out of poverty (a link to the report is included below).</p>
1.42	<p>The Pandemic has highlighted and resulted in more residents experiencing negative impacts on their financial situation.</p>

	<p>The service has been adapted to provide welfare support over the telephone which has meant that the service has been able to respond promptly to the increased volume of referrals. Additionally, due to limited availability of front line face to face services, the team provides assistance and support to residents to make online applications for various benefit claims.</p>						
1.43	<div data-bbox="320 465 1283 1039" data-label="Figure"> <p>The bar chart, titled 'Welfare Referrals Comparison', displays the number of referrals for two financial years. The vertical axis (y-axis) represents the number of referrals, ranging from 760 to 940 in increments of 20. The horizontal axis (x-axis) shows the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21. The bar for 2019/20 reaches the 814 mark, and the bar for 2020/21 reaches the 922 mark.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Number of Referrals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>814</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>922</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>Welfare Reform Team data confirms a 13% increase in referrals for support when comparing 19/20 to 20/21. The assumption is this increase is due to the impacts of the pandemic.</p>	Financial Year	Number of Referrals	2019/20	814	2020/21	922
Financial Year	Number of Referrals						
2019/20	814						
2020/21	922						
	<p><b>Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)</b></p>						
1.44	<p>Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are payments that may be made by the Council to people that are receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element), but who may still need further financial help with their housing costs.</p>						
1.45							

### Volumes of Discretionary Housing Payment applications

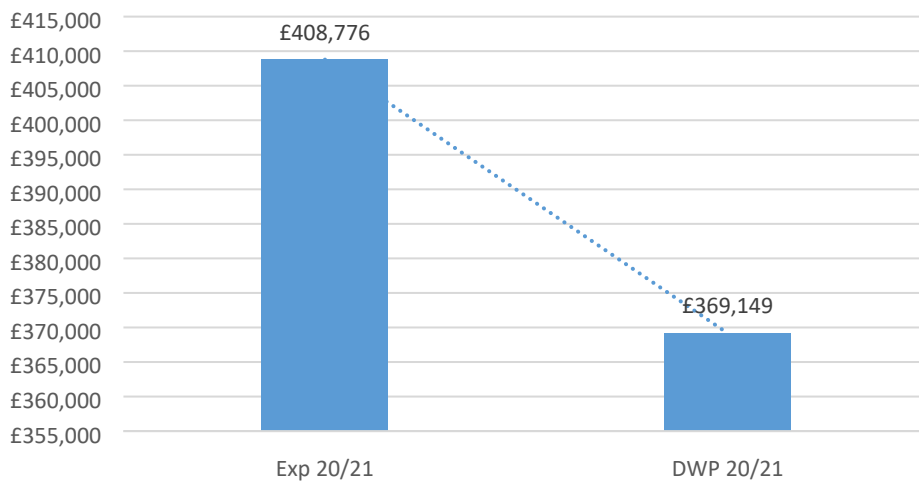


The assumption for the decrease in applications between 2019/20 and 2020/21 is due to the eviction process being paused and the subsequent increase to a 6 month notice period to seek possession. In addition residents also accessing financial support through the current Job Retention` Scheme.

Data shows that Bedroom Tax – under-occupancy is still the most common reason for DHP applications which indicates that finding available suitable accommodation remains difficult for customers.

1.46

### DHP Expenditure 2020-21

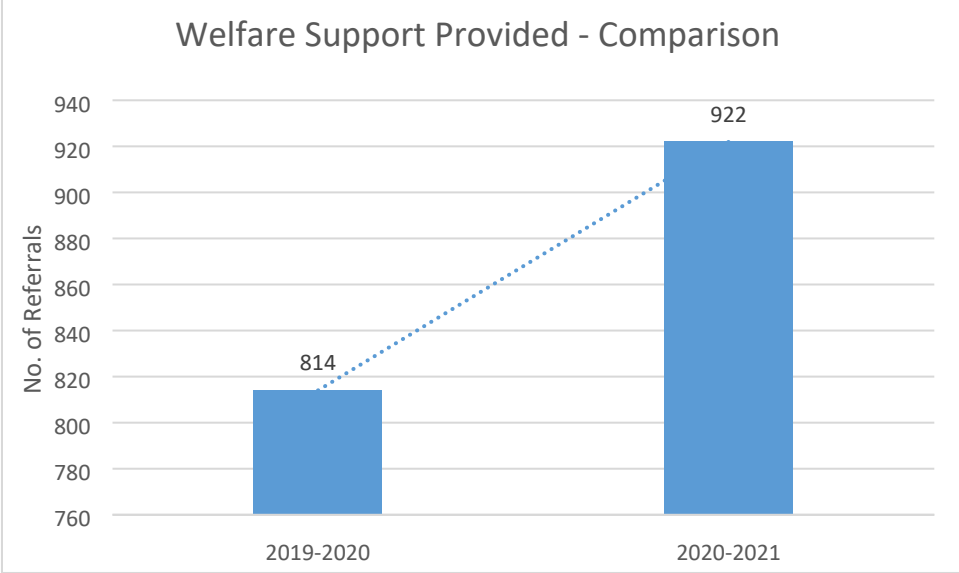
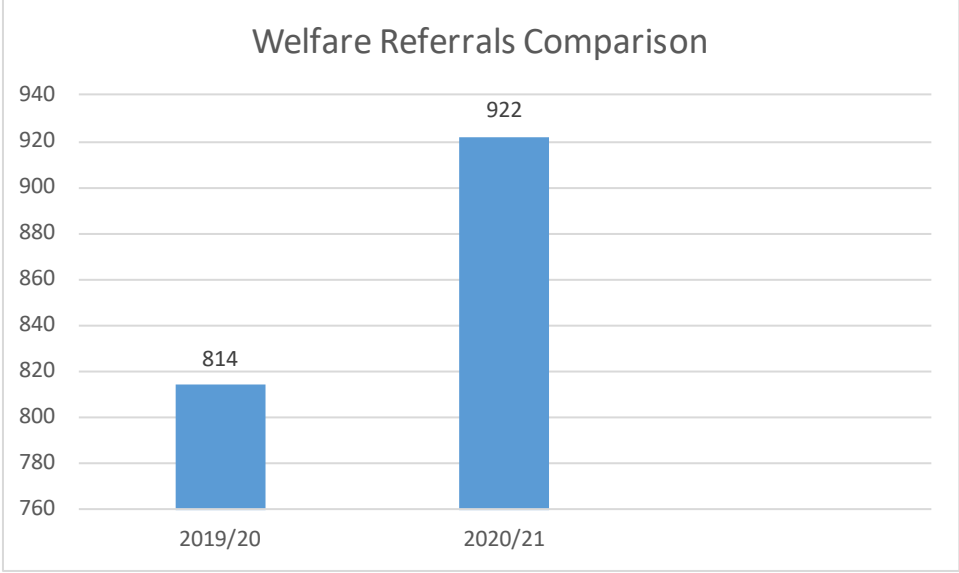


The overspend in the budget was due to more residents accessing DHP support and longer awards of DHP have been granted during the early and ongoing pandemic to create a period of stability for those experiencing financial difficulties.

Additionally, DHP funding is often used to help residents with rent arrears. Experience has shown that these type of requests are usually when a person is in a crisis situation. When considering a payment of rent arrears

	the aim is to prevent the risk of homelessness, how best to safeguard a tenancy and the financial implications of not implementing support.
1.47	<p>In March 2021, Local Authorities received notice that Department for Works &amp; Pensions (DWP) made an error in calculating funding arrangements and as a result of this error Flintshire were underpaid by £2,109. DWP confirmed that they would correct this error and this would be rectified in 2021/22.</p> <p>The total DHP funding for England and Wales in 2021-22 will be £140 million. The DWP only allocated £100m at the start of the year using each LA's individual funding amount for 2020-21 as a starting point. This amount was then corrected to the amount Flintshire would have received for 2020-21 if the errors had not occurred.</p> <p>At mid-year 2021-22 the DWP will allocate a reserved £40 million of funding based on the latest caseload data. This additional payment should be due in September 2021</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Due to the changes in funding arrangements by DWP for 2021/22, the initial funding for Flintshire for 2021/22 is £205,444. Currently, Flintshire are unaware of how much funding will be received in September 2021.
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 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	Since April 2020 to help meet the demands of new and existing customer needs support has been adapted. There has been a significant increase in the volumes of customers requiring support comparing 2019/2020 referrals to 2020/2021 that has been an approx. 13% increase.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welfare Support Provided - Comparison</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="320 136 1283 707"> <thead> <tr> <th>Period</th> <th>No. of Referrals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019-2020</td> <td>814</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020-2021</td> <td>922</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Period	No. of Referrals	2019-2020	814	2020-2021	922
Period	No. of Referrals						
2019-2020	814						
2020-2021	922						
2.04	<p>The approach of the team has been really clear in terms of support being focused on the customer and their needs to move forward into a better position both financially and in terms of their general well-being.</p>						
2.05	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welfare Referrals Comparison</b></p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="320 898 1283 1469"> <thead> <tr> <th>Period</th> <th>No. of Referrals</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>814</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>922</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Period	No. of Referrals	2019/20	814	2020/21	922
Period	No. of Referrals						
2019/20	814						
2020/21	922						
2.06	<p>Our understanding is that there are long lead times to access debt advice which can exacerbate an already challenging financial situation. Additional resources are currently being considered to fund a specialist debt advisor within the Housing Benefits Service and a business case is being developed to secure funding resource this much needed position.</p> <p>The team have a good understanding of any emerging trends which could potentially put a customer at risk of losing their home or reaching crisis point and are able to share any such observations amongst other organisations both internal and externally.</p>						
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>							
2.07	<p>Since April 2019, the DWP have not provided funding for the Council to provide support to Universal Credit customers with Personal Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support. The team have continued to</p>						

	deliver this and during 2020/21 429 residents were provided with budgeting support alone.
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	
3.01	Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act the Welfare Reform Team can have the following impacts:	
	Long-term	Positive impact on longer term solutions to help people manage their financial commitment and sustaining their homes.
	Prevention	Positive impact by supporting people out of poverty.
	Integration	Positive impact by working with other organisations to promote positive changes.
	Collaboration	As above
	Involvement	As above
	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive impact – support residents to address poverty and improve life chances particularly those most adversely impacted by Welfare Reforms.
	Resilient Wales	No impact
	Healthier Wales	Positive – supporting residents with skills and knowledge that influence better choices which promote better health and wellbeing.
	More equal Wales	Positive - By supporting residents to move out of poverty this also contributes to enabling residents to fulfil their potential no matter what their background.
	Cohesive Wales	No impact
	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive –support residents to make simple changes such as reviewing energy providers and bank processes - such as the promotion of local credit unions.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml">https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/dataCatalogueExplorer.xhtml</a>
6.02	<a href="https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Welsh-Benefits-System-Final-Report-1.pdf">https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Welsh-Benefits-System-Final-Report-1.pdf</a>
6.03	<a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/uneemployment/timeseries/ycnm/lms">https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/uneemployment/timeseries/ycnm/lms</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer: Jen Griffiths</b>  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 – 702929  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)</b> Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are payments that may be made by the Council to people that are receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element), but who may still need further financial help with their housing costs.</p> <p><b>Eligible Rent</b> – this is the amount of rent (net of any ineligible services) that a claim for housing benefit or universal credit is calculated from.</p> <p><b>Housing Benefit</b> - helps tenants pay all, or part of their rent if they have a low income. Housing Benefit is administered by Local Authorities.</p> <p><b>Ineligible Services</b> – 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> <p><b>Registered Social Landlord (RSL)</b> - RSLs are not-for-profit organisations that aim to provide good, low cost accommodation.</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.

**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.

**UC Managed Migration** – Managed migration describes the transfer of existing legacy benefit claims to Universal Credit, where there has not been a change of circumstances that has resulted in a ‘natural’ transfer to Universal Credit.

**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.

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## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Housing Rent Income
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer, Housing and Assets
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Informal Cabinet with an operational update on 2020/21 year end housing rent income collection performance for housing, including the 2021/22 latest collection position.

The outturn for 2020/21 resulted in rent arrears of £1.854m compared to £1.815m in the previous year – an increase in arrears of £39k. The data generally makes for positive reading especially when contrasted against earlier predictions for rent arrears for the service throughout the last twelve months, particularly at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the ability of some tenants to pay on time.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the £1.854m year-end position for rent arrears in 2020/21.
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## REPORT DETAILS

### 1.00 EXPLAINING THE LATEST POSITION OF RENT ARREARS

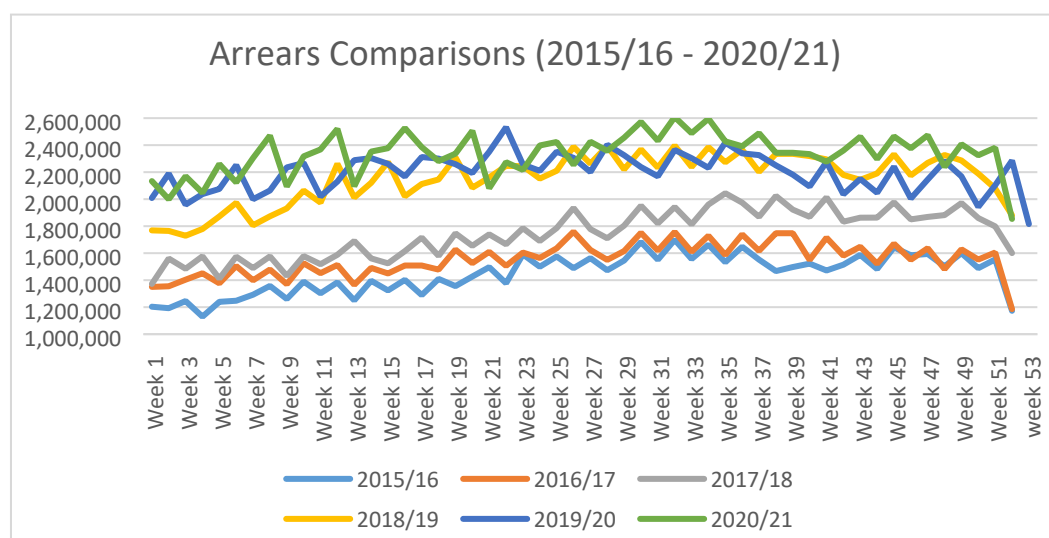
1.01 The 2020/21 financial year has been one of the most challenging for the service in the same way as it has for other social landlords who have been responsible for supporting tenants during the pandemic.

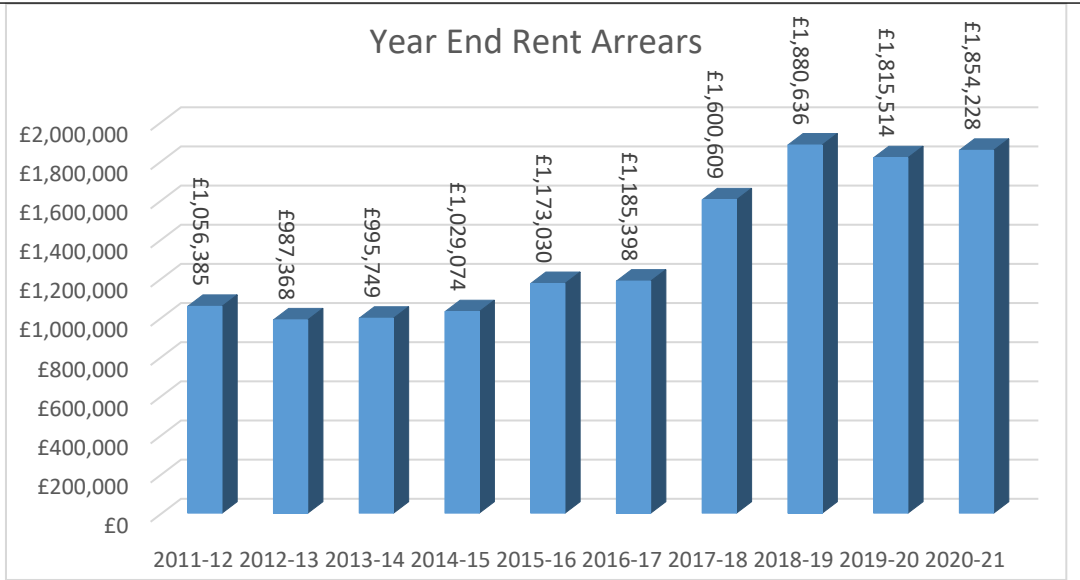
1.02 The year-end position for 2020/21 shows rent arrears (£1.854m) have marginally increased by £39k compared to the previous years' outturn. The data generally makes for positive reading especially when contrasted against earlier predictions for rent arrear at a time when Covid-19 continues to impact on the ability of some tenants to pay their rent on time.

Financial Year	Gross Rent Yield	Year End Rent Arrears	Rent Arrears as % of Rent Yield	Movement in Arrears (£)	Movement in Arrears (%)
2020-21	£39,949,266	£1,854,228	4.6%	£38,714	0.1%
2019-20	£39,969,296	£1,815,514	4.5%	−£65,000	−0.4%
2018-19	£38,086,058	£1,880,514	4.9%	£279,905	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%	-	-

\* denotes the period when Universal Credit full service was rolled out.

1.03 The chart and table below illustrates the year end position in 2020/21 as well as the comparable outturns for previous years.





1.04

Most tenants have maintained their rent payments, but the pandemic has inevitably also impacted on the ability of some tenants to pay their rent on time.

There are some trends that are of concern, such as the notable increase in high-level arrears for tenants who owe in excess of £5k of unpaid rent. Despite everything that has been and is done to support tenants, a very small minority have failed to engage and continue to do so with the Council and appropriate recovery will be taken at the first opportunity against those tenants who do not effectively engage or pay.

The table below shows the analysis of tenants who owe in excess of £250 in unpaid rent. Tenants who owe less than £250 and are generally up-to-date with their payments are excluded from the analysis.

Banded Arrears (£)	Apr-20		Nov-20		Mar-21	
	No.	Arrears (£)	No.	Arrears (£)	No.	Arrears (£)
250 - 500	504	185,702	603	218,371	460	169,224
500 - 750	334	206,413	327	200,747	244	150,878
750 - 1,000	197	171,180	201	174,160	155	132,552
1,000 - 2,500	489	768,287	481	754,234	432	674,751
2,500 - 5,000	134	444,175	156	530,271	132	449,779
5000+	8	44,787	21	126,509	28	176,290
Totals	1,666	1,820,544	1,789	2,004,292	1,451	1,753,474

1.05

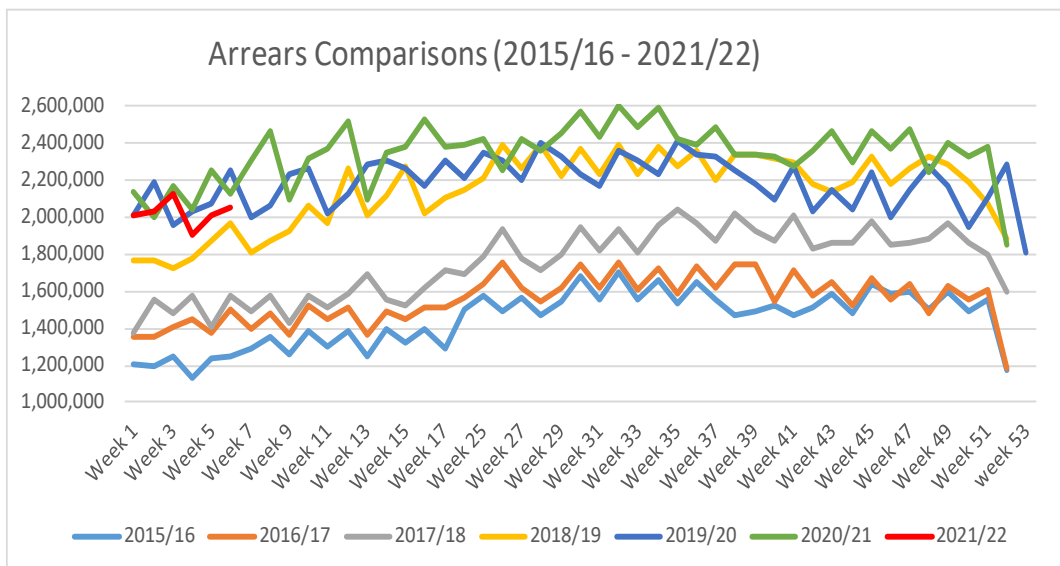
To support tenants during the Covid-19 pandemic, from March 2020, Welsh Government also introduced a package of measures to protect

tenants from eviction and these measures remain in place until at least 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Consequently, no evictions have taken place during 2020/21.

1.06 There remains a small number of cases (5 in total) that were due to move to eviction prior to the lockdown, and these cases will be progressed when the moratorium ends. Rent arrears alone in these five serious cases of non-engagement now equates to a total of £34k, an increase of £20k since the start of the pandemic.

Year	Number of Evictions for rent arrears	% Increase / Reduction
2020/21	0	-100.0%
2019/20	26	-13.3%
2018/19	30	36.4%
2017/18	22	15.8%
2016/17	19	-13.6%
2015/16	22	-

1.07 The current position for 2021/22 is starting to show an improving and more positive position as at week 6. Rent arrears are currently running at £2.05m, but are £75k lower than the same position in the previous year



1.08 Although rent arrears have stabilised since the introduction of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms, there remains several key risks to effective income management as a result of the pandemic. These risks include, the ending of the furlough scheme and uncertainty around the temporary Universal Credit uplift as well as other legislation such as the temporary suspension on evictions.

1.09	In addition to this, the introduction of the Breathing Space scheme in England and Wales from May 2021, is generally a welcome step as this will provide tenants in debt with a 60 day period of legal protections from their creditors, including what tenants owe in housing rent. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors.
1.10	The Breathing Space scheme is defined by legislation under The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. These measures though may impact negatively on the cash flow for the HRA in the short term as debt advice agencies work with tenants to agree affordable repayments for the repayment of debts.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The continued deployment of the Mobyssoft 'Rent Sense software, funded by the HRA, is necessary to control rent arrears and to ensure resources are targeted effectively.
2.02	Resource levels are also under review in the Housing Rent Income service and may need to be increased to support the improvement of rent collections as part of the Covid recovery strategy. The HRA business plan for 2021-22 takes account of an additional resource for a temporary period of up to two years.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	To ensure financial risks to the HRA are minimised as far as possible, rent arrears continue to be tracked on a weekly basis and cases are identified as quickly as possible to ensure targeted intervention if provided to those tenants at highest risk of non-payment.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing (Wales) Act 2014</li> <li>• Welfare Reform Act 2012</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Coronavirus Act 2020 – section 2</li> <li>• The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.</li> </ul>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> David Barnes, Revenues Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703652  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk">david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA):</b> The Council is required to keep a HRA to record all income and expenditure relating to the provision of local authority housing. All rental income, including arrears, must be held with a ring fenced HRA account. This means that income can only be used for council housing purposes and not general expenditure. This also allows rental income to be invested locally to help improve and maintain council owned homes and also build new council homes.</p> <p><b>Welfare Reform:</b> these are changes introduced to a range of social security benefits and tax credits which aim to ensure that the UK has an affordable benefits system.</p>





## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) External Works
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme.

This report focuses on the external work elements of the programme along with achievements to date and maintaining the standard moving forwards.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Scrutiny support the Capital Investment Programme in its final year of major investment and as the Council enters into the maintenance phase of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD EXTERNAL WORKS PROGRAMME</b>
1.01	<p>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) is a national quality standard for public sector homes in Wales as set out by the Welsh Government.</p> <p>All tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of each household. The Housing Capital Works Team is responsible for delivering Internal &amp; External upgrades to all Council owned properties and for compliance with the WHQS.</p>
1.02	<p>At the commencement of the WHQS programme the Capital Works Team were tasked with delivering a major investment programme covering a number of years to upgrade its housing, including its external areas</p>
1.03	<p>Following the tenant consultation in 2014 and member workshops, it was agreed that following tenant feedback a logical approach to property refurbishment would be taken and that all internal works should be prioritised first followed by envelope works (roofing, windows and doors) and finally external works (fencing, paths and gardens). In addition there is also an environmental works programme that targets communal based regeneration and car parking etc.</p> <p>As noted above the Council prioritised the internal and envelope works at the beginning of the WHQS programme and as a result these works are nearing full compliancy. There will be a percentage of Council properties that have not yet had any roofing works completed and this is due to the property component (window, door etc.) not scheduled for replacement until post WHQS compliance. As the Council moves into the maintenance phase of the WHQS, those roofs or components will be replaced and scheduled accordingly.</p> <p>As a result of completing the internal and envelope works the focus has now moved on to external works (fencing, paths and gardens). We are planning our work programmes to properties based upon our stock condition surveys where we have either identified a health and safety risk, unusable garden area (due to the topography) or external storage issues.</p>
1.04	<p>The Fencing and Garden improvement programme that commenced in 2015 has been developed into a more extensive programme now that the majority of internal and envelope works have been completed to reach WHQS compliance, available resources will be redirected to this work area.</p> <p>The programme will focus mainly on the property boundaries ensuring they are safe, secure, and suitable and in line with the Council's agreed specification/requirements. Also included within the programme will be paths, gardens and storage allocation.</p>

	<p>The below will also be considered when completing the programme and will depend each scheme and area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depending on the property type and location, whether it be general needs, sheltered or a communal/ open plan areas, what type and specification of boundary is considered suitable (hedgerow, garden walls, fencing etc.), detailing the height etc. and what should be removed, repaired or renewed. Future maintenance costs and in the context of hedges impacts on garden wildlife must also be considered when removing hedgerow and replacing with timber fencing that requires future maintenance and renewal.</li> <li>• The Council's plans for programmed replacement and refurbishment</li> <li>• The Council's expectations for gardens, paths, paved areas and gates etc.</li> <li>• The Council's approach to natural boundaries; i.e. Hedgerows etc.</li> <li>• The Council's approach to 'open plan' gardens and fencing</li> <li>• Storage for general needs and sheltered properties for garden equipment, bicycles etc. or mobility scooters.</li> </ul> <p>Flintshire County Council are continuing programmes of work to encompass all the components required to achieve and maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).</p> <p>In terms of the WHQS and external areas it asks for the following areas to be considered;</p> <p><b>Safe and secure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All opportunities must be taken to make gardens safe and suitable for young children to play in, easy to maintain and reasonably private.</li> </ul> <p><b>Located in attractive and safe environments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there soft and hard landscaping with planting in protected areas?</li> <li>• Is there adequate and safe play space for young children?</li> <li>• Are dwellings clearly identifiable with definable boundaries?</li> </ul>
1.05	<p>The Council is committed to maintaining boundaries to its properties to meet the WHQS standard on an ongoing basis. This includes repair, replacement and maintenance of existing boundaries in whichever form they take, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete Post/Timber panel</li> <li>• Hit/Miss or Close Boarding</li> <li>• Natural Boundaries (Hedges, Bushes etc.) (Maintain only – Not replacement)</li> <li>• Brick Walls</li> <li>• Garden Rail/kick rail</li> </ul>

The Council's preferred option of fencing is close boarded timber fencing and double sided hit and miss timber fencing as a result of tenant and tenant federation feedback as this has relatively low maintenance and replacement costs etc. Wherever possible and this will be the choice whenever replacement is needed (if feasible).

If, on inspection, existing fencing is in good condition, it will not be replaced. The Council will not replace components that still have an adequate component replacement life remaining. However, if it is beyond economical repair or does not deliver sufficient security or privacy, they will be considered for replacement.

As hedges and shrubberies etc. are the responsibility of the tenant to maintain, any excessive works, due to overgrown/neglected natural boundaries may be recharged back to the tenant in compliance with the Tenant Policy and Recharge Policy.

The Council will install and/or renew front, side & rear gates in any replacement/programme where required. Gates to the front will normally be powder coated metal; gates to the side/rear will be timber in line with existing heights. Both will take into consideration, Lifetime Homes etc. in terms of openings.

Fencing in sheltered schemes will be approached in a different way. Emphasis will be on security but without creating an 'institutionalised' effect for tenants; the favoured fencing height will be maintained at 1200mm; however, side elevations and side gates will be 1800mm if required/feasible to ensure access to the side and rear of these properties is secure.

However, as all schemes differ slightly, consultation with the relevant authorities/carers will be completed if this standard is to deviate in any way so as to ensure the comfort and security of vulnerable tenants is not compromised.

The Council has numerous sites where an open plan arrangement is in place from the design stage of construction. This can be due to various reasons, but in certain areas, there may be a call for this restriction to be waived due to the original sizes of the properties and the lack of storage space our tenants have access to.

Any structures that have been erected on Open Plan areas of land without permission from the Landlord (in this case the Housing Assets Team) or from the Planning Department, will require removal and the area reinstated to its original condition.

Due to our properties now having sensitive equipment in the loft/attic space such as Solar Photovoltaic power supplies, meters, ventilation systems (Positive Input Ventilation) and boiler flues; it is proposed that these areas are restricted not only for tenant safety but due to the fact that these areas are not boarded for storage purposes and the Council does not provide access ladders.

	<p>As a result, the Council will be providing external storage depending on the type of property and only if permitted under planning regulations and permitted development etc. Tenants should have access to reasonable storage and depending on the size of the garden, layout and also the number of bedrooms within the property; then a suitable sized timber shed for storage purposes only will be provided.</p> <p>As a Council there is no legal obligation to provide storage for mobility scooters, however, the Council recognises that this is something our tenants in sheltered accommodation quite often request.</p> <p>We have already started providing scooter storage and charging points to some of our sheltered housing complexes, however, this requires a robust management regime to be in place due to the potential fire risks.</p> <p>Moving forwards, all properties and sheltered complexes will be individually assessed. Where there is existing storage such as brick built outbuildings etc., the Council will, where feasible, repair. Where these structures are beyond repair and in dangerous condition they will be replaced with timber storage solutions.</p>
1.06	<p>The Capital Works Team have also continued with the good work delivered through its Environmental Works programme which includes communal and individual car parking solutions and regeneration works to communal footpaths and garage areas.</p> <p>All works are prioritised through our Scrutiny approved matrix and any feasible projects are tendered and progressed accordingly.</p> <p>More recently we have included communal lighting solutions and CCTV initiatives into these projects focusing on our sheltered properties initially and communal shared garden areas. We have also liaised with our colleagues in the Estate Management Team addressing anti-social behaviour concerns and ensuring any priority areas are included within our Capital Programme.</p> <p>We have also incorporated the renewal communal pathways and communal fencing/boundaries. This ensures that our communal areas that are utilised by our tenants, are attractive and safe (Part 6 of the WHQS, Section 7) 'Located in attractive and safe environments'.</p> <p>It is important that our tenants feel safe in their homes but also when they are accessing communal areas that are usually in the immediate vicinity of their homes.</p> <p>We are confident that this programme will bring further benefits to our tenants whilst regenerating these areas, continuing to provide accessible parking solutions close to our tenants homes (where possible) alleviating congestion and ensuring ease of access for emergency services.</p>
1.07	<p>It is estimated that the Council will deliver approximately £880,000 of External and Environmental works this financial year.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Workforce</b> - There are always concerns that workforce retention may be difficult to maintain. Given that the Construction Industry is an ever changing sector, the workforce may seek opportunities elsewhere i.e. New Build, Private Sector etc.</p> <p>The Capital Works Team has made adjustments to the team's structure to incorporate a degree resilience and robustness to the delivery model.</p>
2.02	<p><b>Budgets</b> - When creating our delivery programme, budget estimates were made for the required upgrade works to our existing properties with contingency sums included for unforeseen work such as Structural Repairs etc.</p>
2.03	<p><b>Procurement</b> – Procuring the various WHQS works can be challenging. The Council must ensure that all contracts are measured not only by cost but by quality. Quality forms an important part of the assessment process where the Capital Works Team interviews all its Contractors and assesses Quality Submission Papers before any contracts are awarded. The team have been able to secure further efficiencies by merging some contracts so that internal and external resources can be shared.</p> <p>There is a risk that many Contractors are opting for New Build contracts rather than Refurbishment contracts. Engaging with our supply chain early on and sharing our Capital Investment Programme aspirations with our Contract Framework Partners assists us to procure longer term contracts and therefore reduces risk of inflated costs based on long term contract arrangements.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>Failure to maintain WHQS would be damaging to the Council's reputation. This scheme will ensure that the maximum number of properties maintain this standard – reducing the number of costly reactive repairs and potential disrepair claims.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<p>Prior to the Capital Investment Programme commencing, the team held Member Workshops in 2014 where the majority of Members attended and were actively involved in the design and delivery of the current Capital Programme.</p> <p>We also held Tenant Federation Workshops where we engaged with the federation with regards to what priority and which order the works should be completed along with discussing the potential to merge certain work streams, i.e. Internal Works were prioritised first with both the Kitchen and Bathroom Upgrade works merging into one work stream.</p>

	<p>We also held Tenant Consultation Workshops in our Connects Centres and community centres engaging with our tenants and discussing the Capital Programme along with ascertaining what order tenants would prefer to have components of their home upgraded first.</p> <p>We also sent over 7,200 Tenant Questionnaires asking for feedback and comments on the proposed Capital Programme and initially completed circa 50 interviews with Contractors utilising Tenants &amp; Volunteers. This has increased year on year when new contracts are awarded.</p> <p>Moving forwards and as part of the next phase of the Capital Programme and retrofit programme the Capital Works Team will again be consulting with Members, tenants and tenant groups to ensure that each is engaged with and to ensure their preferences and concerns with regards to this next phase are considered and implemented as we have previously.</p>
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - WHQS Delivery District Areas Appendix 2 - Appendix C Capital Programme- 21.22 (Budget)

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Housing/Welsh-Housing-Quality-Standard-WHQS.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Housing/Welsh-Housing-Quality-Standard-WHQS.aspx</a>
6.02	<a href="https://gov.wales/decarbonisation-homes-wales-advisory-group#content">https://gov.wales/decarbonisation-homes-wales-advisory-group#content</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Sean O'Donnell, Capital Works Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 701642 <b>E-mail:</b> Sean.O'Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Capital Programme:</b> The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.</p> <p><b>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS):</b> is a national standard of quality for homes. This is set by the Welsh Government. It means that all tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of that household.</p>

**Acceptable Fail:** Welsh Government understand that some homes cannot receive the WHQS works due to 4 reasons, listed below:

1. Works are physically impossible carry out,
2. It is not cost effective to do the works,
3. Timing (works due in near future already)
4. Tenant refuses the improvements.

These are called 'Acceptable Fails' and the Welsh Government will accept that 20% of our properties will be in this group.

**Financial Year:** the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April

**Budget:** a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.

**Contract Framework:** A Contract Framework is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators. These frameworks have Contractors, Consultants and Suppliers that have been successful in joining the specific work categories. The Council often uses these frameworks to procure works that have already gone through a tender process in line with OJEU and can be utilised to procure works or services.

They are often the most economic advantage in terms of value for money and local training provision.

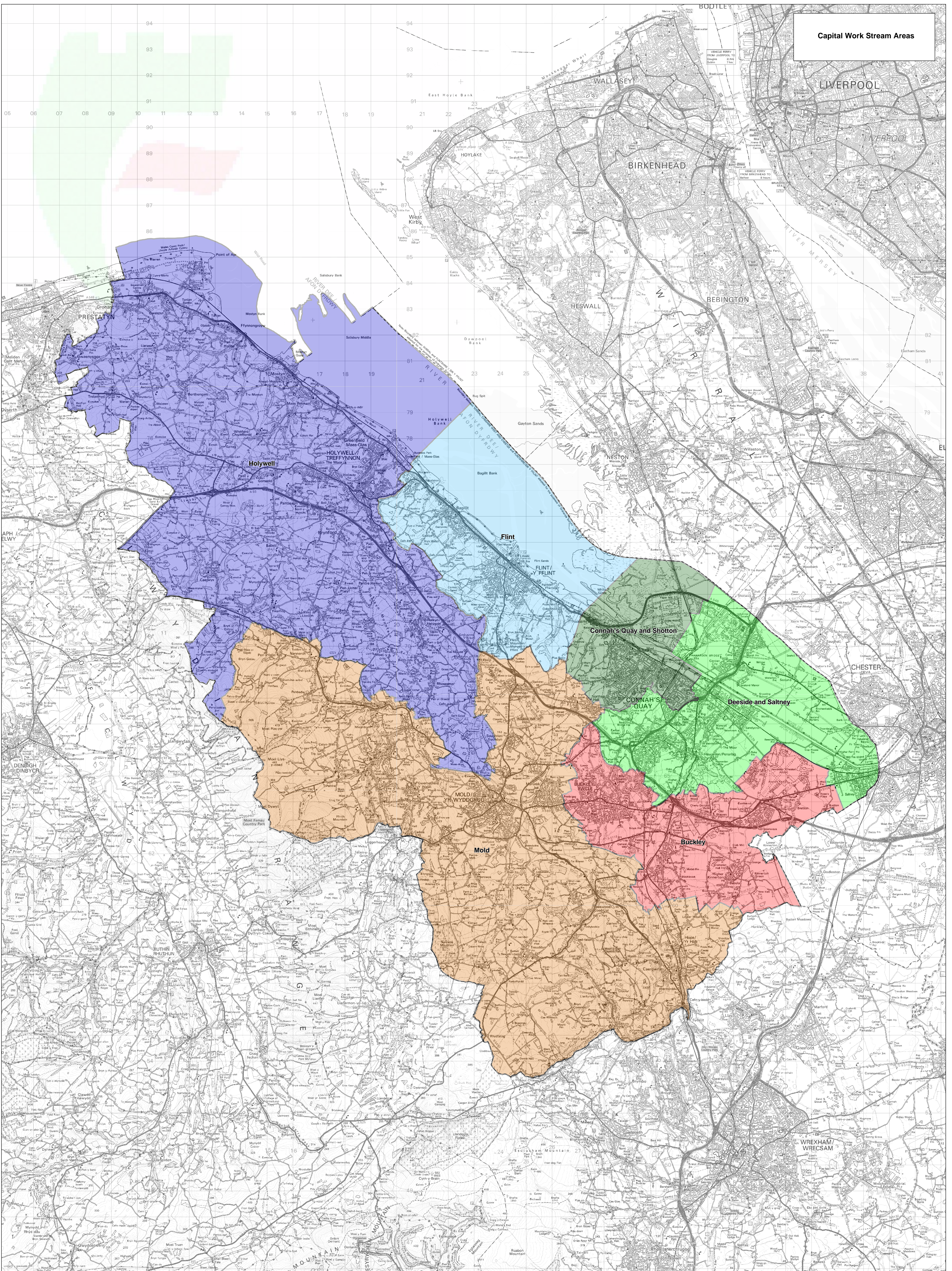
**HRA:** The Housing Revenue Account

**Components:** A part or element such as an assets amenities (Kitchen Bathroom, Boiler, Roof, Windows, Doors etc.).

**CCTV:** Closed Circuit Television, a security camera used for recording and monitoring activity in line with the Council policies.



Capital Work Stream Areas



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Planning & Environment,  
Flintshire County Council,  
County Hall, Mold,  
Flintshire, CH7 6NF.  
Chief Officer: Mr Andrew Farrow

Scale: 1:45000 @ A0  
OS Map: Landranger  
Plotted: 01/10/2014



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**HRA Capital Programme 2021/22****Appendix C**

<b>HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>£'m</b>
<b>Investment Works</b>	
Renewables / Alternative Technology	0.510
	<b>0.510</b>
<b>WHQS</b>	
Internal Works	5.818
Envelope Works	8.786
Externals	0.888
<b>Total WHQS</b>	<b>15.493</b>
<b>Non WHQS</b>	
Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) - Mandatory/ Minor Adaps	1.114
Asbestos	0.561
Fire Risk Assessments Work	0.541
General DDA Work	0.185
	<b>2.401</b>
<b>Fees</b>	
Capitalised salaries	1.037
	<b>1.037</b>
<b>Regeneration of stock</b>	
Estate remodelling	1.342
	<b>1.342</b>
	<b>20.783</b>
<b>SHARP Programme</b>	
Anticipated spend in 21/22	14.052
<b>Total SHARP Programme</b>	<b>14.052</b>
<b>Total Capital Spend</b>	<b>34.835</b>

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## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Communal Heating Charges 2021/22
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing & Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Assets Portfolio currently operates eight communal heating schemes within Flintshire. The Council negotiates fuel costs in advance and tenants benefit from the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate.

New communal heating charges are based on the previous year's energy use ensuring an accurate assessment of costs and impacts (negative or positive) on the heating reserve account.

The proposed recharges for 2021/22 are set out within this report and are pending Cabinet approval. In the majority of cases, the recharge to tenants has reduced for 2021/22, which as in other years, would allow Flintshire to recover the projected costs of the heating charges whilst still passing on the benefit of reduced energy costs to tenants.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Scrutiny approve changes to the current heating charges at council properties with communal heating schemes as outlined in table 1, paragraph 1.07 of this report. All changes will take effect from 2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2021.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE COMMUNAL HEATING RECHARGES</b>
1.01	The Housing and Assets Portfolio currently operates eight communal heating schemes within Flintshire. The Council negotiates fuel costs in advance and tenants benefit from the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate. The cost of fuel used within these schemes is paid for initially by the Authority through a heating reserve account and then collected from tenants in addition to their weekly rent.
1.02	New communal heating charges are based on the previous year's energy use ensuring a more accurate assessment of costs and impacts (negative or positive) on the heating reserve account.
1.03	Any proposed changes to charges are intended to ensure that each communal heating scheme recovers the full energy cost charged in respect of each scheme.
1.04	The Council charges tenants for the energy consumed within each block. This is a basic flat rate charge irrespective of individual usage. The method of applying tenants heating charges is to apply uplifts or decreases to tenants each year, based on previous year's usage plus energy rate costs.
1.05	<p><u>2019/20</u> In April 2019, the average price increase was 18%. As a result of the mild winter the majority of schemes saw a small decrease in usage.</p> <p>During the year in 2019/20 works were completed on upgrading the heating systems at Panton Place, Holywell and in one area of Glan y Morfa Court, Connah's Quay. As a result of this work, these tenants are now billed directly by their chosen utilities provider based on their own meter readings and usage.</p>
1.06	<p><u>2020/21</u> In April 2020, the energy rates decreased by an average of 14% and in some properties, the energy usage fluctuated against the estimated usage used to calculate 2020/21 charges.</p> <p>The majority of tenants saw a reduction in their Communal Heating charges in 2020/21. Therefore, at the properties which have seen an increase in energy usage, this has resulted in a small deficit on the heating reserve. This will be recovered through the 2021/22 charges.</p>
1.07	<p><u>2021/22</u> The table below sets out recommended heating charges for 2021/22 based on actual usage in 2020/21. The assumption has been made that costs have reduced by an average of 14% in 2021/22 and that usage remains at similar levels for the next 12 months.</p> <p>Revised charges will be introduced from 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021.</p>

**Table 1**

Communal Area		Weekly Charge 2020/21	Increase 2021/22	Revised Weekly Charge 2021/22
<b>Bolingbroke Heights, Flint</b>	1 Bed	£ 4.10	-£ 0.15	£ 3.95
	2 Bed	£ 4.92	-£ 0.18	£ 4.74
<b>Richard Heights</b>	1 Bed	£ 4.10	-£ 0.15	£ 3.95
	2 Bed	£ 4.92	-£ 0.18	£ 4.74
<b>Castle Heights, Flint</b>	1 Bed	£ 4.70	-£ 1.15	£ 3.55
	2 Bed	£ 5.64	-£ 1.38	£ 4.26
<b>Llwyn Beuno, Holywell</b>	1 Bed	£ 6.00	£ 0.50	£ 6.50
	2 Bed	£ 7.20	£ 0.60	£ 7.80
<b>Llwyn Aled, Holywell</b>	1 Bed	£ 7.95	£ 1.55	£ 9.50
	2 Bed	£ 9.54	£ 1.86	£ 11.40
<b>Acacia Close, Mold</b>	1 Bed	£ 7.30	£ 0.80	£ 8.10
	2 Bed	£ 8.76	£ 0.96	£ 9.72
	3 Bed	£ 9.86	£ 1.08	£ 10.94
<b>Glan-y-Morfa Court1, Connahs Quay</b>	1 Bed	£ 9.65	-£ 1.35	£ 8.30
	2 Bed	£ 11.58	-£ 1.62	£ 9.96
<b>Glan-y-Morfa Court2, Connahs Quay</b>	1 Bed	£ 5.30	£ 1.65	£ 6.95
<b>Chapel Court, Connah's Quay</b>	1 Bed	£ 6.40	£ 0.20	£ 6.60
	2 Bed	£ 7.68	£ 0.24	£ 7.92

Across all of our communal properties an options appraisal is being completed to assess the condition and efficiency of these heating systems and a plan will be put in place for improvements and upgrades over the coming years.

## 2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 As identified above.

## 3.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

3.01 Tenants cannot claim Housing Benefit for the cost of domestic heating.

3.02 Estimates have been based on energy usage during 2020/21. A severe winter could lead to higher costs which may lead to an increased charge during 2022/23.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	No formal consultation required.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Rachael Corbelli, Strategic Finance Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703363  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:rachael.corbelli@flintshire.gov.uk">rachael.corbelli@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account:</b> records all revenue expenditure and income relating to the provision of council dwellings and related services.</p> <p><b>Tenant:</b> a person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord (in this instance Flintshire County Council).</p> <p><b>Heating Reserve Account:</b> the account which records all expenditure on communal heating and all income from tenants.</p>





## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June, 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	End of Year Performance Monitoring Report
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing; and  Deputy Leader (Governance) and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council Reporting Measures 2020/21 were identified by portfolios and approved by Cabinet in September 2020. This report presents the annual out-turn of performance against those measures identified for 2020/21 relevant to the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

This out-turn report for the 2020/21 Reporting Measures shows that 67% of the performance indicators have met or exceeded their targets.

This report is an exception-based report and concentrates on under-performance against target.

### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee consider the End of Year Performance Monitoring Report to monitor areas of under performance and request further information as appropriate.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE PERFORMANCE AT YEAR-END 2020/2021</b>
1.01	<p>The year-end performance monitoring reports provide explanation of the progress being made toward the agreed measures set out in the Flintshire County Council Reporting Measures 2020/21.</p> <p>These measures were approved by Cabinet after targets for 2020/21 were re-assessed for forecasted performance due to the disruptions caused during the response phase of the pandemic.</p>
1.02	<p>This report is an exception-based report and concentrates on under-performance against in-year targets.</p>
1.03	<p><b>Monitoring our Performance</b></p> <p>Analysis of performance against the performance indicators is undertaken using the RAG status. This is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RED - under-performance against target.</li> <li>• AMBER - where improvement may have been made but performance has missed the target.</li> <li>• GREEN - positive performance against target.</li> </ul>
1.04	<p>Analysis of current levels of performance against target shows the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41 (67%) have achieved a green RAG status</li> <li>• 12 (20%) have an amber RAG status</li> <li>• 8 (13%) have a red RAG status</li> </ul>
1.05	<p>The performance indicators (PIs) which show a red RAG status for current performance against target, relevant to the Community, Housing &amp; Assets Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee are:-</p> <p><b>Housing &amp; Assets</b></p> <p><b>The number of Council homes completed or under construction through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)</b></p> <p>Whilst the target has not been achieved for this measure, we have delivered 149 properties and over half of these are family homes. This is a great achievement considering the difficulties with ensuring COVID site safety throughout the year and the impact of lockdowns.</p> <p><b>The percentage of council houses that meet the Welsh Housing Quality standards within our annual programme</b></p> <p>Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many of the Contractors the Council had procured to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Capital Programme were furloughed. This delayed the completion of the 2019-2020 financial years' work (Year Five) and the commencement of the 2020-2021 financial years' work (Year Six). We were able to commence and mobilise WHQS Programmes of work from July and as a result we started to receive</p>

	hand overs for completed works in quarter three of the 2020-2021 financial year.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications for this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>														
3.01	<p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td rowspan="5">Throughout all of the Mid-Year Monitoring Report there are demonstrable actions and activities which relate to all of the Sustainable Development Principles. Specific case studies will be included in the Annual Performance Report for 2020/21.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Well-being Goals Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td rowspan="7">Throughout the Mid-Year Monitoring Report there is evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Council's Well-being Objectives</b> The Council's wellbeing objectives will be included in the Annual Performance Report for 2020/21. We have reviewed and updated our Well-being Objectives in throughout the development of the Council Plan 2021/22.</p>	Long-term	Throughout all of the Mid-Year Monitoring Report there are demonstrable actions and activities which relate to all of the Sustainable Development Principles. Specific case studies will be included in the Annual Performance Report for 2020/21.	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	Prosperous Wales	Throughout the Mid-Year Monitoring Report there is evidence of alignment with the Well-being Goals. Specific strategic and policy reports include impact and risk assessments.	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Cohesive Wales	Vibrant Wales	Globally responsible Wales
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	The Reporting Measures are monitored by the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees according to the priority area of interest.
4.02	Chief Officers have contributed towards reporting of relevant information.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1: End of Year Performance Monitoring Report 2020-21.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Flintshire County Council Reporting Measures 2020/21.







<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton, Overview &amp; Scrutiny Facilitator  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Reporting Measures:</b> The document which sets out the performance indicators of the Council. This document provides a set of measures to support recovery and selected portfolio measures.</p> <p><b>An explanation of the report headings</b>  <b>Measures (Key Performance Indicators - KPIs)</b>  <u>Baseline Year</u> – As a new indicator, a target has not been established. This will be monitored and targets established for the following year.  <u>End of Year Target</u> – The target for this end of year as set at the beginning of the year.  <u>Current RAG Rating</u> – This measures performance for the year against the target. It is automatically generated according to the data. Red = a position of under performance against target, Amber = a mid-position where improvement may have been made but performance has missed the target and Green = a position of positive performance against the target.  <u>Trend</u> – Trend arrows give an impression of the direction the performance is heading compared to the previous year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'downward arrow' always indicates poorer performance regardless of whether a KPI figure means that less is better (e.g. the amount of days to deliver a grant or undertake a review) or if a KPI figure means that more is better (e.g. number of new jobs in Flintshire).</li> <li>• Similarly an 'upward arrow' always indicates improved performance.</li> </ul>

# End of Year Report 2020/21



# Key for Report Performance

Performance	Shown as	Trend	Shown as
Off Track (Red)		Downturned (Red)	
Monitor (Amber)		Maintained (Amber)	
On Track (Green)		Improved (Green)	

Page 62

## What we mean by Performance RAG

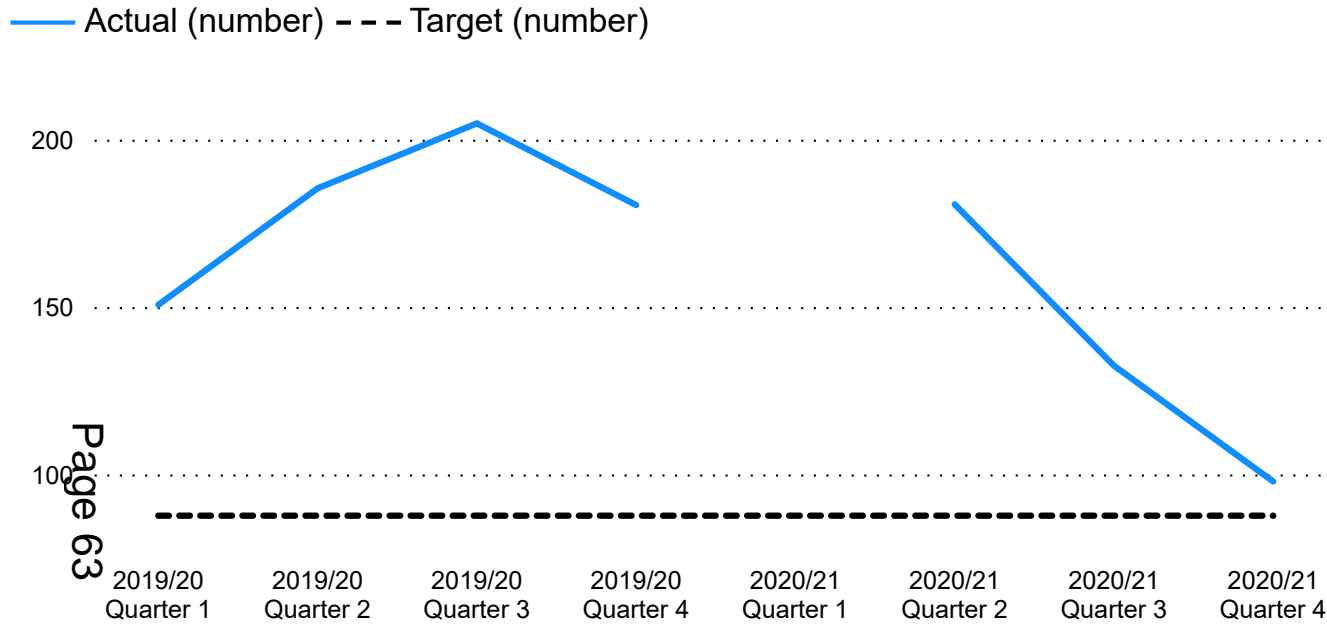
The Performance RAG is generated by assessing current performance against the target. This outcome is then illustrated in the report using the images above.

## What we mean by Trend

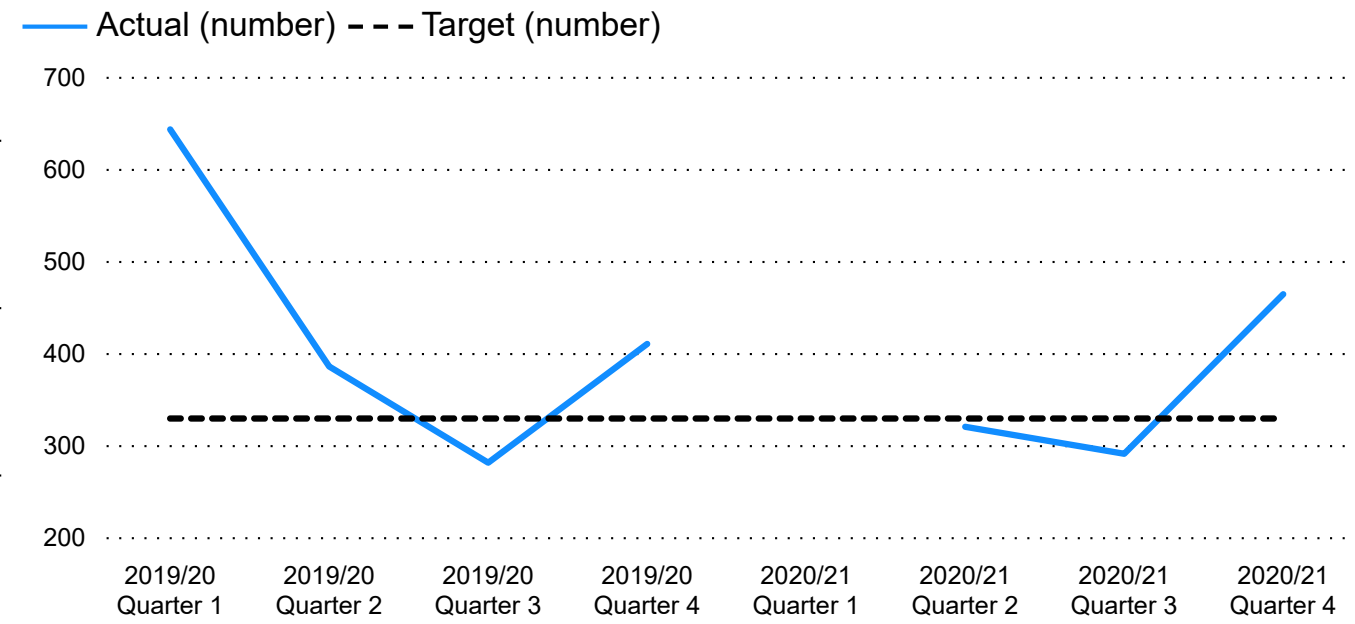
The Trend is generated by assessing current performance against last years performance. This outcome is then illustrated in the report using the images above.

# Housing and Assets - Recovery Measures

**Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG (medium adaptations)**



**Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG (Large Adaptations)**



End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
137.33	88.00	↑	▲

End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
359.23	330.00	↓	▲

**Comment**

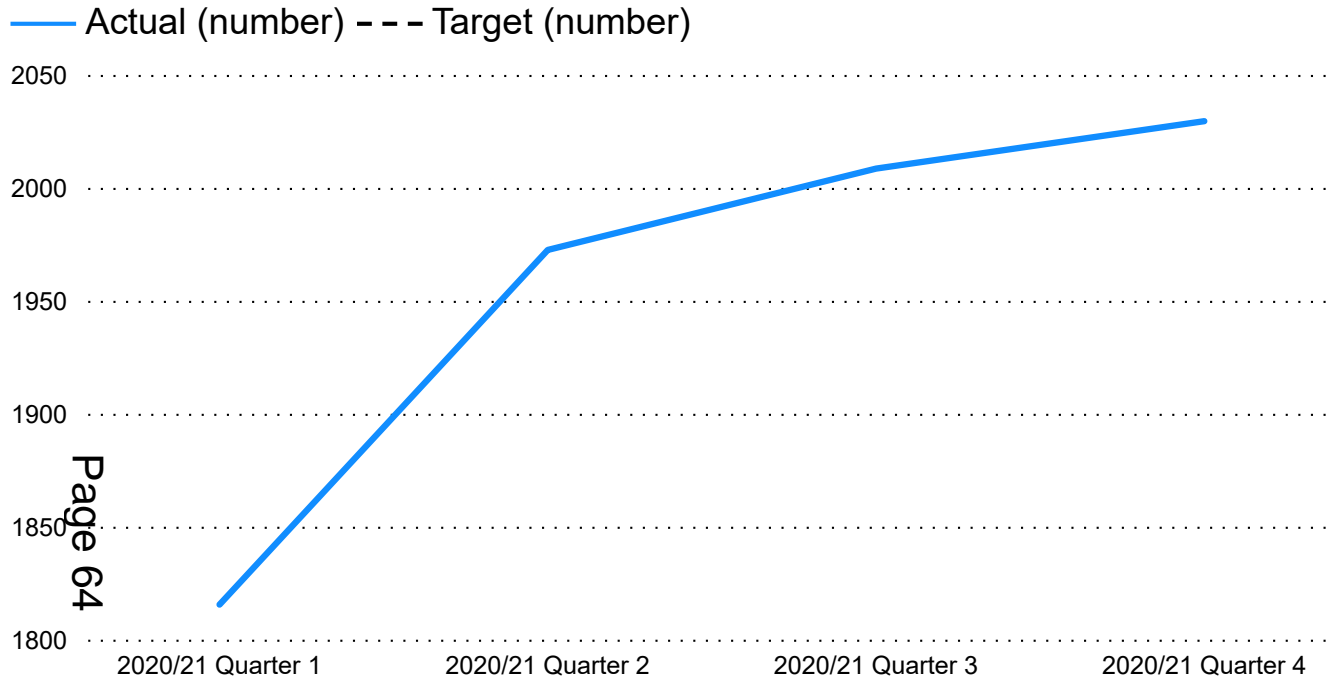
The lockdown restrictions have had an effect on current works. Consideration for the safety of all staff, customers and contractors is paramount. However, majority of works have now re-started and we hope to get back on track to delivery within our timescales as set out in the Housing Service Standards.

**Comment**

Due to the lockdown restrictions this has had an effect on current works. Consideration for the safety of all staff, customers and contractors is paramount. However, majority of works have now re-started and we hope to get back on track to delivery within our timescales as set out in the Housing Service Standards.

# Housing and Assets - Recovery Measures

## Number of applicants on the Common Housing Register

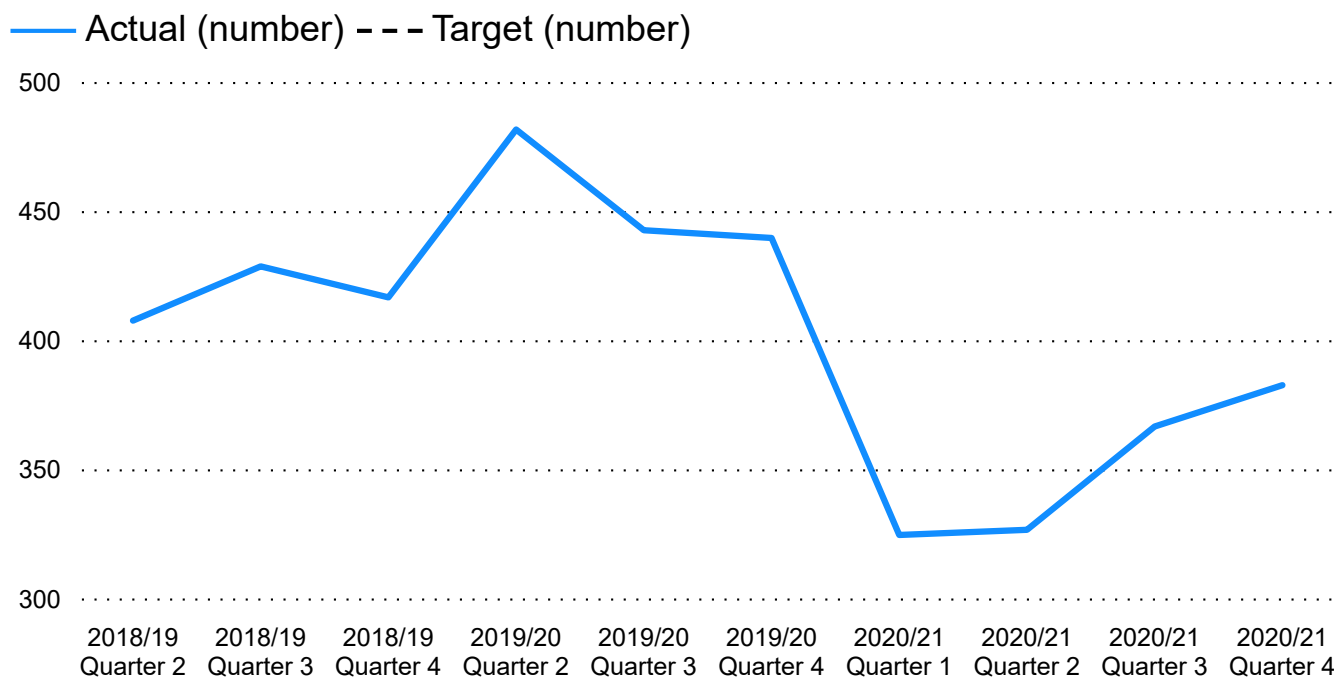


End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
2030.00			

### Comment

No target set - Demand and eligibility for social housing through the Common Housing Register has increased during the course of the year. Numbers of applicants on the Common Housing Register are up approx. 29% from 1578 in the previous year. The increase is consistent with growing housing needs and hardship during the COVID period. Reduced supply of social housing throughout the year and increasing demand accounts for the large increase across the year and will have an impact on applicants waiting times for rehousing.

## Number of referrals to the Housing Support Gateway



End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
1402.00			

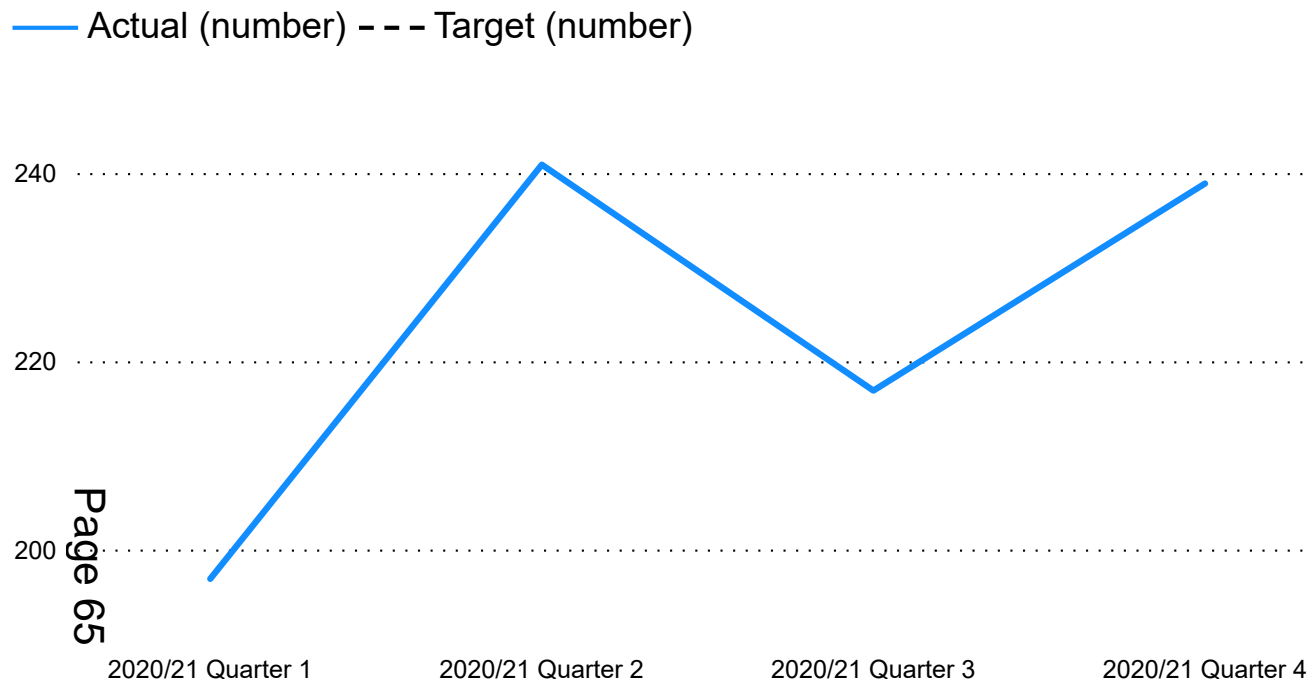
### Comment

No target set - Demand for housing related support services has increased during the course of the year but is still down on the previous year. There are significant unknowns in regards to the medium term impact of COVID on people incomes, households' debts, health and overall welfare and it is likely that demand for housing related support will increase in the coming year. Flintshire's Housing Support Grant funding from Welsh Government has been significantly increased, enabling us to develop further service capacity in anticipation of forthcoming pressures



# Housing and Assets - Recovery Measures

## Number of homelessness presentations



Page 65

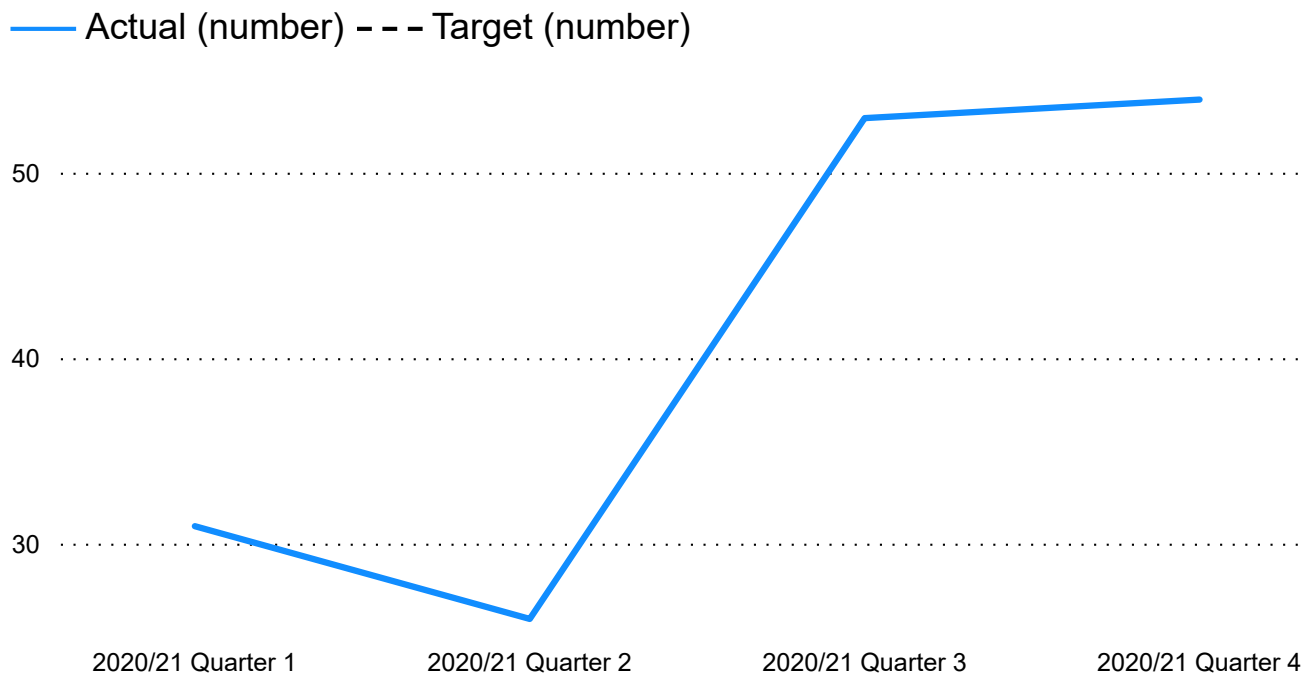
End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
894.00			

894.00

### Comment

No target set - Presentations to the Homeless Team is down 11.4% on the previous year. National interventions such as the closure of courts for possession proceedings, evictions ban, furlough scheme, extended notice periods for those who rent, rental and mortgage holidays, have all been positive protections for residents to mitigate risks of increased homelessness during the coronavirus health pandemic. It is however anticipated that levels of presentations and pressures relating to homelessness will increase as these interventions and lockdown measures are eased.

## Number of households in homeless accommodation



End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
41.00			

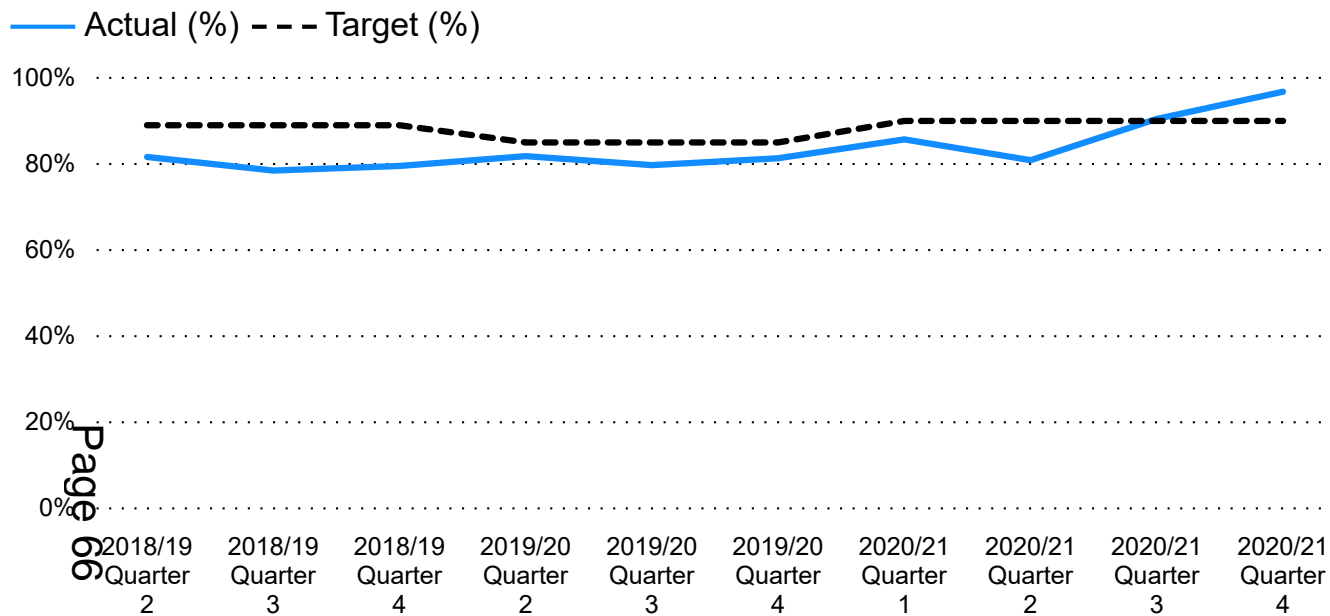
41.00

### Comment

No target set - Presentations to the Homeless Team is down 11.4% on the previous year. National interventions such as the closure of courts for possession proceedings, evictions ban, furlough scheme, extended notice periods for those who rent, rental and mortgage holidays, have all been positive protections for residents to mitigate risks of increased homelessness during the coronavirus health pandemic. It is however anticipated that levels of presentations and pressures relating to homelessness will increase as these interventions and lockdown measures are eased.

# Housing and Assets - Recovery Measures

## Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless



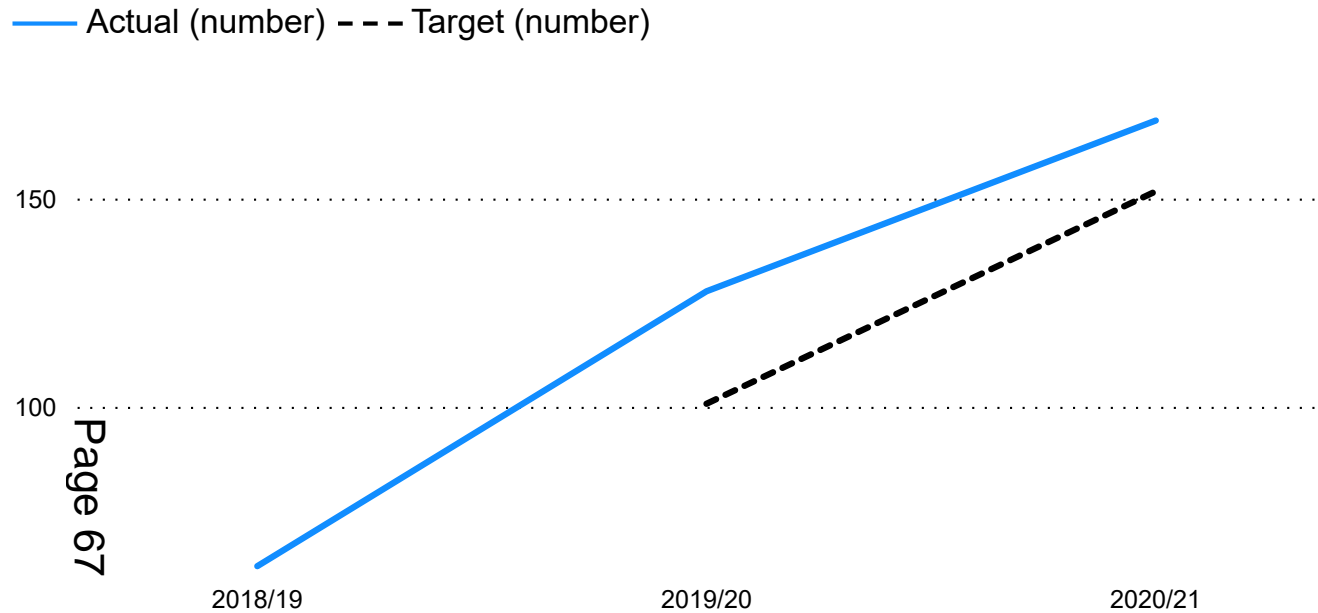
End of Year Actual (%)	End of Year Target (%)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
89.27%	90.00%	↑	▲

### Comment

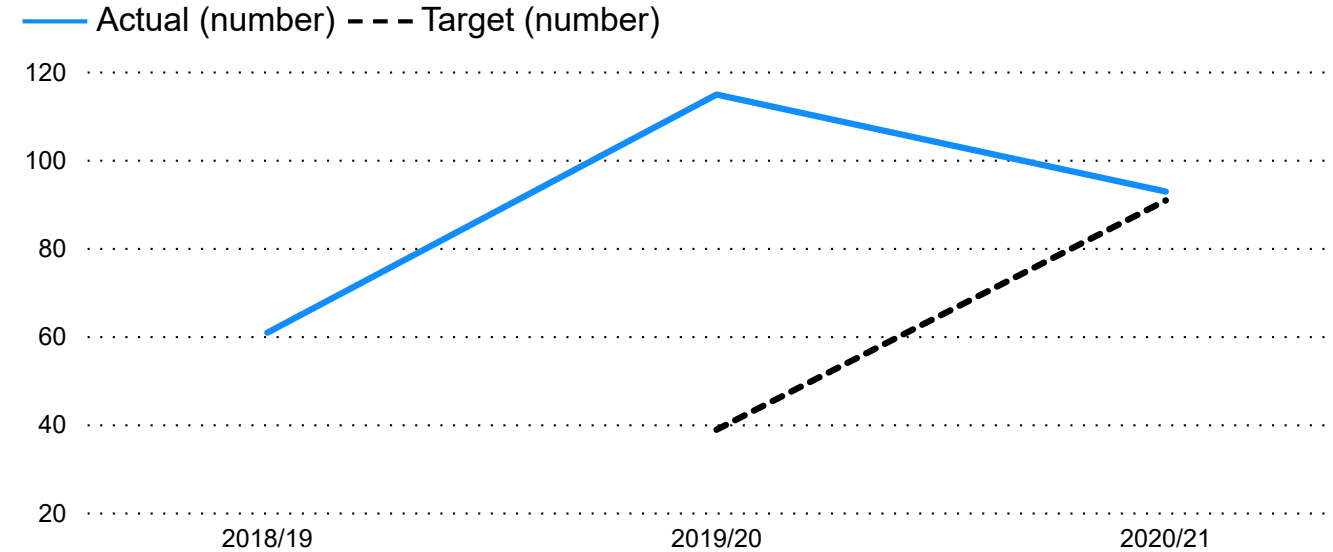
Throughout the year there were 183 cases where positive intervention by the Council helped people to avoid homelessness. Despite efforts to prevent homelessness this is not always possible and there are 22 cases where homelessness has occurred because prevention activities have failed. There are significant protections during the COVID period in regards to housing such as the evictions ban, extended notice periods that have reduced the number of cases where households are at risk of homelessness. Measures such as the furlough scheme have also helped reduce risks of homelessness. As these protections are lifted there is a greater risk of homelessness and the service is increasing capacity for housing support and homeless prevention.

# Housing and Assets - Portfolio Measures

**The number of affordable homes owned and managed by NEW Homes**



**The number of affordable homes completed or under construction through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)**



End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
169.00	152.00	↑	●

End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
93.00	91.00	↓	●

**Comment**

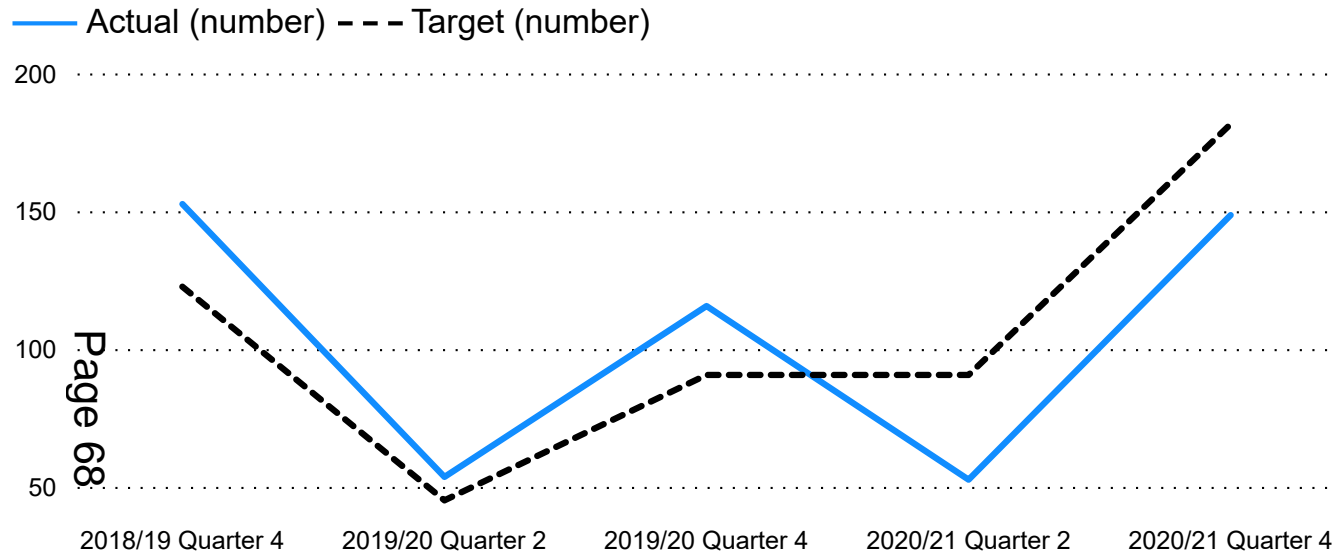
Target exceeded by 17 additional homes. Future targets to be based on NEW Homes Business Plan, Planning Permissions and availability funding.

**Comment**

The target has been achieved for this measure. The majority of the properties completed for this year were two bedroom apartments and houses. Several three bedroom family homes were also delivered for Flint. Future developments will be conditional on the availability of building land and funding.

# Housing and Assets - Portfolio Measures

## The number of Council homes completed or under construction through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)

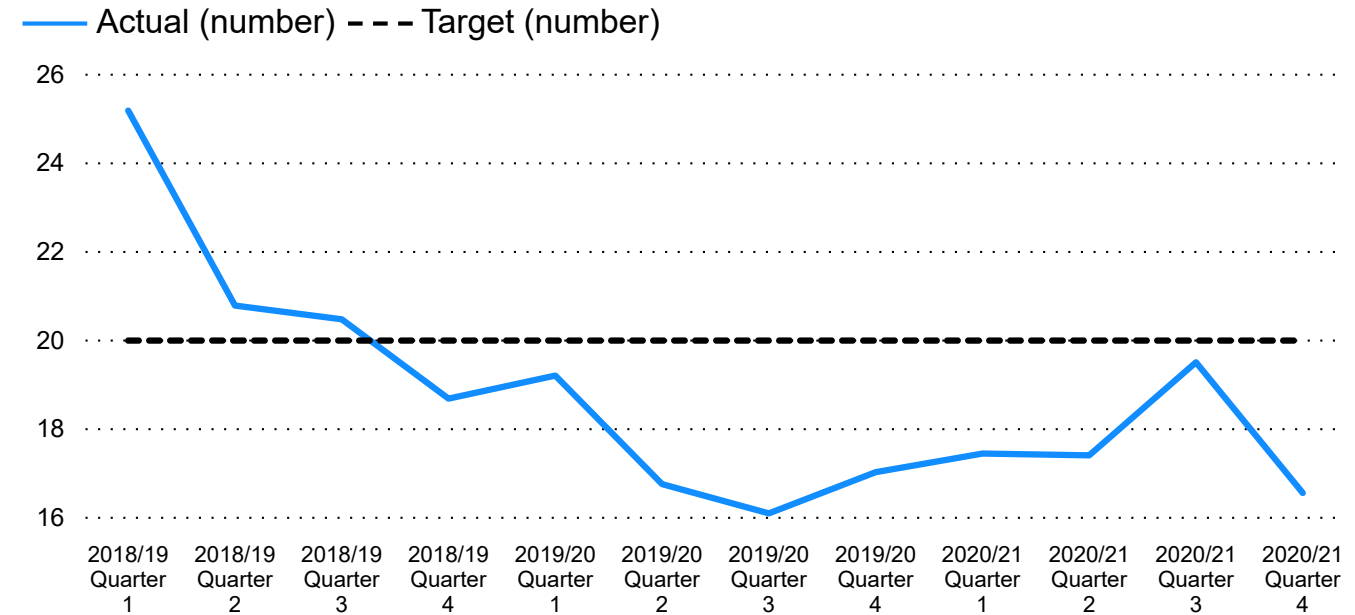


End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
149.00	182.00	↑	⬇

### Comment

Whilst the target has not been achieved for this measure, we have delivered 149 properties and over half of these are family homes. This is a great achievement considering the difficulties with ensuring COVID site safety throughout the year and the impact of lockdowns.

## Average number of days to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax reduction



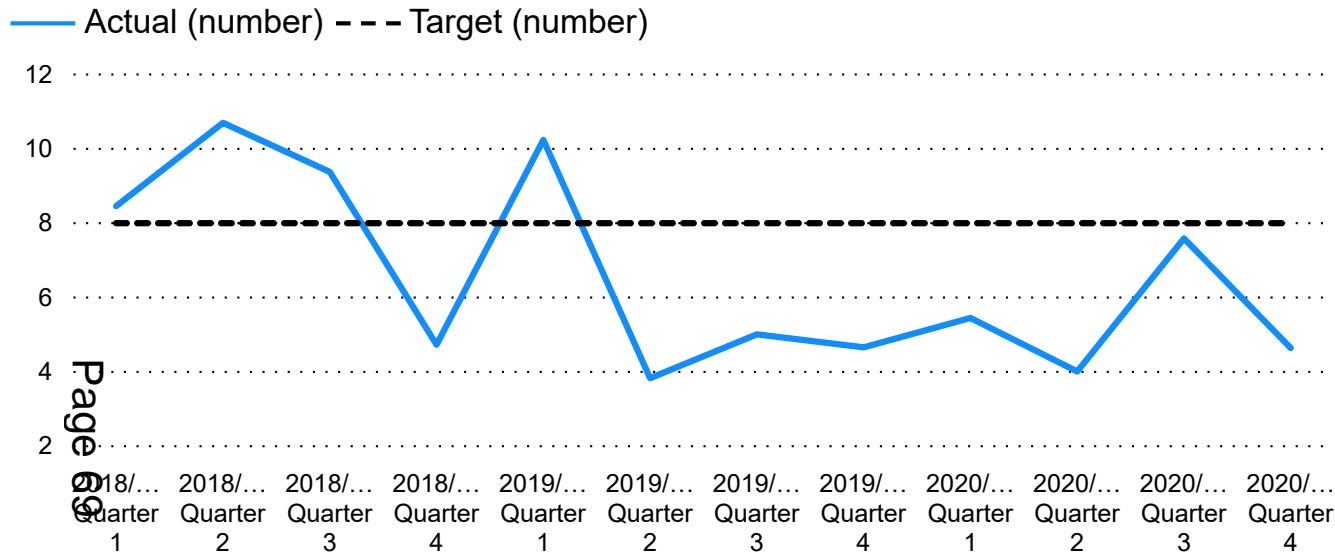
End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
17.73	20.00	↓	●

### Comment

Performance target has been met each quarter for 2021/22. Due to the COVID Pandemic and the effect this had on the economy, work volumes increased. The team have been able to meet performance through overtime, TOIL and agency staff.

# Housing and Assets - Portfolio Measures

## Average number of days to process change in circumstances for housing benefit and council tax reduction

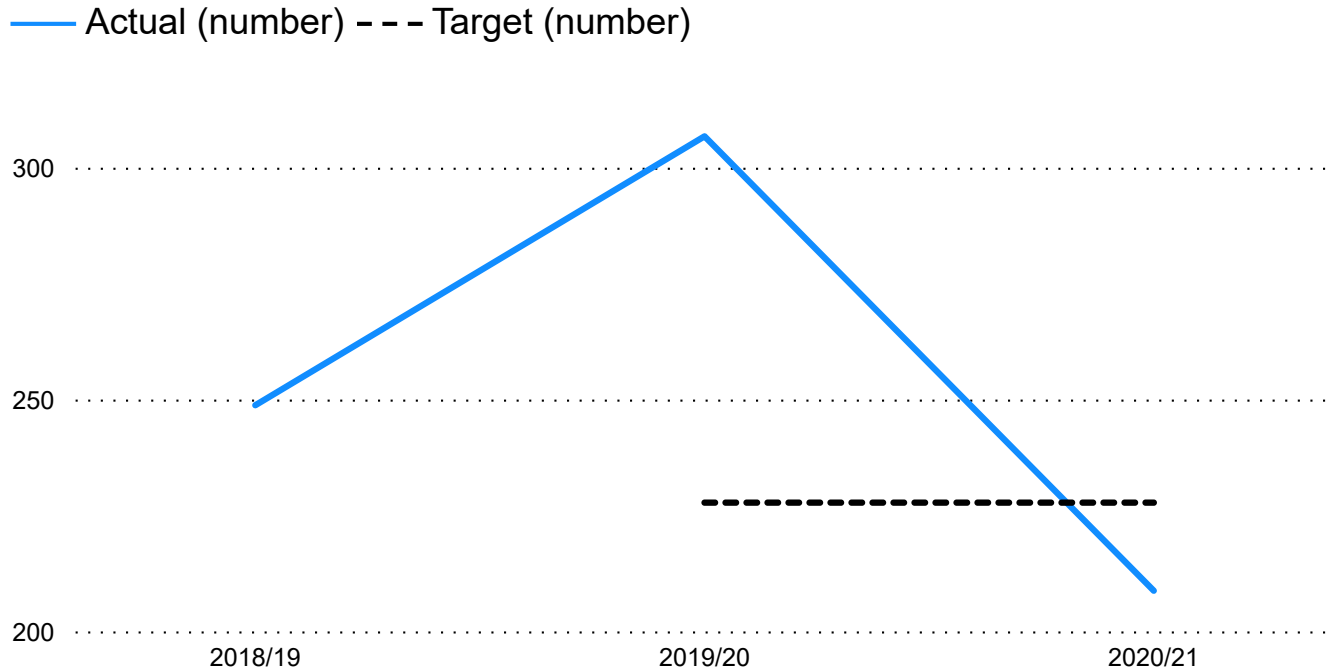


End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
5.42	8.00	↑	●

### Comment

Performance target has been met each quarter for 2021/22. Due to the COVID Pandemic and the effect this had on the economy, work volumes increased. The team have been able to meet performance through overtime, TOIL and agency staff.

## Increase supply and variety of affordable homes



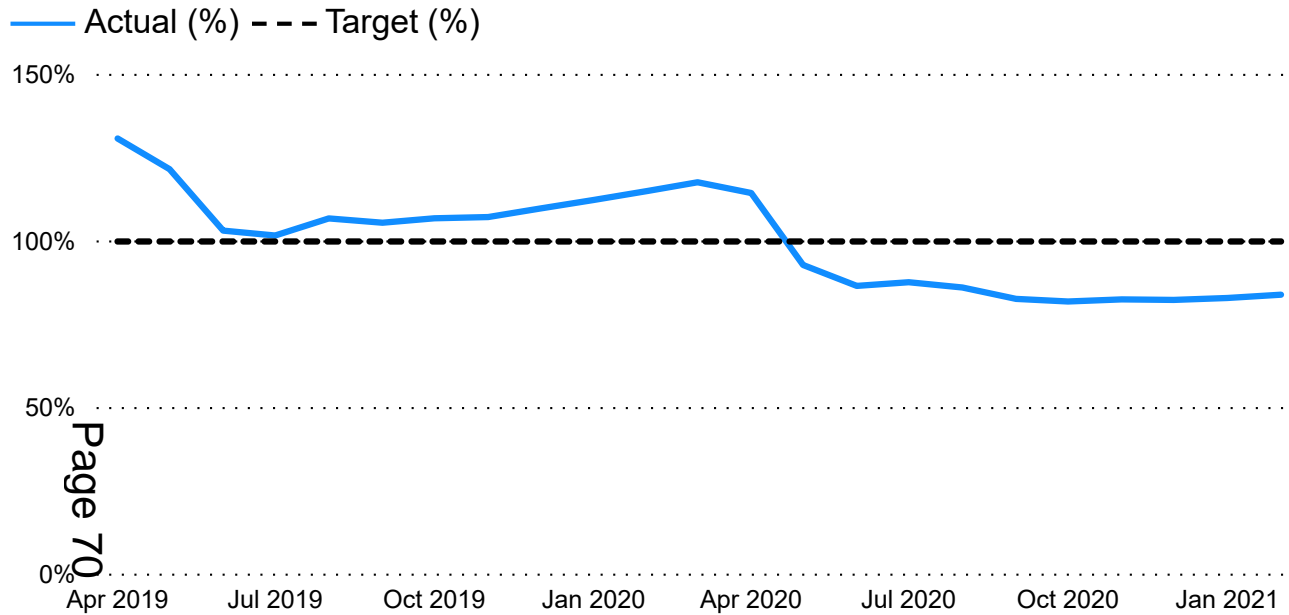
End of Year Actual (No.)	End of Year Target (No.)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
209.00	228.00	↓	▲

### Comment

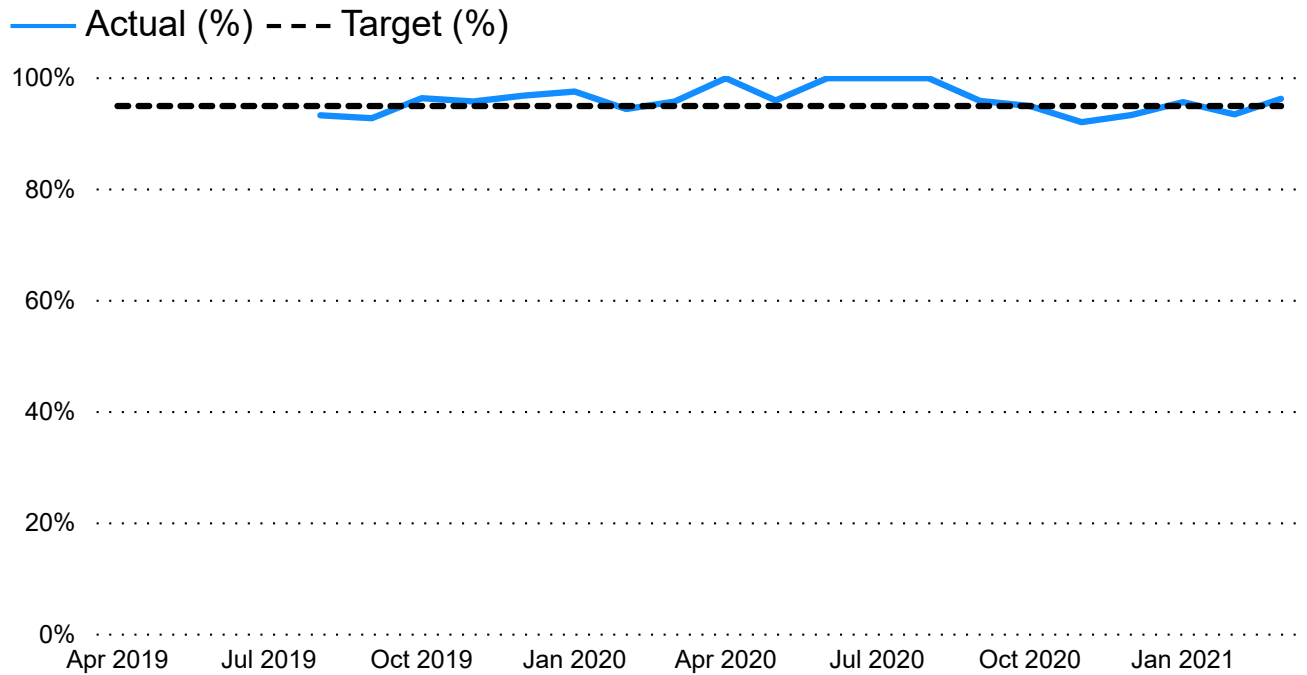
A total of 209 additional affordable homes were provided in Flintshire in 2020/21. Partner Housing Associations (Registered Providers) delivered a total of 125 (60%) additional affordable Homes in Flintshire. These combined with the 84 additional affordable homes (40%) delivered by the Council/NEW Homes give a grand total of 209 affordable homes. Amber performance attributable to Flintshire County Council (FCC)/NEW Homes falling short of 100 unit target by 16 units (FCC Shortfall 13 NEW Homes 3).

# Housing and Assets - Portfolio Measures

## The percentage of council houses that meet the Welsh Housing Quality standards within our annual programme



## Tenant satisfaction level



End of Year Actual (%)	End of Year Target (%)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
85.57%	100.00%	↓	⬇

End of Year Actual (%)	End of Year Target (%)	Trend	Current RAG Rating
96.05%	95.00%	↑	●

### Comment

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many of the Contractors the Council had procured to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Capital Programme were furloughed. This delayed the completion of the 2019-2020 financial years' work (Year Five) and the commencement of the 2020-2021 financial years' work (Year Six). We were able to commence and mobilise WHQS Programmes of work from July and as a result we started to receive hand overs for completed works in quarter three of the 2020-2021 financial year.

### Comment

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many of the Contractors the Council had procured to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard Capital Programme were furloughed. This has impacted on our tenant satisfaction surveys and the ability to complete these with the tenant face to face with our Tenant Liaison Officers. Our satisfaction results for our Welsh Quality Housing Standards (WHQS) refurbishment programmes ended positively with an overall average of 97%. This is an excellent result given the restrictions placed upon the Council and its Contractors who were working in our tenants homes during this difficult time.