

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Rosetta Dolphin (Chair)

Councillors: Sean Bibby, David Evans, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Cindy Hinds, Andy Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas

8 September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

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 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021.

4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING (Pages 13 - 22)

Report of Environment and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

5 TARGET 70 (Pages 23 - 70)

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

Purpose: To consider the proposals prior to consideration at Cabinet

6 REVIEW OF WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY (Pages 71 - 94)

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

Purpose: To review the policy prior to consideration at Cabinet

7 PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT (Pages 95 - 102)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection

Purpose: To receive a report as requested at Committee on 12 May, 2021

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>

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ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **6 JULY 2021**

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Tuesday, 6 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Rosetta Dolphin (Chair)

Councillors: Sean Bibby, David Evans, George Hardcastle, Patrick Heesom, Andy Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Joe Johnson, Vicky Perfect, Paul Shotton, and Owen Thomas

APOLOGIES: Councillors Cindy Hinds, Richard Jones and Kevin Rush

ALSO PRESENT: The following attended for minute No.14

Councillors: Haydn Bateman, Clive Carver, Geoff Collett, Rob Davies, Richard Lloyd, and Arnold Woolley

CONTRIBUTORS:

Councillor Chris Bithell (Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection), Councillor Glyn Banks (Cabinet Member for Streetscene), Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation), Chief Officer (Social Services), and Principal Accountant, Streetscene & Transportation

For minute number 14

Alwen Williams (Portfolio Director), and Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Operations Manager), North Wales Economic Ambition Board

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitators and Democratic Services Officer

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12. MINUTES

(i) The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021 were submitted.

Matters arising

Councillor Chris Bithell asked if a response had been received from the Welsh Government (WG) to the letter sent on behalf of the Committee to seek reinstatement of the Aggregates Levy Fund. The Facilitator advised that a reply had been received which she would forward to Councillor Bithell, and that Councillor Carolyn Thomas said she would progress this with the WG on behalf of the Committee.

The minutes were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Owen Thomas.

(ii) The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2021 were submitted.

Matters arising

Councillor George Hardcastle took the opportunity to thank the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) for his response to the concerns he had raised during the meeting regarding the costs incurred for dealing with stray dogs.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson also took the opportunity to thank the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) for his direct response and explanation to the concerns he had raised during the meeting on 8 June.

The minutes were approved, as moved and seconded by Councillors Andy Hughes and Paul Shotton.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme. She drew attention to a virtual tour of Parc Adfer which was scheduled for the meeting on 12 October, and asked Members to contact her with any suggestions for items they wished to include on the Forward Work Programme.

The Facilitator referred to the actions arising from previous meetings. She advised that some actions were still ongoing but were long term and an update on progress would be provided.

The recommendations were moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Joe Johnson.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved;
- (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 Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

14. NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT AND QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE

The Chief Executive introduced a report to present the Quarter 4 (January – March) Growth Deal report, updated Portfolio Risk Register, and the Portfolio Management Office Annual Report for 2020-21 for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. He provided background information and reminded Members that the North Wales Growth Deal was a medium to long term set of interventions which linked to North Wales' strengths, citing in particular Green and Inclusive Economy and core progressive industries. He said it was a regional programme and gave a balance of West/Central East.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Economy & Environment) introduced Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director, and Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Operations Manager, and invited them to give a joint presentation to the Committee on the North Wales Growth Deal which covered the following main points:

- Growth Deal portfolio:
- the 5 Programmes:
 - Digital Programme
 - Land and Property Programme
 - Energy Programme
 - Innovation in High Value Manufacturing Programme
 - Agri-food and Tourism Programme
- North Wales Growth Deal 2020-21 Quarter 4 (January- March 2021) Performance Report
- North Wales Economic Ambition Board 2020-21 Annual Report

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to the easing of Covid restrictions and asked if any of the projects could be brought forward before 2023. He also asked for an update on the upskilling project. The Operations Manager advised that work on delivery was progressing as fast as possible, however, the projects were medium/long term complex capital projects which would take time to develop and construct. He advised that the first operational projects were likely to deliver benefits from 2023 onwards, however, the construction phases were expected to start end of 2021/beginning 2022. The Portfolio Director advised that all of the capital investment would require the right skills and people to service the investment and commented on work with the Regional Skills partnership, industries, colleges and schools, concerning the skills and employment opportunities required to keep value in local economy.

Councillor Andy Hughes asked what strategies were in place to promote the Growth Deal to the general public. The Portfolio Director explained that a website was being developed and was due to be launched in the next few months which would provide comprehensive information and contact details about all the projects. In addition to the website there would be a launch of a brand identity. She commented on the need to influence and inspire young people about the opportunities and high value jobs which would be created by the Growth Deal.

The Chief Executive explained that the Economic Ambition Board would be expanding its role in the future to have a greater impact beyond the Growth Deal. He commented that in terms of public awareness of the Growth Deal interest in specific projects would be high and said engagement with the business and academic sector had been significant and would filter through. He said North Wales was recognised as a coherent and ambitious region by both the UK government and WG and said there was a need to build up stakeholder interest and promote local projects when going live.

Councillor Owen Thomas referred to the Holyhead project and asked if investment was going to be made to the A55 and the electrification of the Holyhead to Chester rail service. He also asked if there was to be investment into electric vehicles and referred to production of engines on Toyota, Deeside Industrial Park. The Chief Executive explained there were separate programmes of work regarding the A55 and rail services. He said there was investment in improving land capacity and speed and investment by Transport for Wales in rolling stock but electrification was not on the agenda for UK and WG governments for the North Wales railway at the current time as it was about improving connectivity, the number of trains, and quality. The A55 was WG responsibility and multiple schemes were in operation to improve the flow and the Authority was pursuing WG funding for the easement of congestion which did not require a new route and replacement of the Dee Bridge.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) provided further detail regarding the Holyhead project. He said that work was at a critical stage, and as part of the Land and Property Programme the proposals for investment in the Holyhead project were being reviewed which may have an impact on other projects in that Programme.

Councillor Patrick Heesom asked that consideration be given to the potential for Mostyn port and referred to the concerns raised around the Holyhead project. The Chief Executive explained that although Mostyn was not in the Growth Deal – and was self-sufficient in funding its own expansion - and therefore not part of the funding list, the Authority would be its advocate for the region and Flintshire as it remained a significant port.

Councillor Glyn Banks thanked all involved for their work and spoke in support of the Growth Deal. He commented on the anticipated growth in the tourism industry and asked for further information on the Tourism Talent Network project. The Portfolio Director gave an overview of the project and explained that the Tourism Talent Network was a project designed to identify the need for skills in tourism and to raise the quality of customer and hospitality service. The Chief Officer (Planning, Economy & Environment) commented on the challenges of recruitment into the tourism industry during the last 12 months.

The Chief Executive advised that progress reports and themed reports of particular interest would be provided to future meetings of the Committee.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Patrick Heesom and seconded by Councillor Paul Shotton.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 4 Performance Report and the Portfolio Management Office Annual Report for 2020/21 be noted.

15. TOWN CENTRE MARKETS

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) introduced a report to give an update on local markets within Flintshire. He provided background information and reported on the main considerations as detailed in the report. He commented on the challenge and evolving impact of the pandemic on street and indoor markets and local businesses during the last 12 months. He explained that the Council had supported market businesses during the pandemic and had promoted the importance of local business and local shopping to residents. The Chief Officer said he would welcome Members' views on further investment in local street markets.

The Chair referred to the questions she had received from street market traders in Holywell and said that they felt they were not being treated the same as market traders in Mold and cited an example.

Councillor Joe Johnson asked if market traders who were successful in other areas could be enticed to trade in Flintshire. The Chief Officer acknowledged the point and explained that some markets operated from a permanent site and were open to the public on more days and longer hours than the local markets, however, there was potential which could be looked into further.

Councillor Vicky Perfect commented that due to the pandemic many people now preferred to shop outside and locally and suggested that consideration be given to reintroducing a market in Flint.

Councillor Chris Bithell commented on the lack of parking provision for market traders in Mold and said there was a need for collaboration between the markets department and streetscene services to resolve current issues. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) agreed to take the matter up with the relevant service areas.

Councillor George Hardcastle asked what fees were charged for trading in local markets. The Chief Officer agreed to circulate a copy of the Authority's current fees to the Committee prior to the next meeting.

Councillor Owen Thomas spoke in support of Mold market.

Councillor Dennis Hutchinson asked that Buckley be included in the review of current markets in Flintshire with a view to establishing a market in the area to increase footfall in the town.

Councillor Bithell spoke of the need to introduce new businesses and encourage entrepreneurship into local market trading which if successful could create opportunities for permanent trade and employment in the local area.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Joe Johnson and seconded by Councillor Owen Thomas.

RESOLVED:

That the current status of the markets in Flintshire is reviewed and the work which the Council has undertaken to support them be noted.

16. UPDATE ON DEESIDE HYDROGEN HUB PROJECT

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) introduced a report to provide an update on the work carried out to date by Jacobs to develop a Strategic Business Case (SBC) for a new hydrogen hub at Deeside. She provided background information and advised that the low carbon energy programme presented an opportunity for North Wales to be established as a leading UK location for low carbon energy generation. She reported that the Growth Deal, which was for the whole North Wales region, had allocated £11.4million to the Deeside Hydrogen Hub project. Whilst the Hydrogen Hub project was Flintshire focussed it presented huge opportunities for the whole of North Wales. The Chief Officer reported on the key points as detailed in the report.

The Chief Officer referred to the subject of electric vehicles which had been raised in discussion during the meeting and said due to the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030 there was a push towards electric vehicles which would play an important part in the future of transport. She advised that following the strategy produced by the WG for electric and vehicle charging a transition plan was being developed and the Authority was working closely with the Welsh Government's energy teams on implementation.

Responding to Councillor Paul Shotton's comments in support of the benefits of the hydrogen project, the Chief Officer advised that the project manager had contacted a number of local industries/businesses to discuss how they could be involved going forward. She explained that the strategic business case was currently assessing demand for hydrogen across the region and said there was a need to develop infrastructure to give companies confidence to invest in vehicles. In response to the further comments by Councillor Shotton, the Chief Officer advised that only "green" hydrogen was being considered at the present time, however, there was the potential to use "blue" hydrogen first and then move into "green" and this was being considered.

Councillor Glyn Banks referred to the proposal to create a hydrogen hub in Deeside (referred to as a hydrogen bunkering facility) and asked if it could be built larger and underground. The Chief Officer explained that the size of the bunker would depend on the demand required which was unknown at the current time but would be identified as business cases progressed. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) responded to the further question raised by

Councillor Banks regarding the use of “blue” and “green” hydrogen and explained the difference between them. He advised that the drive for the Deeside project was for “green” hydrogen as it did not produce the carbon by-product which had to be stored or moved elsewhere.

The recommendation was moved and seconded by Councillors Paul Shotton and Joe Johnson.

RESOLVED:

That the work carried out to date in partnership with the NWEAB to consider the options for a hydrogen energy hub in Deeside be supported.

17. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.37 am)

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Chair

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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 14 September 2021
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

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

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

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

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

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Margaret Parry-Jones Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702427 E-mail: Margaret.parry-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

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

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Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2020/21

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
12 October 10.00 am	Empty Homes	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.	Information sharing	Public Protection Manager – Community	
	Parc Adfer	To receive a virtual tour of Parc Adfer from Enfinium the operators of the facility, as a site visit is not feasible at the current time.	Assurance	Steffan Owen	
	Review of Operator Licences	Referred by Governance and Audit Committee	Assurance	Chief Officer – Streetscene and Transportation	
	North Wales Economic Ambitions Board	To receive the Performance Report for Quarter 1, 2021-2022	Assurance	Chief Officer- Planning, Environment & Economy	
9 Nov 2021 10.00 am	Integrated Network Maps	To receive the outcome of the formal consultation on the Council's Integrated Network maps	Pre-decision scrutiny	Chief Officer – Streetscene and Transportation	

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
	<p>Impact of the pandemic on prioritising highway schemes, gulley emptying, grass cutting, and flooding.</p> <p>Entrepreneurial grant support from Welsh Government and how the Local Authority could be involved</p>	<p>Request from Recovery Committee</p> <p>Request from Recovery Committee</p>	<p>Assurance</p> <p>Assurance</p>	<p>Chief Officer- Planning, Environment & Economy</p> <p>Niall Waller</p>	
<p>7 Dec 2021 10.00 am</p>	<p>Mid-year Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures</p>	<p>To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring. Members are required 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>Performance monitoring/ Assurance</p>	<p>Chief Officers</p>	
<p>11 Jan 2022 10.00 am</p>					
<p>8 Feb 2022 10.00 am</p>					

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
APPENDIX 1

Date of Meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report/Presentation	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible/Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
8 Mar 2022 10.00 am					
7 Jun 2022 10.00 am	Year-end Performance Indicators for Recovery, Portfolio and Public Accountability Measures	To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring. Members are required to review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan.	Performance monitoring/ Assurance	Chief Officers	
5 Jul 2022 10.00 am					

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Items to be added:

Integrated Transport Plan & Climate Change updates as appropriate

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Action tracking from Environment & Economy OSC September 21

Item/Date	Discussion	Action	By whom	Status
Litter & Flytipping 8/06/21	Chief Executive it would be useful to circulate the waste bin location criteria to Members and Town & Community Council Clerks	Circulate to Members and Town & Community Council Clerks	Ruth Cartwright	Ongoing
Litter & Flytipping 08/06/21	Consideration to be given by officers to a forward plan of approved request for bins with deadlines for incoming requests.	Officers to consider the introduction of a forward plan	Katie Wilby/Ruth Cartwright	Ongoing
Litter & Flytipping 08/06/21	Following discussions the Committee resolved that officers explore whether the Council could be granted powers for enforcement of litter caused by alcohol consumption in public places	That officers explore the suggestion	Katie Wilby Ruth Cartwright	Ongoing
Litter & Flytipping 08/06/21	Consider additional waste bins along the coastal path	To be considered by Officers	Ruth Cartwright	Ongoing
Performance Report 08/06/21	The Chief Officer agreed to share results of the network review by Transport for Wales	Results to be shared when available.	Ruth Cartwright	Ongoing
Town Centre Markets 06/07/21	That consideration be given to starting a market at Flint & Buckley	Outcome to be shared when available	Andy Farrow/ Niall Waller	Ongoing
Town Centre Markets 06/07/21	Andrew Farrow to facilitate discussion between relevant officers within Streetscene/Planning & Environment regarding issue raised re parking for traders/parking fine at Mold	To be progressed by relevant Officers	Andrew Farrow	Ongoing

Town Centre Markets 06/07/21	Fees & charges for market stalls to be advised (link to cabinet report to be circulated)	Link to be circulated	Facilitator	Completed
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ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14th September 2021
Report Subject	Target 70 – A Review of Flintshire County Council's Waste Strategy
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Flintshire County Council introduced a Managed Weekly Collection waste service (MWC), which changed waste collections in the County from a weekly, black sack and backdoor service to weekly recycling and food waste collections with fortnightly collections of non-recyclable waste, alternating with garden waste and all of the waste streams being pre-sorted by residents and collected at the kerb-side.

This change significantly improved the Council's recycling performance and, due to the engagement and efforts of residents, the Council continues to perform well with the recycling performance for 2019/20 confirmed at 65.58% meeting the statutory target of 64%.

The impact of COVID has resulted in significant changes in the volumes of waste and recycling collected from residential properties and deposited at the Household Recycling Centre (HRCs), which has resulted in a downturn in performance to 64.04% for 2020/21. This change has come about as a result of increased working from home, restrictions on movement and the closure of hospitality venues, along with the periodic closures of the HRCs

Whilst the current waste strategy does not come to an end until 2025, the next national target to be achieved is 70% by 2024/25. It is now important that the Council starts to plan for the future, assess the ongoing impact on waste volumes post-COVID and consider what more could be done to increase recycling rates to ensure that we achieve the national targets.

In July 2021, following a report to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee, two all-member workshops/seminars were held to update elected members on the current recycling performance position, provide an overview of the impact of the COVID pandemic on services and discuss what changes the Council could implement to achieve the national recycling target of 70%.

This report provides feedback from the seminars and provides recommendations on future recycling and waste service provisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That Scrutiny welcomes the feedback from the member seminars and supports the work undertaken to date to increase recycling rates.
2	That Scrutiny approves the recommendations on future recycling and waste service provisions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	RECYCLING AND WASTE PERFORMANCE AND CONSULTATION															
1.01	<p>Recycling Targets and Performance</p> <p>In 2010, Welsh Government (WG) published its policy for dealing with municipal waste in Wales ‘Towards Zero Waste’ (TZW). The policy set out statutory recycling targets for all Council’s in Wales to meet.</p> <p>In June 2010, the Council adopted its own Municipal Waste Strategy. The strategy contained a number of key actions, which were required to meet the challenging targets set out in TZW.</p> <p>In 2011, WG published its Municipal Sector Plan which was a partnering document to TZW and provided guidance to Welsh Councils in the form of a blueprint describing WG’s recommended service delivery for Councils to follow.</p> <p>In 2020, WG published its ‘Beyond Recycling’ strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality.</p>															
1.02	<p>Working to the Council Municipal Waste Strategy, recycling performance in Flintshire has consistently exceeded the statutory targets: -</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Recycling Target</th> <th>FCC’s Recycling Performance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>52%</td> <td>54.92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>58%</td> <td>68.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>64%</td> <td>65.58%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>70%</td> <td>???</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Council’s recycling success is to be celebrated; however, with changes to the classifications of what waste can be categorised as recycled and the changing behaviours of our residents in response to the pandemic, which have both impacted on our recycling performance, we now need to look at additional measures to ensure that we achieve the target of 70% by 2024/25.</p>	Year	Recycling Target	FCC’s Recycling Performance	2013/14	52%	54.92%	2016/17	58%	68.2%	2019/20	64%	65.58%	2024/25	70%	???
Year	Recycling Target	FCC’s Recycling Performance														
2013/14	52%	54.92%														
2016/17	58%	68.2%														
2019/20	64%	65.58%														
2024/25	70%	???														
1.03	Waste compositional analysis has shown that items such as steel cans, plastic bottles and food waste are still ending up in the residual waste bin and then inevitably in landfill or being incinerated, rather than being recycled.															
1.04	It is widely recognised that not recycling our waste has substantial environmental implications, which must be addressed to mitigate future impact on the planet.															

	<p>Some of the most significant effects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The continued use of raw materials for the manufacture of new products destroys natural habitats and ecosystems. • Increased carbon emissions from the mining, transport and manufacture of new products. • Increased pollution as non-recycled items enter the waste stream and pollute the natural environment. Plastic waste, specifically, has recently been highlighted as polluting our sea and oceans.
1.05	<p>There is also a lost financial opportunity by not recycling our waste. There is a cost for every tonne of waste that is treated or landfilled, whilst the sale of the recycled products raises a small amount of income for the Council.</p>
1.06	<p>In 2019, a waste and recycling consultation took place to identify further measures that could be introduced to improve our recycling performance.</p> <p>The Council's Cabinet agreed that the changes should be implemented from March 2020; however, due to the national pandemic and the need to focus on service delivery in a COVID compliant manner, these changes were put on hold. The changes approved by Cabinet are outlined in a report from September 2019 (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>As the current Municipal Waste Strategy comes to an end in 2025, there is a need to implement these changes and further review the current service provision to identify how recycling performance could be increased further.</p> <p>Subsequently, the Council's Cabinet approved that all-member seminars should be held over the summer 2021 to consider our current recycling service and performance and explore what further options could be implemented to improve recycling performance.</p>
1.07	<p>All-members seminars were held online on 6th and 20th July 2021. The sessions were well attended by members and the seminars were split into three sessions, as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Context/Background to current arrangements and strategy and where are we now – Presentations were given to members by the waste operations and strategy teams (see attached slides Appendix 2). ➤ Achieving 70% - Waste and Recycling Collections – An informing overview of the collection service with breakout sessions for members to provide feedback, suggestions and comments. ➤ Achieving 70% - Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) – An informing overview of the HRCs with breakout session for members to provide feedback, suggestions and comments.
1.08	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Improved Education and Information.</p> <p>Members continued support for improved education and engagement with residents to improve awareness and understanding of what can and cannot be</p>

	<p>recycled. This will include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear information on why we provide our services in the current format (pre-sorted and separated waste at kerbside) • clear information on what can and cannot go in each recycling container • clear information on what waste can and cannot be recycled, and why • focused community engagement in low participation areas • increased engagement with schools, including use of the new Parc Adfer education facility • attendance at local events, markets, shopping centres to increase awareness of recycling • engagement with estate agents, landlords and our housing department to share information on waste collection arrangements for new properties and residents • increased use of social media and website • engagement with organised and community groups to raise awareness
1.09	<p>Side waste and Enhanced Enforcement.</p> <p>In July 2021, Cabinet approved the reintroduction of side waste enforcement following its suspension in March 2020 due to the pandemic and it has been agreed that enforcement will be reintroduced from 6th September using the same three staged approach: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and engagement with warning/improvement letter (informal) 2. A Section 46 Notice served on the offending property (formal) 3. Issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (formal) <p>At the seminars, Members requested that, before side waste enforcement is reintroduced, an education and engagement campaign takes place to inform residents of their responsibilities when placing waste out for collection.</p> <p>This will be done via press releases, improved website information, email to all registered Flintshire residents, social media campaigns, briefings to all Members, Town/Community Councils and Members of Parliament/Members of the Senedd.</p> <p>Members continued their support for an enhanced approach to side waste enforcement for those residents who habitually do not recycle their waste.</p> <p>However, this will only be implemented once side waste enforcement has been fully implemented and there is clear demonstrable evidence that residents have not changed their waste disposal habits.</p>
1.10	<p>Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) – Disposable Nappy Collections</p> <p>Members continued their support for the introduction of an AHP (disposable nappy collection service) for those who request a service, which will complement the current medical waste collection service and assist with removing this waste stream from the black wheeled bin.</p> <p>The Council has already been awarded £282k of funding by the Welsh Government to deliver this service (for up to 20% of all properties), which has provided support for the purchase of a vehicle to deliver the service, appropriate containers and bags to provide to residents for storage, and also make any</p>

	<p>necessary depot improvements to bulk and store the waste prior to disposal.</p> <p>Again, the implementation of the disposable nappy / AHP collection service was put on hold in March 2020 due to the pandemic. It is now proposed that this collection service should be introduced from 1st November 2021, which will offer: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A weekly collection service (these collections may not take place on the same day as the scheduled waste and recycling collection day) • Provision of a 75L orange box (with lid) and plastic storage bags • Applications for the service online or by telephone through our Contact Centre (Monday to Friday) • Expectation that up to 20% of residents will require the service • A reduction in requests for larger bins as a result <p>Communications for this new service will commence following approval and applications for the service will open from 1st October 2021, which is intended to allow sufficient time for assessment, distribution of the bags and containers, and setting up the collections.</p> <p>The service will be for households who use a large amount of nappies or incontinence products and find that they do not have enough space for these items in their black wheeled bin. Sanitary waste and infectious clinical waste will not be collected as part of this service, and alternative collections are available for the disposal of these waste streams.</p>
1.11	<p>Christmas Waste and Recycling Collections / HRC Opening Dates</p> <p>At the seminars, members were presented with a proposed calendar for waste and recycling collections over the Christmas period. This proposal would see waste and recycling collections for Saturday 25th December 2021 and Saturday 1st January 2022 moved to Sunday 2nd January 2022.</p> <p>The calendar was broadly support with the only request being the inclusion of a food waste collection the week after Christmas Day and Boxing Day.</p> <p>This has now been accommodated and additional food waste collections will take place on Monday 27th December for those residents whose collections would have fallen on Christmas Day and will move to Sunday 2nd January.</p> <p>The proposed collection schedule for the Christmas and New Year period is detailed in Appendix 3</p> <p>Discussions also took place in relation to the opening times of the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) over the Christmas and New Year period.</p> <p>It was explained that it has been common practice to open the sites on Boxing Day and New Year's Day in the past; however, footfall is always low and there is little benefit in opening them.</p> <p>It was suggested that the sites remain closed on these two days, as well as Christmas Day, which would ensure that working patterns are consistent with the waste and recycling collection crews and that service provision is consistent with our neighbouring local authorities. Members supported this approach.</p>

1.12	<p>Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)</p> <p>A number of proposals were discussed at the seminars in relation to HRC sites, which are outlined as follows: -</p> <p>Booking Systems: Throughout the pandemic, a number of Welsh Authorities introduced and continue to operate a booking system for residents wanting to use the HRCs. Members discussed the option of introducing such a system; however, the proposal was not supported as it was felt that it could lead to a potential increase in fly tipping, inconvenience to service users and limit the amount of recyclable materials presented. However, the proposal for a booking system for hazardous wastes such as asbestos was supported by Members. Such a system would allow HRC staff to control when hazardous waste is coming to site and make preparations for its acceptance, by allowing for the correct bags to be issued for transportation of the materials and ensure that the containers are available before residents transport their waste to the site.</p> <p>Bag Splitting: Members supported the reintroduction of black bag splitting at the HRC sites to ensure that all recyclable materials brought to site are pre-sorted and separated correctly. With the reintroduction of side waste enforcement, it is expected that residents who avoid recycling may take the easy option and potentially take waste to the HRC instead. Prior to this being re-introduced a full risk assessment will take place and bag splitting will only be implemented when safe to do so.</p> <p>Van Permit System: Members expressed their concerns that the van permit criteria is not clear and can be left to interpretation. It has also been noted by the HRC staff that the current system does allow for traders to exploit the system. It is proposed that the permitting criteria is reviewed in order to make it clearer to service users what type and size of vehicles will or will not be issued a permit. It is also proposed that those vehicles that are registered to a business could be offered a 'one-off permit' if it can be demonstrated that the waste they are disposing of has no relation to the business to which they are registered e.g. allow a vehicle registered to a plumber to dispose of garden waste.</p> <p>Charging for Bulky Waste Items: It is becoming more common for Local Authorities to charge for the disposal of bulky waste items received at HRC sites, such as wood or soil and rubble. Members did not support this proposal, as it was felt that it could lead to a potential increase in fly tipping and therefore it is not proposed for this to be introduced at this time.</p>
1.13	<p>Repair and Reuse</p> <p>Members supported the Council's commitment to prioritising repair and reuse of items that could be deemed as waste but can be fixed, repurposed or reused, thereby keeping items in circulation longer and reducing the demand for new products.</p> <p>Members welcomed news of the new Repair and Reuse Centre in Buckley, which is being developed in partnership with Groundworks NW and Refurbs Flintshire. With funding granted by Welsh Government through the Circular Economy, the aim of the project is to promote education and behavioural change on waste and recycling initiatives, provide volunteering opportunities and employment for local people and create an attractive and unique venue in the heart of the town centre,</p>

	<p>whilst supporting the strategic regeneration plan of the town and creating a hub for the community to come together. Once this facility is fully established, the model may be replicated in other town centres and areas of the County (subject to funding).</p> <p>Members also supported the continued aspiration to partner with local charities to adopt a Household Recycling Centre. The aim of this is to change residents' behaviours of disposing reusable items, which could be sold through charity shops to raise income to support the charity and reduce waste. Each HRC would be sponsored with the respective charities branding and, if savings could be made to the Council for reducing waste disposal costs and improving reuse rates, this could be shared with the charity.</p>
1.14	<p>Local Targets / Local Benefits</p> <p>Members have suggested having a process whereby, if a local community were to improve its recycling performance (e.g. achieve the 70% target or more), then the benefits, such as financial savings, could be provided back to the community to support local environmental groups to continue their good work. This proposal is quite complex to put into practice, as waste collection rounds do not operate solely in one community/ward and, due to the nature of the containers to collect, the waste rounds do not mirror the recycling rounds to calculate an improvement.</p> <p>Therefore, it is proposed that this idea be progressed as a pilot project, but only in a controlled sample area, where the measurement of success is feasible. Options need to be explored further to identify where this pilot scheme could be organised and how it would work operationally and how the community be engaged in the project.</p>
1.15	<p>RFID Tags for Garden Waste and Assisted Collections</p> <p>The service has been piloting an electronic tag system for brown bin collections, known as RFID (radio frequency identification). This is as an alternative option to the sticker/tag that is manually issued each year once a resident has subscribed to the garden waste collection service.</p> <p>Currently, each year the Council manually sends out 33,000+ stickers or tags to attach to the brown bins, an operation that is time consuming, labour intensive and costly to administer and distribute year on year. The purpose of the pilot scheme was to reduce the administrative burden on the service and find a more cost effective way of issuing tags and identifying which bin is registered and subscribed to the collection service, whilst also offering improved back office reporting information on the collections and operational services.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council provides an assisted collection service for anyone who is physically unable to move the wheeled bin to the kerbside and where an able bodied person is not available to assist in presenting the bins at the kerbside for collection. The issue of missed collections for residents who are registered for the assisted collection service can be very emotive, as they rely on the collection crews to collect the bins from a location on their property instead of the kerbside. Currently, there is no way of knowing whether an assisted collection has taken place, other than the driver confirming the collection on return to the depot. The use of RFID tags on black bins registered to receive assisted collections would enable us to identify immediately whether a collection has been missed, record</p>

	<p>the emptying of the bins and confirm that all bins on the round have been processed.</p> <p>The pilot has been successful with a read rate of 99.2% and the capability of the system for monitoring the progress of collection rounds and demonstrating that bins have been collected has also proven effective.</p> <p>It is now proposed that this system is rolled out countywide and implemented for all subscriptions to the 2022 garden waste collection service and also those residents who are registered to receive assisted black bin collections.</p> <p>To enable the service to do this, grant funding of £122k has been awarded via Innovate UK as part of a wider project to promote carbon reduction through the use of electric vehicles and intelligence based route planning. The funding will pay for all of the RFID tags and the back office system to support the collection service. Further funding will be required for the tag readers for each vehicle and ongoing maintenance of the new back office system, which is intended to be sourced from the savings generated by not having to manually issue annual stickers or tags to households.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS								
2.01	£5,000 required for education/information literature. This is accounted for in the revenue budget								
2.02	Enforcement will be delivered by the existing in-house Civil Parking and Environmental Enforcement team. Approval was given to employ two additional officers to deliver enhanced enforcement. One officer has been employed and a review of the success of the project will be undertaken before employing the second post. The posts will be funded by the saving from waste disposal costs.								
2.03	£282,200 of grant funding has been awarded for the delivery of the AHP and disposable nappy collections. No additional workforce resource will be required as this will mirror the existing medical waste collection service								
2.04	<p>£122k Innovate UK funding to implement the RFID tag system for garden waste collections and assisted black bin collections</p> <p>Additional funding will be required to fund the vehicle readers and future maintenance costs for the back office software system. It is intended that this will be funded from the savings generated by not having to manually issue annual stickers or tags to households.</p> <p>The costs for manually issuing the tags during 2020-2021 were broken down as follows:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>Materials & Printing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,379.74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Postage</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£26,185.56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admin Support</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£25,574.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£57,139.51</td> </tr> </table>	Materials & Printing	£5,379.74	Postage	£26,185.56	Admin Support	£25,574.21	Total	£57,139.51
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT																								
3.01	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>The proposals will drive improvements to recycling performance.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>The proposals will help prevent the disposal of recyclable resources reducing the need for raw materials</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>The proposals will provide an opportunity for the County Council to work with community groups to promote recycling awareness</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Improved engagement with Flintshire residents, schools, community groups</td> </tr> </table> <p>Well-being Goals Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>Positive – improving reuse and recycling of recycling materials resulting in world leaders in recycling performance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>Positive – Less demand for raw materials, promoting circular economy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>Positive – reducing vehicle movements and emissions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> <td>No impact</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> <td>Positive – Promoting reuse and recycling of waste, and working towards carbon reduction</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> <td>Reducing the reliance on the extraction of raw materials and destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems by the reprocessing of recyclable materials.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	The proposals will drive improvements to recycling performance.	Prevention	The proposals will help prevent the disposal of recyclable resources reducing the need for raw materials	Integration	No impact	Collaboration	The proposals will provide an opportunity for the County Council to work with community groups to promote recycling awareness	Involvement	Improved engagement with Flintshire residents, schools, community groups	Prosperous Wales	Positive – improving reuse and recycling of recycling materials resulting in world leaders in recycling performance	Resilient Wales	Positive – Less demand for raw materials, promoting circular economy	Healthier Wales	Positive – reducing vehicle movements and emissions	More equal Wales	No impact	Cohesive Wales	No impact	Vibrant Wales	Positive – Promoting reuse and recycling of waste, and working towards carbon reduction	Globally responsible Wales	Reducing the reliance on the extraction of raw materials and destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems by the reprocessing of recyclable materials.
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3.02	Only those residents not complying with the waste collection policy will be accountable for their actions. There will be no impact to those residents who continually present their waste correctly																								
3.03	Improved recycling knowledge and understanding, promoting better engagement with Council services																								
3.04	Reduction in single use items, repairing and reusing items and waste minimisation will contribute to the carbon reduction agenda and reduce climate change.																								
3.05	<p>An integrated impact assessment has been completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The impact assessment has identified there may be a potential positive impact on Equality and Human rights, Welsh Language, Environment and Biodiversity and Health. <li>ii) There may be potential negative impacts on Equality and Diversity with respect of digital communications with older people, but these will be mitigated by ensuring that communications will be offered by face-to-face 																								

	<p>contact or written, paper based literature.</p> <p>There may be potential negative impacts on Equality and Diversity with respect of the ability of disabled persons to sort and separate waste streams to ensure that the correct recycling containers are used. This will be mitigated by ensuring the assisted waste collection service is offered when appropriate.</p> <p>There may be potential negative impacts on Equality and Diversity with respect of those with learning difficulties understanding the waste and recycling collection service and collection schedule. This will be mitigated by making documentation and information in easy read format.</p> <p>iii) There will be a neutral impact on service from the introduction of this policy across all aspects of the assessment.</p>
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
4.02	Elected Members – all-member seminars held online in July 2021
4.03	Workforce and Trade Unions – workforce briefing sessions and meetings with the Trade Unions were held in August 2021 to gain feedback on the proposals
4.04	A communications plan will be required following approval of the recommendations put forward in this report to ensure that wider stakeholders are consulted on any proposed changes to waste and recycling services.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Waste Strategy Review Consultation Report to Cabinet from September 2019</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Presentation Slides from All-Member Seminar held in July 2021</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed Christmas Waste and Recycling Collection Schedule for 2021/2022</p>

6.0	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.1	<p>Integrated Impact Assessment</p> <p>Towards Zero Waste https://gweddill.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/waste_recycling/zerowaste/?lang=en</p> <p>Beyond Recycling strategy https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/beyond-recycling-strategy-document.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Ruth Cartwright, Regulatory Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 E-mail: ruth.cartwright@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	WG – the Welsh Government TZW – Towards Zero Waste MWC – Managed Weekly Collections AHP – Absorbent Hygiene Products – this can include disposable nappies, nappy changing waste such as wet wipes, nappy sacks and cotton wool Incontinence products (pads, pants and bedding). RFID

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 24 th September 2019.
Report Subject	Waste Strategy Review Consultation
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene And Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, Flintshire County Council introduced a Managed Weekly Collection waste service (MWC), which changed waste collections in the County from a weekly, black sack and back door service to weekly recycling and food waste collections with fortnightly collections of non-recyclable waste, alternating with garden waste - with all of the various waste streams being pre-sorted by residents and collected at the kerb-side.

This change significantly improved the Council's recycling performance and due to the engagement and efforts of residents, the Council continues to perform well with the recycling performance for 2018/19 confirmed at 69.16%. This is already above the 2019/20 target of 64% with the next significant target being 70% in 2025.

The current recycling performance needs to be celebrated, but without operational and policy change, it is likely that performance will now stabilise and any future improvements in performance will become difficult to achieve. Whilst the current waste strategy does not come to an end until 2025, the target set within the document of 70% has been almost achieved and it is important that the Council starts to plan for the future, considering what more could be done to increase recycling rates still further and reduce residual waste.

This report proposes that the Council undertakes a wide ranging public consultation exercise on the future provision of the waste and recycling service to better understand residents' expectations and behaviours, and set the future direction for the service provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet notes the current recycling performance.
2	That Cabinet approves the commencement of a public consultation exercise on the Council's Waste Strategy and the future direction of the waste and recycling service.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT POLICY															
1.01	In 2010, Welsh Government (WG) published its policy for dealing with municipal waste in Wales 'Towards Zero Waste' (TZW). This policy sets out statutory recycling targets for all Councils in Wales to meet.															
1.02	In June 2010, the Council adopted its own Municipal Waste Strategy. The strategy contained a number of key actions which were required to meet the challenging targets set out in TZW.															
1.03	In 2011, WG published its Municipal Sector Plan which was a partnering document to TZW which provided guidance to Welsh Council's in the form of a blueprint describing WG's recommended service delivery for Councils to follow.															
1.04	Working to the Council Municipal Waste Strategy, recycling performance has exceed the statutory targets, with current performance almost at the level required by 2024/25 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Recycling Target</th> <th>FCC's Recycling Performance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>52%</td> <td>54.92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>58%</td> <td>68.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>64%</td> <td>69% (projected)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>70%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Recycling Target	FCC's Recycling Performance	2013/14	52%	54.92%	2016/17	58%	68.2%	2019/20	64%	69% (projected)	2024/25	70%	
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2024/25	70%															
1.05	<p>WG is currently reviewing its national policies with a view to revising future targets.</p> <p>This review is taking place following waste compositional analysis, which has shown that items such as cans, plastic bottles and food waste are still ending up in the residual waste bin and inevitably then in landfill or sent for incineration rather than being recycled.</p>															
1.06	<p>It is widely recognised that the impact of not recycling our waste has substantial environmental implications that must be addressed to mitigate the future impact on the planet.</p> <p>Some of the most significant effects are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of raw materials for the manufacture of new products destroys natural habitats and ecosystems. 															

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased carbon emissions from the mining, transport and manufacture of new products. • Increased pollution as non-recycled items enter the waste stream and pollute the natural environment. Plastic waste, specifically, has recently been highlighted as polluting our seas and oceans.
1.07	In addition to the environmental impact, there is a lost financial opportunity by not recycling our waste. There is a cost for every tonne of waste, which is treated or landfilled, whilst the sale of the recycled products raises a small amount of income for the Council.
1.08	<p>With the current Municipal Waste Strategy coming to an end in 2025, and the expectation that our current performance will plateau without further changes, now is an opportunity to review the current service provision to identify how recycling performance could increase further.</p> <p>This report proposes that a public consultation is undertaken to assist the Council in identifying what changes could be made to services in order to achieve improved recycling targets.</p> <p>The consultation will consider a number of aspects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing service users on current success • Informing service users what happens to collected recyclable items • Explaining the need for a review to be undertaken • Gaining information on current recycling behaviours • Consideration for future service change options that will maximise recycling potential are listed in Appendix 1
1.09	<p>It is proposed that the consultation will take place over a period of five weeks from 25th September 2019 until 31st October 2019.</p> <p>In order to deliver the consultation to as many key stakeholders as possible a programme has been developed, highlighting the proposed methods of communication and engagement Appendix 2.</p> <p>The consultation will take the form of a short Survey Monkey questionnaire, in which a number of key questions will be asked Appendix 3.</p>
1.10	A report detailing the outcome of the public consultation exercise will be presented to the December meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny and to Cabinet to approve the next steps following completion of the consultation.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no additional resource implications for undertaking the public consultation.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Member workshops were held in June 2019 to seek views on the future provision of the collection service.
3.02	Residents through 'Survey Monkey' feedback.
3.03	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside.
3.04	Town and Community Councils – invitation for written response/comment.
3.05	Elected Members – invitation for written response/comment.
3.06	Assembly Members – invitation for written response/comment.
3.07	Members of Parliament – invitation for written response/comment.
3.08	Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be asked to provide comments at their meeting in October 2019.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	A project team is in place to manage and support the consultation to ensure Countywide engagement.
4.02	An Integrated Impact Assessment has begun to assess the impact of any potential service changes.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Service change considerations Appendix 2 - Consultation programme Appendix 3 - Consultation questions

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	WG – Welsh Government TZW – Towards Zero Waste MWC – Managed Weekly Collections

APPENDIX 1

Options for consideration to improve recycling levels

Improved education/communication with residents

- Improve resident understanding on what can / cannot be recycled
- Improved education and engagement through schools, community and local groups
- Improved information through digital media (website, social media, my account)

Undertaking stricter enforcement of what is placed in the residual waste (black) bin

- Enforcement action when recycled material is placed in the black bin.
- Enforcement action when waste or recycled material is put in the wrong container.

Changing the frequency of collection of the residual waste (black) bin

- Reducing collection frequency for black bin collection to once every three or four weeks
- Maintain fortnightly brown bin collections (March – Mid-December)

Reducing the size of the residual waste (black) bin

- Maintaining the current frequency of collection while reducing the size of the black bin
- Maintain weekly recycling collections
- Maintain fortnightly brown bin collections (March – Mid-December)

APPENDIX 2

Consultation Programme

August 2019	Integrated Impact Assessment	Start IIA process
10 th September	Informal Cabinet	Inform on the launch of consultation
10 th September	Flintshire Youth Council	Discuss consultation and request support/input
16-20 th September	Connects / Libraries / Contact Centre	Pre - consultation briefing
September	Workforce briefing	Inform and request assistance with promoting consultation to service users
20 th September	Press Briefing	Inform press of content of the consultation and request support to promote through all possible avenues.
24 th September	Change exchange	Message to managers – assist with promoting consultation to service users
24 th September	Cabinet	Inform on the launch of consultation Present: Document, survey, consultation list, video,
25 th September – 31 st October	Consultation Live	Launch consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live on Flintshire CC Website • Video detailing recycling operations • Live survey monkey questionnaire • Live on Infonet / workforce email • Live in Connects Centres / Libraries (documents on deposit) • Informative banner on HRCs • Twitter updates • Press release • Information via My Account / Your Council • Letter to: Members, T&CC, AMs, PMs • Letter to School Councils / eco groups • Leaflet to each property (with calendar) • Call %age of residents to take survey
25 th Sept – 31 st October	Connects Centres / Libraries	Drop in events – dates TBC Mold – Wednesday Holywell – Thursday Flint – Friday Buckley – Monday C'Quay – Tuesday Q'ferry – Wednesday

2 nd October	Twitter	Reminder on Consultation / Recycling advice
9 th October	Twitter	Reminder on Consultation / Recycling advice
10 th October	County Forum	Brief on Consultation and request participation
15 th October	EO&S committee	Present report on Consultation and request discussion / feedback
16 th October	Press Release	Reminder on Consultation
16 th October	Twitter	Reminder on Consultation / Recycling advice
23 rd October	Twitter	Reminder on Consultation / Recycling advice
31 st October	Consultation End	Close Consultation and review feedback

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Appendix 3

Introduction

Flintshire County Council is undertaking a public consultation to engage with residents on the current and future waste services. Feedback is required on how residents currently use the service provided, what restricts a person's ability to recycle and what we could do to make sure recycling performance is maximised into the future.

Please take this opportunity to complete this short questionnaire to have your say.

Please provide POST CODE:

Consultation Questions

1. Which statement best describes how much you currently recycle?
 - I recycle everything that can be recycled
 - I recycle a lot but not everything that can be recycled
 - I recycle a little
 - I do not currently recycle, but I intend to start
 - I do not currently recycle and do not intend to start

2. How often do you use the following collection services:

Recycling (paper/card/plastic/tins/glass)

Food waste

Garden Waste

Batteries

Waste

Bulky waste

Options: Every Week/Every fortnight/Once a Month/A few times a year/Never

3. On average, how full are your containers and black bins on your collection day?

Recycling (paper/card/plastic/tins/glass)

Food waste

Garden Waste

Batteries

Waste

Options: Overflowing / Full / Half Full / Quarter Full / Virtually Empty

4. Do any of the following factors prevent you from recycling?

- It takes too much time
- I'm not sure what containers to use
- I don't have all the containers I need
- I don't know where to get containers / bags from
- I don't think it matters whether I recycle or not
- I recycle everything
- Other

5. Over the past few months, how often have you:

- Thrown recyclables in to the waste bin
- Thrown uneaten food or food that is packaged in to the waste bin
- Thrown dirty recyclables into the waste bin because of the time it would take to rinse the items
- Thrown items into the waste bin because you weren't sure if they could be recycled
- Forgotten to put recycling out as you were unsure of the collection day
- Thrown recyclable items into the waste bin because your recycling containers were full
- Thrown waste into the recycling bin because your wheelie bin is full

Options: Always / Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

6. Do you agree that the Council should take steps to encourage more people to recycle so less money is spent on disposal costs?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you think it is reasonable for the Council to take robust enforcement action against those who do not recycle?

- Yes
- No

8. If you recycled as much of your waste as possible with the existing weekly recycling service, could you cope with less frequent black bin collections?

- Yes
- No

9. If you recycled as much of your waste as possible with the existing weekly recycling service and you were provided with a larger black bin, would that help with reduced collection frequency?

- Yes
- No

10. If you recycled as much of your waste as possible with the existing weekly recycling service could you cope with a smaller black bin if collection of the bin remained fortnightly?

11. What concerns would you have if the container was emptied less often?

- I would have no concerns
- Odours
- Disposal of nappies
- The black bin would fill up too quickly
- The bin would be too heavy
- Increase in fly-tipping and litter
- Longer time between collection if I miss a day
- Vermin
- Flies
- Animal waste / animal bedding

12. How would you like to receive/find out about information on recycling and waste collection services?

- Leaflets
- Smartphone / apps
- Flintshires' My Account
- Council website
- E-mail
- Community events
- Online videos
- Other?

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Waste Strategy

Target 70

All Members' Workshop

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Context / Background

Workshop follows on from Workshop held in 2019

Council's waste and recycling collection services are highly valued by Local Members and the community.

Any changes to the service have wide reaching consequences and receive substantial challenge.

In 12 years we have moved from a back door weekly bin collection service to a modern, highly controlled kerbside collection arrangement with the emphasis on recycling...

This has been driven by WG Statutory Recycling Targets and the threat of Infracton Fines (if we do not achieve them)

Where are we now?

WG recycling target set at 70% by **2024/2025**

2018-2019 – almost had achieved target at 69.16%

2019-2020 – Start of Covid-19 pandemic: 65.85%

2020-2021 - Covid-19 pandemic: 64.04%

12% increase in residual waste (additional 3,000 tonnes)

40% More people at home e.g. furlough, working from home; eating at home; shopping online, undertaking DIY home improvements etc.

Recycling increased by 26%

Food waste increased by 10%

Policies, Legislation, Guidance & Changing Times

- Towards Zero Waste
 - Municipal Waste Sector Plans
- Wales Waste Measure
 - Classification of Wood
 - Household/municipal waste
- End Destinations – proximity principle , market stability, reporting regimes
- Wales Circular Economy – Beyond Recycling Strategy
 - Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) – impact on kerbside
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Changing Waste Composition
 - WFH, lockdown, temporary closures
 - Cardboard, glass, residual
 - Contamination

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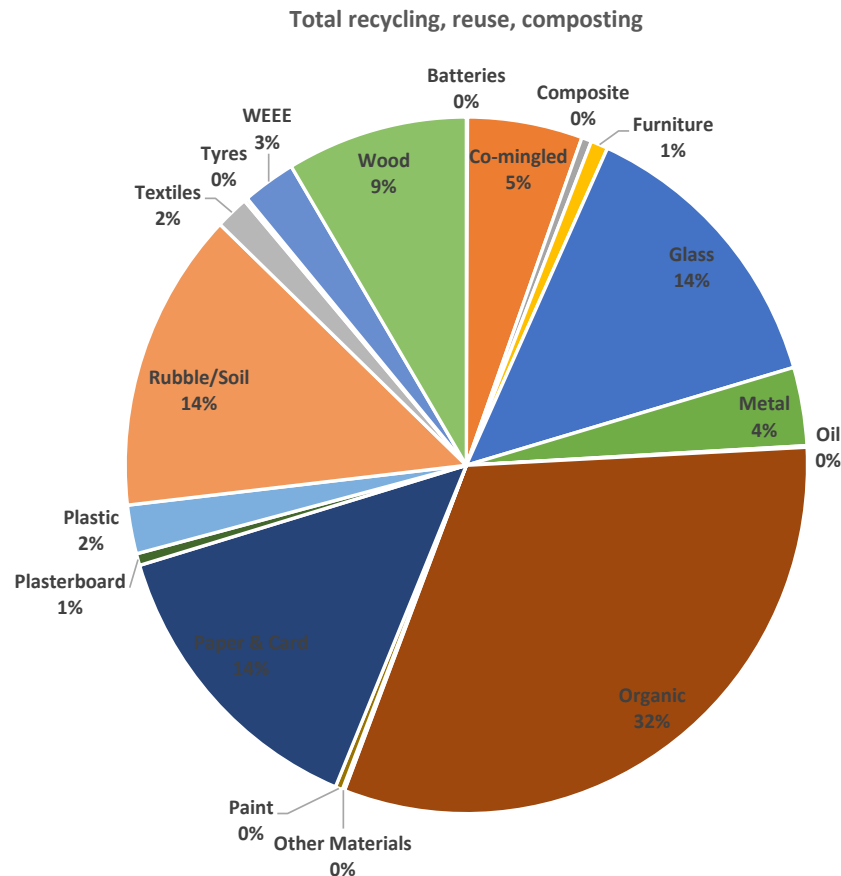
Municipal Sector Plan
Part 1
March 2011



Statutory Targets – weight based

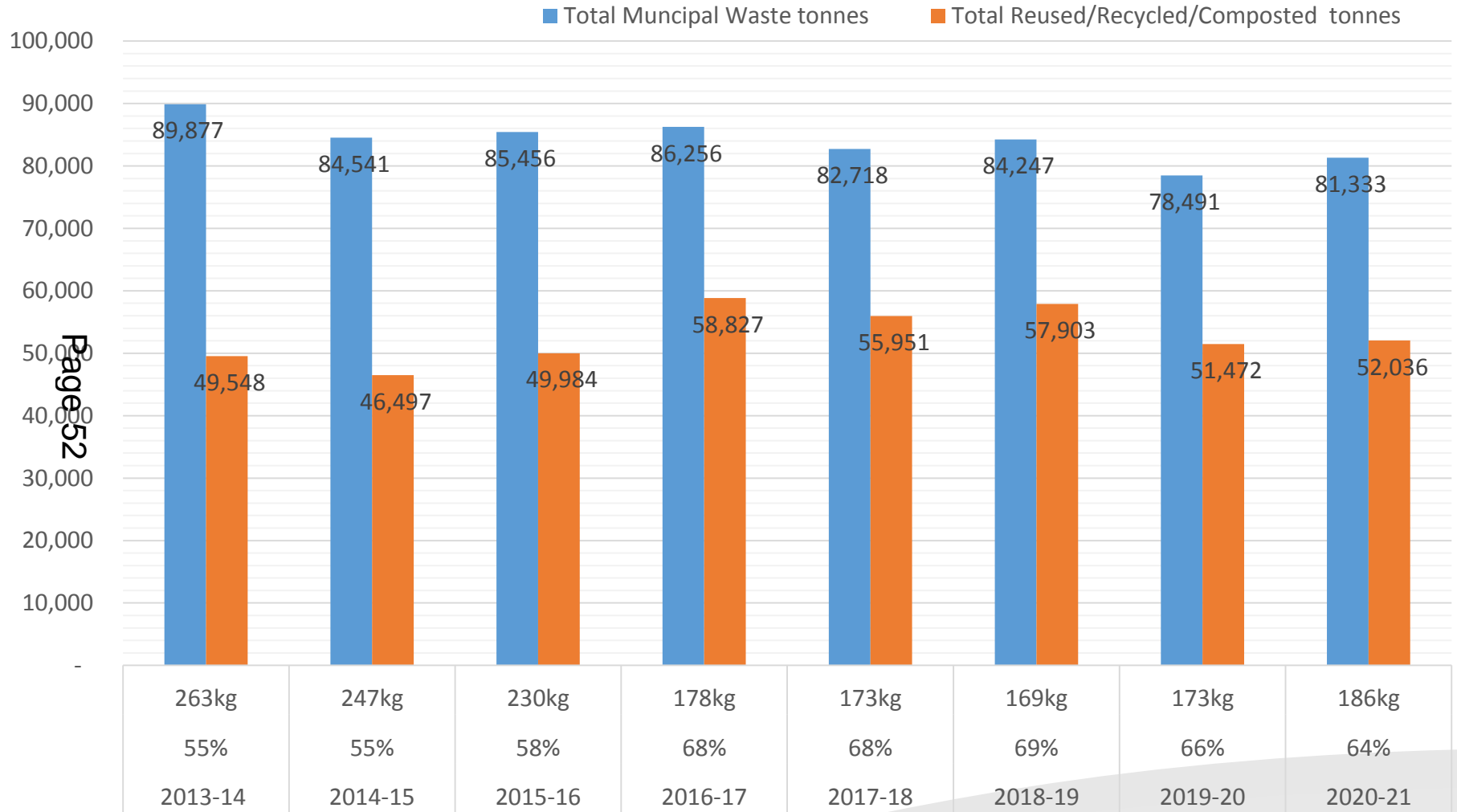
Municipal Waste Collected by local authorities	2012-13	2012-13	2015-16	2019-20	2020-21
Minimum levels of preparing for reuse and recycling/composting (or AD) for municipal waste	40%	52%	58%	64%	70%

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Source: www.wastedataflow.org.uk Flintshire own dataset – material arising report 20/21

Targets & Performance



Areas to Focus

Headline Indicators

1.1 Household waste per capita

1.2 Municipal waste sent to landfill

1.3 Municipal waste that is recycled

1.4 Net zero carbon public sector

Activity Data

2.1 Food waste reduction

2.2 Carbon index – carbon saving per capita from recycling

2.3 Low carbon capital investment construction

2.4 Eco schools

2.5 Items repaired by repair cafes

2.6 Procurement – percentage of public sector spend that is spent in Wales

2.7 Plastic sent outside of Wales

2.8 Modernising the waste fleet with ULEV's

Policy Data

3.1 Welsh Government collections blueprint

3.2 Sustainable businesses

No longer just weight based targets.
Service and Strategy needs to reflect wider reaching measures.

Service Impact of COVID-19

23.03.2020
"lockdown"

- A number of frontline services suspended e.g. garden waste collections
- Household Recycling Centres (HRC) sites closed
- Prioritised kerbside collections for black bins, medical waste, food waste and recycling
- Still gritting, doing emergency repairs and repairing street lights

Immediate
impact

- Sickness absence levels high / staff redeployed
- Supply chain issues with PPE
- Recycling bags full of tissues - crews worried
- Missed collections increased, rounds not completing
- Side waste, litter and fly tipping increased



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From May
2020
onwards

- HRC sites reopened, garden waste and bulky waste collections resumed
- Grass cutting and grounds maintenance started in some areas
- Highway maintenance and potholes resumed / cleansing restarted
- Infrastructure projects started – Standard Yard / Greenfield Waste Transfer Stations
- Christmas collections / Flooding followed by snow and ice

The new
"normal"

- Convoy vehicle working; drivers and loaders go straight to vehicles
- Text messaging service and "bubble" groups
- Staggered use of welfare facilities, one-way systems, mandatory face coverings
- Home working / new shift patterns / screens in cabs
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitation stations





Challenges to Service Delivery

- Creating “bubbles” we had to ensure that we kept knowledge of the rounds whilst keeping the teams separated
- Challenge to try to avoid a two team / us-them attitude was especially important within the supervision team (introduction of new working methods such as virtual handover meetings when shifts crossed over)
- Planning for the event that any cases of COVID could impact on service delivery due to loss of whole crews
- Side waste – challenge will be to reduce and eliminate side waste and encourage people to recycle
- One of the biggest challenges was trying to introduce all the above whilst still maintaining a high level of service to the residents

Planning for Christmas Collections 2021-2022

- Christmas 2020 - food collections maintained between Christmas and New Year
- Unknown effect COVID might have had on workforce availability and skill set/knowledge
- Calendars – published in September each year
- Normally, we try to move collections from Christmas Day and New Year's Day to an alternative day e.g. Catch-up day on a Sunday in between Christmas and New Year
- Christmas Day 2021 = Saturday, 25th December
- Bank Holidays = normal working day

Christmas 2021: Proposals

- Equivalent to fortnightly collections for general waste (black bins) throughout December 2021 and January 2022 as per policy
- Weekly recycling collections maintained in the main
- Christmas Day and New Year's Day waste & recycling collections: moved to 2nd January 2021
- Sunday, 2nd January = normal working day
- Temporary change of shift pattern for all Saturday workers – subject to consultation TU/employees
- Garden waste collections – finish w/e 11.12.2021
- HRC Sites: Closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day

Christmas 2021: Proposed Calendar

December 2021							January 2022						
Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Page 59*	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						

* Saturday, 11th December = last garden waste collections for the season

	Black Bin (General residual waste) / Food Waste / Recycling
	Brown Bin (Garden Waste) / Food Waste / Recycling
	No Collections – moved to Sunday 2nd January 2022
	Extra working day for Saturday's collections – Black bin / Food Waste / Recycling
	Recycling and Food Waste Only

Service Delivery Improvements

- Standard Yard New Materials Recovery Facility
- Greenfield Redevelopment
- RFID garden waste project to replace stickers/yellow tags
- Vehicle Telematics
- Electric Vehicles – WG Grant Funding for two new EV Recycling Vehicles
- Grant Funding for Electric Charging - Depot

Achieving 70% - Waste Collections

- Education and engagement
 - Behavioural change campaigns
 - Localised engagement programmes
 - Attendance at organised events
 - Local targets / local benefits
- Enhanced enforcement
 - Side waste enforcement
 - Warning letter
 - Formal (Section 46) Notice
 - Fixed Penalty Notice
 - Enforcement of recycling inside the black bin

Achieving 70% - Recycling Collections

- Additional waste streams to be collected
 - At the kerbside
 - AHP / Textiles / Small Electrical items, etc.
 - Within local stores / businesses
 - Coffee pods / make up cases / plastic film
- Information on what can be recycled
- Christmas collection arrangements

Breakout Session One

- 40 minute breakout session
- Discussion and comments

Achieving 70% - Household Recycling Centres

- Household Recycling Centres
 - Bag Splitting
 - Van permit scheme
 - Booking system
 - Charging for items (rubble / wood / asbestos / mattresses)
- Repair and Reuse
- Engagement with Charities
- Deconstruction of unusable items
- Christmas opening times

Breakout Session Two

- 40 minute breakout session
- Discussion and comments

Next Steps

- Collate all feedback
- Review feedback
- Identify any operational and policy changes
- Amend current policy
- Present to Cabinet in September for consideration

Thank You

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Appendix 3 – Proposed Christmas Waste and Recycling Collection Schedule for 2021-2022

December 2021							January 2022						
Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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							31						

* Saturday, 11th December = last garden waste collections for the season

	Black Bin (General residual waste) / Food Waste / Recycling
	Brown Bin (Garden Waste) / Food Waste / Recycling
	No Collections – moved to Sunday 2nd January 2022
	Extra working day for Saturday's collections – Black bin / Food Waste / Recycling
	Food waste collections for those residents who will not receive collections on Christmas Day
	Recycling and Food Waste Only

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ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14th September 2021
Report Subject	Winter Maintenance Policy Review 2021-2023
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene
Report Author	Chief Officer – Streetscene & Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Scrutiny comment for the review of the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy.

Winter services operations play a fundamental role in ensuring that highway networks are safe and available during adverse weather conditions from October through to April each year. The winter maintenance service is recognised as one of the most important functions that the highway authority provides. Maintaining access to the network is crucial for emergency services, businesses, social services, education and the general public.

This report outlines the current Winter Maintenance Policy (see Appendix A), the legislative requirements of providing such a service, and the actions taken by the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio to support the winter maintenance service operations. In addition, the report outlines the County's response to other adverse weather events, such as flooding and high winds.

We have committed to regularly reviewing the Winter Maintenance Policy and this report outlines the salient points of the most recent revision of the Winter Maintenance Policy being put forward for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny approves the outcome of the review of the Winter Maintenance Policy 2021-2023 (Appendix 1) and procedures for delivering the winter maintenance service operations, along with the County's response to other adverse weather events.
2	That Scrutiny supports the need to maintain the budget at present levels, 'top up' the reserve by £150k and carry forward an MTFs revenue pressure for 2023/24 onwards.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND OF WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY
1.01	The Council, as the Highway Authority for County Roads, has a general duty, under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, to maintain the highway network in a good state of repair so as to render it safe for ordinary traffic at all times of the year.
1.02	Highway authorities in England and Wales have a duty “ <i>to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice</i> ” (Highways Act 1980, Section A1 (TA) as modified by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003)
1.03	In addition, under Section 150(1) of the Highways Act 1980, there is a requirement for the highway authority to remove an obstruction resulting from an accumulation of snow, subject to a number of factors stated in Section 150(3) of the 1980 Act.
1.04	Furthermore, the Traffic Management Act 2004 has placed a network management duty on all local traffic authorities, which requires authorities to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting the duty, authorities are required to establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, in so far as is reasonably practicable.
1.05	<p>The legislation does not impose an absolute duty, but rather involves a balance between the degree of risk and the steps necessary to eliminate the risk. This legislation informs the best practice identified to highway authorities on winter service operations, which has changed in recent years.</p> <p>Given this duty, the industry has developed a best practice guide, the latest version of which is the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure 2016 Code of Practice (COP), which provides a broader view of asset management. It is supplemented by Practical Guidance from the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) which was issued in 2020. The COP reflects many years of operational practice and current issues and problems and is regarded as a benchmark by which local authorities will be assessed by both the general public and the courts should disputes occur.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council liaises with other North Wales highway authorities and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) to ensure a consistent approach is adopted when reviewing operations and introducing changes or improvements.</p>
1.06	Under the COP, a Council must have a policy on winter maintenance services, which should be reviewed on a regular basis. In Flintshire, we currently review the policy every two years.

1.07	Last winter was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and operational working arrangements were changed to ensure the resilience of the service. For example, creation of “bubbles” with the crews, separate welfare facilities, drivers going straight to the gritting vehicles. The working arrangements last year worked well and we are looking to keep the benefits that were gained from these changes, but at the same time limit any wider disruption to the rest of the operational services. Our aim is to maintain the service levels set out in the policy, but should it become necessary, we may have to put similar contingency measures in place again to ensure the continuity and resilience of this priority service.
1.08	<p>The review of service was undertaken by officers from the Streetscene and Transportation portfolio and considered the following key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the current service meet the statutory requirements? 2. Are there any changes to standards which should be incorporated into the new policy? 3. Are there any local concerns or complaints with the service which might require a change to working practices? 4. Are there any changes in local circumstances which would require changes to policy? 5. Is the current supply chain effective and sufficient to support the service? 6. Are current salt stocks sufficient to deliver the service effectively? 7. Are arrangements to treat car parks and footways sufficient?
1.09	The review concluded that the current operating model is adequate in responding to the risk presented during periods of adverse weather. The service is effective in the deployment of resource, whilst limiting the impact of disruption to the rest of the operational service and road users.
1.10	<p>The following factors have however resulted in increased costs for the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments to the resources and equipment required during the winter maintenance season, • Steadily increasing average numbers of callouts and application of preventative salting
1.11	The conclusion of the review is that the policy remains fit for purpose. However, we continue efforts to improve the timing of communications and the channels for communication both internally, through better use of technology, and externally, through increased access to social media.
1.12	Adverse weather arrangements (i.e. high winds, heavy rain) are planned in advance of the winter season and have now been included within the Winter Maintenance Operational Handbook, which had been revised and will be distributed to all personnel involved annually and updated as a controlled document throughout the season.
1.13	5 Duty Officers will be rostered throughout the winter period to monitor weather forecasts and decide on appropriate preventative action.

1.14	A minimum of 26 operational staff will be rostered to be on-call throughout the season to respond to adverse weather. There are also on-call highways response teams, if necessary, alongside the wider operational teams in times of prolonged adverse weather.
1.15	Normally, on receipt of a severe weather warning (high winds, flooding, snow event, etc.) an operational control room will be established in Alltami. It will be operated by staff from Streetscene Services, who will act as a dedicated point of contact for the Contact Centre staff and coordination of the response. The staff within the operational control room have direct contact with Streetscene Coordinators and Supervisors, who will be on-site to investigate complaints, inspect the network and mobilise dedicated gritting vehicles and operational teams under their direct control. It also acts as a single point of contact for the senior leadership team and corporate communications, through which communications will be made.
1.16	In the event that high winds are forecast, the details of the forecast are examined by the Duty Officer and consideration will be given as to whether or not to close the Flintshire Bridge (A548). The process to follow in the event that the bridge needs to be closed is set out within the updated Winter Maintenance Policy 2021-2023.
1.17	<u>Allocation of Salt Bins/Sandbags</u> Requests for additional salt bins across the county are subject to an assessment scoring matrix and must conform to the policy for the purpose of consistency. Requests from Community Councils will be supported with the installation of Green Bins.
1.19	The distribution of sandbags in the event of heavy rainfall and flooding will be applied as described in the Sandbag Policy adopted in September 2017.
1.20	Following the damage caused to the network by Storm Christoph in January 2021, a number of projects have continued throughout the Spring and Summer of 2021 to identify assets and responsibilities of those assets, and address any infrastructure issues in a number of areas across the County. This has resulted in infrastructure improvements, new maintenance programmes and response plans being developed in each case and a joint project group has been set up to oversee the developments and progress of each scheme.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>The Winter Maintenance budget is ring-fenced and reserves are reviewed annually to ensure that adequate funding is available throughout the season.</p> <p>In recent years, the average number of turn-outs per season has increased steadily and the running costs of operations, including labour and fleet costs, have risen. Consequently, reserves have regularly been used to meet the shortfall in budget.</p>

	Given the increasing costs, it would be prudent to maintain the budget at present levels, 'top up' the reserve by £150k and carry forward an MTFS revenue pressure for 2023/24 onwards.
2.02	Winter maintenance operations on the highway network are carried out by Streetscene staff and resources are supplemented by local agricultural contractors as necessary.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The winter maintenance service has undertaken various risk assessments on the provision of road surface treatments, which are outlined within the policy.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Consultation has taken place with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the Cabinet Member • Operational service teams and stakeholders • Neighbouring local authorities in relation to their Winter Maintenance Operations • North and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) • Trade Unions

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Revised Winter Maintenance Policy

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Highways Act 1980.
6.02	Railways and Transport Act 2003
6.03	Traffic Management Act 2004
6.04	Well-managed Highway Infrastructure (2016) (UKRLG)
6.05	Planning For Winter Service Delivery (2020) (NWSRG)
6.06	Quarmby Report – July 2010
6.07	Welsh Government Trunk Road Maintenance Manual
6.08	Welsh Government Advice Documents

6.09	WLGA Advice Documents
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Barry Wilkinson, Highway Network Manager Telephone: 01352 704656 E-mail: barry.wilkinson@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Financial Year (FY): the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April
8.02	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.

Winter Maintenance Policy 2021-2023



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1 | Background

- 1.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on the Highway Authority to maintain the highway, as follows:-

“(1A) In particular, a Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that a safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.”

- 1.2 The legislation does not impose an absolute duty but rather involves a balance between the degree of risk and the steps necessary to eliminate the risk.
- 1.3 In order to provide a statutory defence, a County Policy on winter maintenance services is required which should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 1.4 The requirement to ensure compliance with Section 1.3 has been emphasised in collaborative meetings that have taken place amongst the six North Wales Authorities following the Coroner’s inquest into the winter maintenance incidents that have occurred in North Wales Authorities during recent years.
- 1.5 The level of service for County Roads is determined by the elected Members of each Council. This is based on a risk assessment approach to determining a cost effective hierarchy of routes and treatments. The Authority believes that the level of service meets the requirements on the current interpretation of **‘reasonably practicable’** but will continue to keep service provision under review, particularly in respect of any legal judgements. A review of the Winter Maintenance operations is undertaken each year before the winter season.

2 | Purpose of Policy

- 2.1 To demonstrate compliance with the statutory duties of the Highway Authority by recording a managed, cost effective approach to providing winter maintenance service in the interest of public safety.
- 2.2 To provide a statutory defence against third party claims.
- 2.3 To inform and involve Members in the procedures associated with the winter maintenance service
- 2.4 To set out the aims and standards for the winter maintenance service, the facilities and resources available and guidance as to how the aims and standards are to be achieved.

3 | Procedures

3.1 Winter Weather Forecasts

3.1.1 Daily weather forecasts are received throughout the winter period and are specific to Flintshire County Council. The forecast is currently provided by MetDesk. MetDesk utilise their experience at weather forecasting combined with additional data from weather models and information provided by Ice Prediction sensors situated at:

1. A55 at Brynford
2. A541 at Hendre

to predict the weather for a 36 hour period from approximately 12-noon daily. The weather forecast is provided through a web based system and this forms the basis of the decision making process with regards to gritting actions taken in the interest of road safety over the succeeding 24 hours.

3.1.2 The Forecast Provider provides forecast information in the in the following format:

- ▶ Projected road surface temperature graphs for two ice sensor sites within the County and others in the neighbouring Counties. These sites have been specifically chosen to provide information which is considered representative of the whole County.
- ▶ A site specific forecast for each of the ice sensor sites covering a 36-hour period from the time of issue (normally 12:00 hrs).
- ▶ A 24-hour consultancy service, staff can talk to forecasters at the Weather Centre to expand on the general forecast.
- ▶ A 2-5 day forecast text indicating the outlook.
- ▶ A morning summary in text describing the events of the night before and a preliminary forecast covering the succeeding 24 hours.
- ▶ Alerts and forecast amendments electronically and by direct contact throughout the 24 hour period.

3.1.3 A cross boundary partnership approach is adopted throughout the North Wales Authorities and in conjunction with North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) to ensure an effective and consistent service delivery.

3.1.4 A North Wales protocol for distributing daily weather forecasting information and proposed action details has been formally adopted. This has been coordinated through the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency (NMWTRA) and has established improved communications between neighbouring Authorities, NMWTRA and North Wales Police. The actions of all the North Wales Authorities are recorded on the Forecast Provider web page for all partner authorities to view.

3.2 Priority of Roads

3.2.1 Roads within the Authority have been prioritised for treatment into Priority 1, 2 and 3 routes.

3.2.2 **Priority 1 routes** are roads carrying substantial volumes of traffic having characteristics, which require protection from frost throughout the night. These routes form the spinal road network of the Authority and merit high priority to sustain the free flowing movement of traffic. They include:-

- ▶ Trunk Roads (48kms)
- ▶ Class A Roads (151kms)
- ▶ Class B and C Roads (351kms)
- ▶ Strategic/ Important Bus Routes (8 bus services or more per hour)
- ▶ Main access roads to schools or establishments of higher education
- ▶ Town centre access and distributor roads through villages and housing estates
- ▶ Industrial Estate Roads (10.1Kms)

The 12 **Priority 1** precautionary gritting routes total **45%** of the total County highways network.

3.2.3 **Priority 2 routes** are formed from the unclassified roads that form main distributor routes in both the urban and rural areas. They include:-

- ▶ Housing Estate Roads
- ▶ Access routes between smaller rural communities
- ▶ Remaining bus routes (4 service buses or more per hour)
- ▶ Known problems, including significant gradients, exposed areas and other topological factors
- ▶ Council maintained Car Parks

Priority 2 gritting routes will be treated upon satisfactory completion of the Priority 1 routes providing the criteria set out in 3.2.3 are met and adequate resources are available.

3.2.4 **Priority 3 routes** are all the remaining adopted roads within the County.

3.2.5 Priority of Roads

3.2.5.1 All Priority 1 routes will be subject to precautionary gritting operations throughout the winter period at the discretion of the Highway Network Manager or his representative. The decision to undertake precautionary gritting actions is made daily at around 13:00hrs between the period from 1 November to 30 April of the following year.

3.2.5.2 Priority 2 routes will only be treated in the event of icy conditions or a forecast of prolonged icy conditions, and following the satisfactory treatment of the Priority 1 routes. The Duty Officer will make the decision whether or not to proceed to Priority 2 routes. The protocol for treatment during this period will be for a continued action on the Priority 1 gritting routes as required with discretionary actions being taken on Priority 2 routes in response to known or observed problem areas, or in relation to requests that have been assessed and justified by staff of

Flintshire County Council. If temperatures remain below zero with prolonged icy conditions the winter maintenance teams will continue to undertake inspections and liaise closely with the Duty Officer. The level of actions will be dictated by the available resources and the weather forecast outlook. Bulk gritting vehicles and manual salting gangs will be deployed for this purpose. A discretionary decision to suspend further actions pending improving weather conditions may be taken.

- 3.2.5.3** Priority 3 routes will normally be treated dependent upon the availability of appropriate resources following the satisfactory attention to Priority 1 and 2 routes and will be restricted to normal working hours, and in response to known or observed problem areas, or in relation to requests that have been assessed and justified by staff of Flintshire County Council..
- 3.2.6** During the onset of snow conditions and the satisfactory treatment of the Priority 1 routes, all available plant and resources will be deployed to clear snow within the Priority 2 routes. During such operations the gritting appliances will be directed by Flintshire County Council staff who will patrol their respective areas and liaise with the Duty Officer.
- 3.2.7** The Authority employs 38 No. agricultural snow ploughing contractors to clear the highway during periods of snow conditions. Each Contractor has a dedicated route which enables the Authority to clear the entire adopted highway network within the County. During snow conditions contractors may be hired at the discretion of the Duty Officer or his representative at the tendered rates. The schedule of the snow ploughing contractors is available to all winter maintenance staff to access as required.

3.2.8 Road Priority/ Treatment Matrix Treatment

Route type	Precautionary Salting	Salting	Times
Priority 1	At any time of the day	At any time of the day	When ice is predicted Priority 1 routes will be pre salted before the on-set of frost. Where severe conditions such as snow or ice persist resources will remain on Priority 1 routes
Priority 2	None	At any time of the day	Priority 2 routes will only be treated if severe weather conditions persist and the Priority 1 routes have been completed
Priority 3	None	At any time of the day	On satisfactory completion of Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes and if severe weather conditions persist these roads will be treated on a reactive basis dependent upon resources

3.3 De-icing Materials

3.3.1 Flintshire County Council procures its de-icing materials through a tendered process. The current tender is with Compass Minerals through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and the life of the contract is 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2023.

3.3.2 6.3 mm nominal size rocksalt

This is the most commonly used material for general purpose gritting. It is spread at a prescribed rate of 10 – 15 grams per square metre for precautionary gritting. This rate can be increased to 40 grams per square metre when treating snow conditions. These rates are in accordance with the recommendations made in the Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management and the Trunk Road Maintenance Manual.

6.3 mm nominal size coated rocksalt (Safecote)

This material is standard rocksalt with an applied coating which enhances its performance to treat ice at lower temperatures (conventional rocksalt has a reduced efficiency at temperatures below -6 degrees centigrade). It has a greater adhesion to the applied surface and is effective over a longer period.

3.3.3 A total of 2200 tonnes of coated rocksalt (Safecote) is currently stored in a storage dome at Alltami Depot. A stock management service is operated in collaboration with the Compass Minerals, Winsford. The stock management system highlights the requirement for the delivery of rocksalt which is triggered by predetermined maximum and minimum intervention stock levels throughout the winter season. This service provides the following benefits:-

- ▶ Fresh stocks of rocksalt which retain maximum salinity values.
- ▶ Controlled levels of stock to meet storage availability and providing the ability to avoid storing large volumes of rocksalt outside of the winter period.
- ▶ Avoidance of a shortage of rocksalt during periods of high demand
- ▶ Regional proximity of supplier provides reduced delivery times.

3.3.4 Strategic Salt Stocks

Due to national shortages of rock salt in previous years and following advice from WLGA and Welsh Government, an additional strategic salt stock of 7000 tonnes is stored under sheeting at the Greenfield Recycling Site at Greenfield.

3.3.5 Most of the road de-icing salt used in the UK is derived from a non-renewable source through mining a natural salt bed stretching from North West England to Ireland. The majority of rock salt is a 10mm grain size to British Standard BS3247. However, a trend is emerging in the UK where a number of Highway Authorities are moving toward a 6.3mm grain size. BS3247 requires the rock salt to contain no more than 4% moisture by weight and the soluble Sodium Chloride content to be not less than 90% of the dry salt mass.

Flintshire County Council introduced using 6.3mm grain size coated salt in 2005/2006. The proprietary name of this product is Safecote.

3.3.6 To effectively remove ice from the road surface the rock salt requires the action of traffic, which assists in the process of breaking down the salt granules into a saline solution. This rapidly melts the ice and prevents further ice forming for several hours.

3.3.7 Salt in solution freezes at a lower temperature than water and if spread before the onset of freezing conditions can be effective in preventing ice from forming on road surfaces at temperatures down to -7°C. However, salt is only effective if it can form a solution with the water on the road surface. If this water has already frozen before the salt is applied, the salt is much less effective in combating the slippery conditions. The generic term ‘gritting’ is often used to describe what is actually “pre-salting” or “precautionary salting”, i.e. spreading salt before the onset of ice or frost formation.

3.3.8 The significant benefits of using Safecote Salt are:-

- ▶ more accurate spreading of the salt
- ▶ more salt remains on the road surface
- ▶ reduced wastage
- ▶ faster de-icing effect
- ▶ increased longevity on the road surface
- ▶ less Sodium Chloride used
- ▶ less corrosive to the gritter vehicles
- ▶ less corrosive to the highway infrastructure.
- ▶ cost benefit

3.3.9 Treatment Matrix

Carriageways - The Council operations will follow the standard guidance issued by Welsh Government as part of the Trunk Road Maintenance Management Policy and the Code of Practise for Highway Maintenance and any subsequent amendments. The de-icing material will continue to be Safecote.

Footways - Following successful trials of alternative de-icing materials heavily used footways in town centres, car parks and sheltered accommodation will be treated with a product called 'Safethaw'. This product is a brine solution mixed with agricultural by-product similar to that used on the highway. 'Safethaw' is sprayed by using a knapsack sprayer or a self-propelled spray bar fitted to an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) or a pickup and will be applied in periods of heavy snow and prolonged icy conditions in accordance with the risk assessment for each element.

3.4 Operational Practices

- 3.4.1** The winter period is defined as between 1st October and 30th April each year. Streetscene drivers are contracted to deliver the service and standby payments will apply from November to March.
- 3.4.2** Forecasts are received at approximately 06.00hrs, 12.00hrs and 18.00hrs every day within the period between 1st October and 30th April each year by the duty Officer at Alltami Depot or the on-call Duty Officer at weekends.
- 3.4.3** A decision on the appropriate action will be made by the Duty Officer, and the supervisory staff and standby crew will be informed accordingly. Standby crews are available to respond to forecast changes and subsequent actions/decisions outside of normal working hours.

- 3.4.4** Priority 1 routes will be treated before the formation of ice. The average route treatment time of 3.0 hours will be taken into account in making the decision to ensure that all pre-cautionary Priority 1 routes are completed on time. Any changes to the pre-determined actions will be verified with the Duty Officer before notification to the workforce. The situation may be varied by weather conditions such as heavy rain immediately before a frost, which may restrict the time to carry out the work.
- 3.4.5** Depending on the forecast, further actions may be required to support the precautionary gritting decisions. Whilst every effort will be made to plan this action it may be considered necessary to obtain updated forecast information from the Forecast Provider prior to a decision being made. The weather forecast update will be carried out by the Duty Officer at any time of the day or night, to ensure that appropriate actions are carried out in the interest of public safety and to provide a cost efficient service.
- 3.4.6** In the event of a forecast of snow the Priority 1 routes will be pre-treated prior to the event. Where this is not possible, for example when it starts as rain and turns to snow, a decision to delay action until the rain stops in order to prevent the salt from being washed away will be taken. It should be noted that this situation can be even more difficult if it occurs during the rush hour as traffic congestion impedes the progress of the gritting vehicle.
- 3.4.7** Following snowfall with significant accumulations, clearance work will continue around the clock until all Priority 1 roads are clear. When the Priority 1 roads are cleared to a standard which safeguards the safe passage of vehicular traffic, all available resources will be dedicated to attend to Priority 2 roads.
- 3.4.8** Priority 3 routes will receive attention when resources are available and after all Priority 1 and 2 roads have received appropriate treatment.
- 3.4.9** Services across Streetscene & Transportation (and possibly others across the wider Authority) will support the Winter Service during periods of prolonged disruption to the county. It may be necessary to curtail certain services during these periods, for reasons such as practicality or safety, and the resource and labour will be redirected to the Winter Service operations as appropriate.
- 3.4.10** During periods of snowfall, all gritting vehicles will be equipped with snow or slush ploughs depending on the type of snow being cleared. Snow ploughing contractors will be deployed at the discretion of the Duty Officer.
- 3.4.11** The decision to deploy contractors to clear roads of accumulated snowfall will be made at the discretion of the Duty Manager and subject to local condition and the prolonged impact of restricted access and treacherous conditions at the time.
- 3.4.12** Following periods of heavy snowfall, priority should be given to the inspection and clearance of gullies to ensure that meltwater from snow on verges and central reservations can quickly drain away.

3.5 Communication

During periods of severe or prolonged adverse weather conditions, the service will provide updates to the senior leaders group (including the Chief Officer Team and Cabinet Members, along with relevant operational managers) advising them of the impact of the current weather conditions, a summary of the weather forecast, a briefing on the allocated resource and operational response, and an outline of the operational plans in place to deal with the forecast.

3.6 Partnership Working

3.6.1 Liaison and cross boundary operational practices are established between Flintshire County Council and its neighbouring Authorities and North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency, with the intention of maintaining a consistency and continuity of winter services throughout the region.

For this purpose the following cross boundary precautionary gritting arrangements are in place:-

Wrexham County Borough Council will treat the following roads for **Flintshire County Council**:-

- ▶ B5102 from County boundary Llay to A541 Mold Road.(Hollybush)

Flintshire County Council will treat the following roads for **Wrexham County Borough Council**:

- ▶ B5430 Bwlchgwyn from County Boundary to Four Crosses
- ▶ B5373 County Boundary to Miners Road (Sharps)

Flintshire County Council will treat the following roads for **Denbighshire County Council**:

- ▶ Section of road from A5151 to Gwaenysgor Cross Roads

Denbighshire County Council will treat the following roads for **Flintshire County Council**:

- ▶ Section of the A494 from County Boundary, Cadole to Cadole junction

3.6.2 It is the responsibility of each individual Highway Authority to ensure adequate treatment of the roads under their jurisdiction. A protocol of daily communications between neighbouring authorities / agencies has therefore been established to ensure continuity of actions.

3.7 Footways and Cycleways

3.7.1 Footways, pedestrian areas or cycleways are not included in precautionary salting operations. Nevertheless, there will be a certain amount of overspill of salt onto footways and cycleways when precautionary salting is being carried out on adjacent carriageways.

3.7.2 Resources will be deployed to treat footways once snow has settled or during periods of prolonged freezing conditions on a priority basis at locations including:

- ▶ Town centre footways and footways in the vicinity of shopping areas
- ▶ Footways around Pay & Display Car Parks including areas around Pay & Display machines
- ▶ Footways in the vicinity of civic buildings
- ▶ Public highway in the vicinity of hospitals
- ▶ Public highway in the vicinity of residential homes / old age pensioners flats
- ▶ Public highway in the vicinity of day care centres
- ▶ Public highway in the vicinity of Schools (during term times only)
- ▶ Footbridges
- ▶ Bus Stops
- ▶ Cemeteries

If any reports of icy footways are received for locations not included in the above criteria, the footway will be inspected to assess whether treatment is appropriate, however this is dependent upon available resources.

3.8 Salt Bins and Salt Heaps

3.8.1 Streetscene Services Salt bins (Yellow Bins) are located in areas for the use of pedestrians and motorists to treat the public highway only. The decision for the distribution of salt bins is that of the Highway Network Manager or his representative in the interest of financial management.

3.8.2 Salt bin locations will be individually assessed against criteria which include:-

- ▶ Non precautionary gritting routes
- ▶ Location within bounds of public highway
- ▶ Benefit to road safety, i.e. areas with steep inclines
- ▶ Traffic volumes
- ▶ Proximity to schools and locations of public interest.

A Pro Forma to aid in the assessment of suitable salt bin locations has been created and will be distributed to staff as required.

3.8.3 All salt bins will be filled at the start of the winter season and refilled once again in January, if necessary. Similarly, salt heaps will be provided before the winter season and replenished once during the winter months.

3.8.4 Salt heaps in the rural areas will also be subject to the same assessment criteria as the salt bins.

3.8.5 Streetscene Services will provide salt bins and rock salt within Council establishments on request at cost to the relevant Department. Every effort is made to establish and meet the requirements of each Department prior to the onset of the winter season. The availability of resources will dictate the priority allocated to provide this service during the winter season.

3.8.6 Provision is available to purchase for salt bins Community Councils (Green Bins), along with rock salt from Streetscene Services with the intention of supplementing

the Authority's winter maintenance services to the benefit of the general public. Salt bins purchased by the Community Council will be distinguishable from Streetscene salt bins and will be maintainable by the Community Council. Location of the salt bin on the public highway will require prior approval of the Highway Authority.

3.9 Resources

- 3.9.1** The workforce involved will all be part of Streetscene Services and all drivers will be trained and assessed. Additional resources can be sought from other sections within the service if required.
- 3.9.2** The Council's winter maintenance fleet consists of 12 frontline gritting vehicles and 2 spare gritting vehicles. These are stored at Alltami Depot. These are supported by 3 trailer type Gritters operated by contractors should they be required.
- 3.9.3** Welsh Government and WLGA have suggested that all Authority's in Wales hold a strategic salt stock to ensure resilience in the event of further winters of extreme weather and national shortages of rock salt. For this coming season Flintshire will hold an additional residual salt stock of 7000 tonnes covered and sheeted at the Greenfield green waste recycling site.
- 3.9.4** The suggested minimum stock levels is based on the last six year average usage figure and with a multiplier of 150%. The tonnage of salt held in Flintshire for 2021-23 will be a minimum of 9,000 tonnes.

3.10 Standards Monitoring

- 3.10.1** Flintshire County Councils service delivery is benchmarked against National performance statistics to ensure that a comparative cost effective service delivery is being maintained.
- 3.10.2** Regional and National meetings of operational staff and support service providers creates the opportunity for continual assessment of operational practices, standards and resources.

3.11 Vehicle Tracking

- 3.11.1** Flintshire County Council's fleet of 14 bulk gritting vehicles have all been fitted with an innovative GPS tracking system. The tracking system is a monitoring device that interfaces with the control systems on the vehicles so not only do we know where the vehicle has been, but exactly what it was doing and, because it is web based, the information can be accessed remotely. The tracking system operates in real time and therefore it is easy to find out exactly where a vehicle is and to check its activity. This gives the Duty Officers the confidence to ensure that any operational decisions that they make are based on accurate live information.

3.11.2 In these increasingly litigious times it is vital that Managers are able to provide positive supporting evidence in the event of a claim. The GPS tracking system will monitor how much salt was spread on what roads, at what rate and at what time. The system is able to provide a record of all control box functions, route time, salt sensor data, spread rate/width and vehicle speed.

3.11.3 The Council operates a fleet of gritting vehicles all equipped with an Autologic system which spreads the amount of salt required based on the location, so gritter drivers can concentrate solely on the road and not have to focus on the vehicles spreading settings. The Autologic system has been pre-loaded with the Authorities road widths and ensures the optimal amount of salt has been spread to maximise the treatments, meaning salt is not wasted. The system provides optimisation and higher levels of road safety, leaving drivers free to concentrate on driving, and providing flexibility in staff deployment as route knowledge is not necessary for the driver.

3.12 Extreme Weather Protocol

3.12.1 On receipt of a severe weather warning an operational control room will be established in Alltami and manned by staff from Streetscene Services who will act as a dedicated point of contact for the Contact Centre staff. The staff within the operational control room will have direct contact with Streetscene Coordinators/Supervisors who will be on-site to investigate complaints and mobilise dedicated gritting vehicles under their direct control.

3.12.2 The operational control room will be responsible for directing all operations and act as a liaison contact to the press office through which all press releases will be made.

3.13 Community Engagement

3.13.1 Flintshire County Council is committed to provide assistance in the form of small quantities of rock salt and tools to community and local groups to enable them to assist with the removal of snow and ice off the footpaths within the urban areas.

3.13.2 The Highway Network Manager will write annually, prior to the winter, to all Community Councils and known action groups for contact details of interested parties and for their requirements.

3.13.3 Contact details provided by these groups will receive daily weather forecasts and details of the proposed daily winter maintenance action, by e-mail, direct from the forecast provider.

3.14 High Winds - Flintshire Bridge Closure/Restriction Procedure

- 3.14.1 Forecasts** - Weather forecasts are received daily via e-mail from MetDesk for the next 3 days. These should be reviewed daily by the Duty Officer to anticipate likely restrictions and resources required to implement a bridge closure or lane closures.
- 3.14.2** When wind gusts are forecast over 50 mph within the next 24 hours the Duty Officer should ring Weather service provider and seek advice from a forecaster of the risk of high winds in excess of the criteria described below.
- 3.14.3** Based on the advice of the forecaster the Duty Officer will decide on any necessary restriction using the criteria described below.
- 3.14.4** Experience has shown that a planned closure based on forecasts is preferable to waiting until wind speeds increase and reacting to them at short notice. If a closure is planned, due to a forecast advice from MetDesk, the FCC Press Office should be informed immediately so they can list the closure on the FCC web site and inform local radio stations in advance of the closure.
- 3.14.5 Criteria for Traffic Restrictions for A548 Flintshire Bridge**

<i>Wind Speed (miles/h)</i>	<i>Wind Speed (km/h)</i>	<i>Wind Speed (m/s)</i>	<i>Restriction</i>
50-55	80-88	22-25	No restriction – Monitor wind speeds
55	88	25	Close bridge or Down-wind lane closures (see note (i))
60	95	27	Close bridge

Notes:-

- (i) In exceptional circumstances a down-wind lane closure can be implemented to allow the bridge to remain open for wind speeds above 55 mph. Generally this method of restriction would only be considered when there is advance notice of anticipated high wind speeds over a prolonged period. A down-wind lane closure provides an empty lane in the event that a vehicle is blown off course or blown over. In addition traffic speed is generally reduced. For down-wind lane closures there will be a slow lane closure on one carriageway and a fast lane closure on the other.
- (ii) The above allowable wind speeds may be increased by 5 mph if the wind is a head or tail wind i.e. blowing along the bridge in a due East or Westerly direction.

- 3.14.6 Closure** - If a full closure is decided upon, the duty officer will:
- ▶ Arrange for warning and diversion signs to be deployed and for the bridge to be close.
 - ▶ Inform all listed in the Contact List contained within the FCC Winter Maintenance Operation Plan handbook which is issued to all nominated personnel.
 - ▶ The police will inform the media and other emergency services of the closure
- 3.14.7** If a lane closure is decided upon the Duty Officer will arrange this and inform FCC Street works Section and the Police.
- 3.14.8 Monitoring** - If it is decided that no immediate action is required, the situation shall be monitored by the Duty Officer until the risk of high winds has receded.
- 3.14.9** If a restriction/closure is implemented the Duty Officer shall monitor the situation and contact the Police to keep them informed of the anticipated re-opening time.
- 3.14.10 Re-Opening** - When the weather improves the Duty Officer shall decide on a time for the removal of any restriction. PA can give advice on timing of reducing wind gust speeds.
- 3.14.11** The Duty Officer shall arrange for the removal of signs, cones and diversion signs used for the closure and inform the FCC Street works Section & Press Office, Police, Shotton Paper and FCC Business Development when the bridge is re-opened.
- 3.15 Flooding**
- 3.15.1 Forecasts** - Weather forecasts are received daily from MetDesk (forecast provider) for the next 2-5 days. The service is also in receipt of national flood guidance alerts. These should be reviewed daily by the Duty Officer to anticipate likely impacts and resources required to respond.
- 3.15.2** The nature of flooding tends to be very localised and is difficult to predict accurately, however resources will be allocated to inspect known hotspot and drainage infrastructure prior to forecasted events.
- 3.15.3** The Duty Manager should refer to the Flintshire County Council Sandbag Policy when considering the prioritisation of requests.

4 | Risk Assessment

4.1 The winter maintenance service has undertaken various risk assessments on the provision of road surface treatments as follows:

- ▶ Precautionary Treatment on Priority 1 Roads
- ▶ Salting on Priority 2 Roads
- ▶ Salting on Priority 3 Roads
- ▶ Salting Town Centre Footways
- ▶ Salting footways with low footfall
- ▶ Salting Council maintained Car Parks

5 | Background Documents

5.1 The additional documents outlined below provided further detail and background information relating to the contents of this policy:

- ▶ Highways Act 1980
- ▶ Railways and Transport Act 2003
- ▶ Traffic Management Act 2004
- ▶ Code of Practice for Well-managed Highway Infrastructure (2016)
- ▶ Quarmby Report – July 2010
- ▶ Trunk Road Maintenance Manual
- ▶ Welsh Government Advice Documents
- ▶ WLGA Advice Documents



ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 14 September 2021
Report Subject	Planning & Enforcement
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Report Author	Chief Officer(Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update to Members regarding the performance of the planning enforcement service and will demonstrate the new software system which the service will be implementing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members note the update and support the actions taken.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PERFORMANCE OF ENFORCEMENT SERVICE
1.01	<p>Introduction</p> <p>In February 2021 the Committee received a report clarifying the structure of the Planning Enforcement team and its position within the Planning, Environment and Economy (PE&E) portfolio. That report clarified the Planning Enforcement policy, how the team had been implementing that policy and their performance against Welsh Government indicators. The report also outlined the mitigating actions taken to address the implications of the pandemic on service delivery. At the February meeting the Committee noted the report and supported the further mitigating actions</p>

which it proposed. Committee requested that a further report be presented to it in nine months' time.

1.02 This update report has been brought forward by two months at the request of Members and seeks to provide an update on the performance of the planning enforcement service with particular regard to response times; the re-introduction of site visits; the use of Eden Planning Consultancy and mitigating actions to address the backlog of cases.

How performance of the Planning Enforcement team is measured

The performance of planning enforcement has been measured by Welsh Government since 2018 using two main indicators, firstly the number of cases investigated in less or more than 84 days and secondly, the number of cases where positive-action has been taken in less or more than 84 days.

Flintshire Council Enforcement Cases

The table below lists the number of enforcement cases, including those where positive enforcement action has been taken within each year and for quarter 1 of 2021/22.

Welsh Government provide the following definitions:

□ 'Investigated' means that the authority has considered the alleged breach of planning control and advised the complainant of the outcome of their investigation.

□ 'Positive Action' means that, following investigation, it is decided that a breach has occurred, and one of the following has also occurred:
 (a) informal negotiation removes the breach;
 (b) an Enforcement Notice is issued;
 (c) planning permission is subsequently granted through an application or enforcement appeal;
 (d) prosecution is brought (with the date the case is first heard deemed as the "positive action" date);
 (e) direct action by the authority removes the breach of control.

The date is measured from the date the complainant is notified that the case is expedient to take forward and to the case reaching one of points (a) to (e) above.

The performance statistics for the service since these indicators were introduced are as follows:

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1
Total number of cases investigated	159	248	220	86
Number of cases investigated In 84 days or less	98 62%	161 65%	118 54%	45 52%
Number of cases investigated In more than 84 days	61	87	102	41
Average time taken to investigate enforcement cases in days	78	131	194	169

	Average time taken to take positive action in days (target is 84 days or less)	110	48	84	46
1.03	<p>Response time and Communication Standards</p> <p>It is clear from above that the planning enforcement service is meeting the performance levels expected by Welsh Government. With regard to more general communication such as emails, the Council's Communication Standard sets out expected response times. The standard states that an email should be acknowledged within 5 working days and a full response as soon as possible but within 10 working days.</p> <p>When Members received the report in February 2021 regarding Planning Enforcement an agreed action was the creation of a dedicated email address for the use of Cabinet Members and Group Leaders only. This email address was to be used when they, or their colleagues, had not received a response to their query within the prescribed 10 day response time. The email address has been in operation since the 15th March 2021 and since then has received three emails from two Councillors. The email will remain in place for use by Councillors if needed and its use monitored but over the six month period it has not been widely used.</p>				
1.04	<p>Site Visits</p> <p>As previously reported, site visits continued regarding the highest priority of planning enforcement complaints throughout lock-down. In the early stages of the pandemic these were carried out by the Service Manager. From July 2020 a robust risk assessment was put in place and site visits have been undertaken from that time onwards when national restrictions allowed. There are only a limited amount of visits which, if carried out, would have been in breach of Covid regulations which had to be postponed. Since the alert levels in Wales have reached zero the service has commenced un-notified site visits.</p>				
1.05	<p>Use of a Planning Consultancy</p>				

	<p>The use of a planning consultancy, Eden, commenced on 30th June 2020. This was in response to the Development Management Service losing 70% of its capacity due to officer absence and availability, as was reported in February. The use of a planning consultancy was one of a series of mitigation measures put in place to prevent the Development Service reaching the highest level of escalation of risk and the service being forced to shut.</p> <p>The consultancy operates on an agreed fee schedule dedicating 4 hours of work to each case. The cost of the planning consultancy has been fully funded by Welsh Government's Hardship Fund. One of the reasons that this particular consultancy was used was that they had supported Flintshire previously with planning appeals and so they were familiar with our County, policies and, most importantly, willing to do the work they were appointed for. It is expected that the bulk of cases referred to the consultancy will be completed by the end of September 2021. An exit strategy for those cases which will not have been fully completed is planned.</p>														
1.06	<p>Backlogs</p> <p>At present both North and South Planning Enforcement officers have approximately 90 lives cases each. The planning consultancy have approximately 50 cases which they are still investigating. The position for the service is therefore largely recovered from the initial stages of the pandemic. At a recent Informal Cabinet it was agreed that a business case should be prepared for an additional full time permanent Planning Enforcement Officer. It is intended that if the business case is successful recruitment would commence immediately.</p>														
1.07	<p>Achievements since March 2021</p> <p>Number of Notices served below</p> <table> <tr> <td>S330s</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning Contravention Notices</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enforcement Warning Notices</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enforcement Notices</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Section 215s</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breach of Condition Notices</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cautions given</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>Prosecutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ffrith • Scotland Farm • Stryt Isa • Cheshire Tarmac – Spinney • Thomas Plant Hire 	S330s	7	Planning Contravention Notices	12	Enforcement Warning Notices	13	Enforcement Notices	7	Section 215s	0	Breach of Condition Notices	2	Cautions given	2
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Cautions given	2														

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groesffordd Bach <p>Appeals outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ty Melin, Nercwys – removal of log cabin – notice amended and upheld – removal required in November 2021
1.08	<p>Demonstration software system – Agile</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Planning, Environment and Economy Portfolio have procured a new software system to provide better infrastructure to deliver a range of services.</p> <p>Development Management and Planning Enforcement is one of those services which will use the new software. There has been extensive collaboration with the software provider, Agile and Council staff and a number of significant achievements have already taken place with regard to the implementation of the necessary IT infrastructure to support the system and allow the portfolio to maximise the benefit of its use.</p> <p>Planning officers have sought to implement the enforcement element of Agile to maximise the amount of information which will be directly available and pushed out to Councillors and our customers. This, of course, must comply with regulations controlling how personal information is published and the necessary IT infrastructure needs to be in place to support such an exchange of information. The Chief Executive of Agile will demonstrate the software to the Committee so that they are able to see first-hand how the software will work.</p>
1.09	<p>Update on the further mitigation measures set out in February 2021 report</p> <p>The redeployment of staff from other services had begun to be wound down early in 2021 to allow those staff to move back into their service area which was re-opening more fully. No redeployment has occurred since March 2021.</p> <p>The additional role of the temporary planner has been extremely useful in progressing planning applications and has enable to planning enforcement officers to fully focus on managing their enforcement caseloads. The temporary roles ends on December 13th 2021.</p> <p>An appointment to the Senior Planner role was made in Summer of this year. An internal candidate was successful and has been promoted from a planner role within the North Team. Recruitment to the now vacant planner role has been agreed and will be undertaken shortly.</p> <p>An appointment to the vacant Assistant Planner role has been made and was appointed in late February 2021. The team have successfully and fully trained the Assistant Planner during the highest alert levels and a time of significant lock-down.</p>

2.01	<p>Revenue: Informal Cabinet have agreed to fund the additional enforcement officer post.</p> <p>Capital: The capital for the purchase, implementation and future contract with Agile is in place.</p> <p>Human Resources: There will need to be a recruitment process to appoint the new enforcement officer.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Key risks are mainly reputational damage to the Council due to a perception of planning enforcement failing.</p> <p>The mitigation of these risks are already in place due to Annual Performance Reporting regarding Planning Enforcement undertaken by Welsh Government for all Local Planning Authorities.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Mandy Lewis – Development Service Manager Telephone: 01352 703248 E-mail: mandy.lewis@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>EWN: Enforcement Warning Notice is intended for use where the Council considers that an unauthorised development could potentially be made acceptable with control such as planning conditions.</p>

S215 Notice: is a section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which enables a Local Planning Authority to serve a notice if it is considered that an area of land is in such a poor condition it has an adverse impact on the amenity of an area.

S330 Notice: is a section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which enables a Local Planning Authority with the power to require information as to interests in land.

Planning Contravention Notice: enable the Local Planning Authority to require detailed information about the suspected breaches of planning control.

Enforcement Notice: enable the Local Planning Authority to require specific action to be taken to remedy a breach of planning control.

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