

# Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Councillor Ian Roberts (Leader)

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Mared Eastwood, David Healey,  
Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones and Linda Thomas

12 June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING**  
**CABINET**  
**TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2024 at 10.00 AM**

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum  
Democratic Services Manager

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. 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**

**Purpose:** To receive any declarations and advise Members accordingly.

### 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 7 - 28)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 24<sup>th</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

### **STRATEGIC REPORTS**

### 4 **HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE** (Pages 29 - 94)

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

**Purpose:** To provide an annual update on the current Strategy.

### 5 **'TOGETHER WE CAN' COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE** (Pages 95 - 100)

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

**Purpose:** To provide an overview of the Audit Wales report and outline reflection of the content and recommendations made. A proposed response to the recommendations is made for consideration.

### **OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

### 6 **AUDIT WALES REPORT (USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION: SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES)** (Pages 101 - 134)

Report of Chief Executive - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

**Purpose:** To review the Recommendations for Improvement along with the Council's response.

7 **WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/24** (Pages 135 - 162)

Report of Corporate Manager – Capital Programme & Assets - Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture

**Purpose:** To receive the Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24 and provide an overview of progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards.

8 **AUDIT WALES: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: MORE THAN A TICK BOX EXERCISE** (Pages 163 - 172)

Report of Corporate Manager – Capital Programme & Assets - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

**Purpose:** To update on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales report “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise” and recommend improvements to ensure Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken more consistently across the Council.

9 **SOCIAL SERVICES CARE INSPECTORATE WALES, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INSPECTION NOVEMBER 2023 – ACTION PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 173 - 216)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

**Purpose:** To update on the outcome of the Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection in November 2023 including the resulting action plan based on the report’s recommendations.

10 **AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES** (Pages 217 - 306)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the development of age-friendly communities in Flintshire and seek commitment for ongoing support across portfolio areas.

11 **DEFERRED CHARGES AUDIT REPORT** (Pages 307 - 352)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

**Purpose:** To provide an update on the progress following the Deferred Charges Audit Report.

12 **CRACKS IN THE FOUNDATIONS BUILDING SAFETY IN WALES - AUDIT WALES REPORT** (Pages 353 - 368)

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

**Purpose:** To consider Audit Wales' report "Cracks in the Foundations" and the recommendations made within that report and how key elements of the Building Safety Act 2022 are being implemented in Wales.

13 **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT** (Pages 369 - 388)

Report of Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

**Purpose:** To seek approval for the draft Destination Management Plan.

14 **COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES 2023/25** (Pages 389 - 394)

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

**Purpose:** To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2024/25 prior to approval.

15 **PURCHASE OF 'BUY BACKS' USING THE WELSH GOVERNMENT (WG) TRANSITIONAL ACCOMMODATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME (TACP)** (Pages 395 - 398)

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

**Purpose:** To seek approval for the internal transfer of the properties from the Council fund to the HRA.

16 **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS** (Pages 399 - 400)

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

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

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

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

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing it until such time as the contract has been awarded.

**17 INSURANCE SERVICES CONTRACT EXTENSION (Pages 437 - 454)**

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

**Purpose:** To seek approval to extend the Insurances Services Contract.

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

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing it until such time as the contract has been awarded.

**18 RECOMMISSIONING OF LEARNING DISABILITY DAY AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES SERVICES (Pages 455 - 552)**

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

**Purpose:** To provide an update on adult day and work opportunity services and to approve recommissioning of current contracts.

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

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**CABINET**  
**12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting in the Delyn Committee Room and on Zoom, on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)**

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Mared Eastwood, Dave Healey, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Billy Mullin, and Christine Jones.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Housing and Communities), Strategic Finance Manager, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development, Revenues and Procurement Manager, Strategic Executive Officer, Strategic Finance Manager, Regulatory Service Manager, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, Highway Network Manager and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

**OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors: Bernie Attridge and Andrew Parkhurst.

**129. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**130. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February were submitted and confirmed as a correct record subject to a typographical error in minute number 106.

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the amendment, the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

**131. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Councillor Roberts introduced the report and explained that the Annual Performance Report set out an analysis and summary of how well the Council had performed against its Well-being Objectives, Priorities and Sub-priorities at the end of the financial year 2023/24 of our Council Plan (2023-28).

The Annual Performance Report also provided a summary of performance regarding other key areas of focus within the Council, i.e., Public Services Boards, Strategic Equality Plan.

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 placed a duty on public bodies to work together to create a sustainable Wales. It set out seven interdependent wellbeing goals for Wales and required public bodies to work towards

all of these goals. It was set out in the Council Plan (2023-28), which defined the deliverable organisational priorities and outcomes.

The Chief Executive highlighted some of the key changes to the Annual Performance Report which included:

**Section 3** - previously aligned Portfolio's Priorities / Well-being Objectives to the Council Plan. This had been removed and now detailed the Council Plans Priorities / Well-being Objectives.

**Section 3.1** - would provide a high-level overview of how each of the priorities / sub-priorities considered the five ways of working and the seven well-being goals (mapping exercise had been undertaken recently by Portfolio's to identify this).

**Section 4** – areas of High Performance, would be removed.

**Section 5** - would now provide information of what had been achieved during the year for each of the Council Plan 2023-28 Priorities / Sub-priorities rather than what had been achieved for each Portfolios. Would also include a high-level summary of the Council Plan End of Year report for each of the Priorities / Sub-priorities. Where possible it would include links to information / stories on the Council's website or Facebook page that was relevant to the Priorities / Sub-priorities.

Full details of the Council Plan, End of Year Performance report would be a supporting document to the Annual Performance Report.

**Section 7** - Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Five Ways of Working will be removed as links to the Act are considered in Section 3.1 and Section 5.

**Section 13** – Corporate Health and Safety, will be removed.

Councillor Healey welcomed the amended report and the progress made in relation to Climate Change.

**RESOLVED:**

That the changes to the Annual Performance Report for 2023/24, which includes incorporating the Council Plan 2023-28 End of Year Performance report into the Annual Performance report be approved.

**132. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Councillor Mullin introduced the report and explained that the Council published its equality objectives and four-year Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) in April 2020, fulfilling the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED), as set out in the Equality Act 2010.



The Strategic Executive Officer added that the aim of equality objectives was to address the most significant issues and areas of inequality that faced people with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

The Equality Act 2010 placed specific duties on public sector organisations in Wales. They included the requirement to publish an annual report by 31<sup>st</sup> March each year, which must outline progress on meeting the PSED and achieving the equality objectives. The annual report was appended to the report and highlights the progress the Council had made in implementing its SEP and meeting its equality objectives during 2022/2023.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the progress made during the year to meet statutory duties in relation to equalities be noted; and
- (b) That the progress made against the Strategic Equality Plan 2022/23, prior to publication of the annual report on the Council website be endorsed.

**133. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-28**

Councillor Mullin introduced the report the purpose of which was to present the Council's draft equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 for approval prior to publication.

The Strategic Executive Officer added that all devolved public authorities in Wales were required by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to publish equality objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan every four years.

Engagement must take place with people with protected characteristics when setting equality objectives and preparing and reviewing the Strategic Equality Plan. The aim of the Strategic Equality Plan was to reduce inequalities and ensure the delivery of positive outcomes for people with protected characteristics.

The Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024-28 is appended to the report and must be published by 1st April 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council's equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024-2028, prior to publication, be approved.

**134. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER UPDATE REPORT AND HOMLESSNESS POLICY**

Councillor Bibby introduced the report and explained that Homelessness was a statutory service that continued to be under significant strain. External factors associated with the cost-of-living crisis and housing market conditions were

increasing the levels of homelessness and the risks associated with homelessness for the people of Flintshire.

The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) added that the need to offer accommodation and support to everyone who was homeless and at risk of rough sleeping continued to be a significant capacity and financial challenge. The local private sector housing market is seeing significant challenges with fewer properties available each year and many landlords leaving the market, which in turn created homelessness as properties were being sold and residents were asked to leave, whilst at the same time meaning fewer properties were available to support the relief of homelessness.

Changes to homeless legislation (Housing Wales Act 2014) and specifically the introduction of an eleventh category of Priority Need for Rough Sleeping and those at risk of sleeping rough, sees a sustainment of the “no one left out” approach adopted during the covid pandemic and now firmly establishes the principles of “no one left out” on a legal footing and as standard practice.

As a result, more people have been owed accommodation duties which resulted in increasing demands on already stretched homeless accommodation, at significant cost to the Council. The report provided an insight into homelessness and rough sleeping for 2023 and includes the draft Homeless Accommodation Policy for review and approval.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the work being undertaken by the Housing Prevention Service be supported and the report be noted; and
- (b) That the draft Homeless Accommodation policy be approved.

**135. RESOURCE AND WASTE STRATEGY**

The Regulatory Service Manager introduced the report and explained that the Council supported the declarations made by Welsh Government for the Public Sector to become net zero by 2030 and in December 2019, Cabinet approved the development of a Climate Change strategy, which set key aims and actions for creating a carbon neutral organisation. Reducing consumption and increasing reuse and recycling to save precious resource was a key part of reaching net zero.

The draft Resource and Waste Strategy set out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets. Without action the authority currently faced circa £1m of fines for failing to achieve those targets in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, as well as a further risk of similar fines in 2023/2024 and beyond.

The new Strategy demonstrated to the Minister the Councils commitment to make change. This report provided feedback on the consultation exercise that took place on a draft of the Resource and Waste Strategy and presents the final strategy document for consideration.

The report had been submitted to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee where it was supported.

In response to a question, the Regulatory Service Manager explained that monitoring was put in place if there was reoccurring missed collections in any one area. Details were also given of the education provided and the levels of enforcement.

On the expansion of the locations where receptacles could be obtained, the Regulatory Service Manager said that was committed to in the strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the progress made on achieving a robust and effective Resources and Waste Strategy to meet net zero targets, achieve statutory recycling targets, and mitigate against the risk of infraction fines be acknowledged;
- (b) That the Resource and Waste Strategy to meet net zero targets, achieve statutory recycling targets, and mitigate against the risk of infraction fines be approved; and
- (c) That a further report be presented in June outlining the Council's transition to a restricted capacity residual waste collection model.

**136. OUTCOME OF ADOPTION OF LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY**

The Highway Network Manager introduced the report and explained that in July 2017, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent, bringing together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act included Provision of Toilets and introduced new responsibilities for Local Authorities to provide Local Toilet Strategies.

To deliver a strategic approach to the provision of toilets across Wales, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 required Local Authorities to assess local needs and facilities, and to publish a Local Toilet Strategy for its area.

Flintshire's current Local Toilet Strategy was approved and published in May 2019. National guidelines stated that the policy should be reviewed every two years from when the Local Authority last published or last reviewed its Strategy, and within one year of every ordinary Local Government election.

At the recent Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members supported the proposed review to the Local Toilet Strategy and approved the intended approach set out in the report. The purpose of the report was to provide Cabinet members with an update following the formal 12-week consultation on the revised Local Toilet Strategy.

The new strategy aimed to reflect the ambition of the Council's Leadership to provide improved facilities for the residents and visitors of Flintshire within the period of the new strategy.

Councillor Bithell welcomed the revised strategy and commented on the toilets in towns across the country that people paid to use which would generate income.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the work done to date on the results from the Local Toilet Strategy questionnaire and 12-week consultation be acknowledged; and
- (b) That the new revised Flintshire County Council Local Toilet Strategy 2024 and renewed action plan included within be approved.

**137. AUDIT WALES ASSURANCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT – CARBON REDUCTION PLAN**

Councillor Healey introduced the report and explained that in 2019 the Welsh Government called for the Public Sector to become net zero carbon by 2030. Following that declaration, Cabinet resolved in December 2019 to a Climate Change Strategy which would set key aims and actions for creating a net zero carbon Council by 2030.

The Climate Change Strategy and action plan were adopted by Council in February 2022. The strategy set the commitment, ambition, actions and milestone targets to reach our net zero carbon goal.

In July 2022, Audit Wales issued a report that called for stronger public sector leadership on reducing carbon emissions in Wales. Following this, they had carried out individual audits of each Council's carbon commitment and action against the findings of their public sector wide report.

The purpose of the report was to give an overview of the Assurance & Risk Assessment review and action that has been taken to date to address the recommendation.

The report would be submitted to Climate Change Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the outcome of the Audit Wales report, the Council's response to it be noted and the actions being taken to address its recommendation be supported.

**138. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 (MONTH 10)**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and explained that the monthly report provided the latest detailed overview of the budget monitoring position for the

2023/24 financial year for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account and presented the position, based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 10.

The projected year end position is as follows:

### **Council Fund**

- An operating deficit of £2.445m which is a positive movement of (£0.057m) from the deficit figure of £2.502m reported at Month 9.
- A projected contingency reserve available balance as at 31 March 2024 of £1.993m (after taking account of previously approved allocations including those approved as part of the 2024/25 Budget).

### **Housing Revenue Account**

- Net in-year revenue expenditure is forecast to be £0.458m higher than budget which is an adverse movement of £0.408m from the figure reported at Month 9.
- A projected closing balance as at 31 March, 2024 of £2.739m  
The economic outlook remains challenging due to inflation levels remaining relatively high.

To assist with managing those risks and mitigating the overall projected overspend, a moratorium on non-contractually committed spend was in place alongside a vacancy management process.

At Month 10, £1.714m of deferred and/or delayed expenditure had been identified and was analysed by service and detailed within Appendix 2 to the report. The robust challenge of budget lines and commitments would continue for the remainder of the financial year, with further updates provided in future reports.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the report and the estimated financial impact on the 2023/24 budget be noted; and
- (b) That the carry forward requests be supported.

## **139. APPROVAL OF THE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2024-2027**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and explained that the Council continues to operate a joint procurement service with Denbighshire County Council, with Denbighshire acting as the lead authority.

It was recognised that for effective and efficient procurement practices to operate at all levels within the Council, processes needed to be underpinned by an overarching procurement strategy. The development of a revised strategy was essential to capture the key, emerging themes for the delivery of procurement activities, as well as the political ambitions of Cabinet.

The Chief Officer (Governance) added that adoption of the latest procurement strategy would help to enhance service delivery and provide guidance and support

for internal stakeholders around how procurement would support the Council's priorities. The document also incorporated the latest Government procurement legislation and initiatives.

The procurement strategy had been prepared to ensure there was an updated 3-year plan, with captures the political objectives and aspirations of Cabinet and which was aligned to the Council Plan and key priorities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the 2024-202 procurement strategy be approved.

**140. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM SCHEME**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and explained Local authorities in Wales had discretionary powers to charge a council tax premium of up to 300% above the standard charge for properties on long term empty properties and second homes.

The Council first introduced a premium scheme from April 2017 and established a premium rate of 50% on both long-term empty properties and second homes.

A public consultation was last undertaken in 2021 and from April 2023 the Council increased the premium rates to 75% for long term empty properties and 100% for second homes.

In line with the recommendations of Council at the meeting held on 20 February 2024, Cabinet committed to bring forward a review of the premium rates by commissioning a further public consultation.

The report therefore set out the key considerations and timelines if Cabinet wanted to undertake a further consultation with a view to Council potentially varying the premium rates from April 2025.

The Revenues and Procurement Manager added that when considering any changes to the council tax premium scheme or the levels being charged, the Council must have due regard to the Welsh Government guidance which said:

*“Any decision to vary or revoke a determination to apply a premium must be made before the beginning of the financial year to which it applies. Local authorities are also strongly encouraged to consult before making a determination to increase a premium to a level above 100% and to do so at least 6 months before the beginning of the financial year to which the proposed premium increase relates. This will enable the premium to be taken into account when setting council tax levels for the forthcoming year and allow taxpayers sufficient time to consider the impact of a higher premium on their own personal financial circumstances and make choices regarding their property”.*

The Chief Officer (Governance) added that to ensure the Council followed Welsh Government guidance, the timelines and key milestones for the council tax premium review were outlined in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the commissioning of a public consultation on whether the premium levels for long term empty properties and second homes be varied from April 2025 be supported.

**141. AUDIT WALES REPORT - HOMELESSNESS**

Councillor Bibby introduced the report and explained that as part of the Audit Wales programme of work for 2023, homelessness was identified as an area of interest. The Council had flagged homelessness and housing needs as high-risk issues through local risk management frameworks and welcomed the review.

The review took place over several months from April 2023 through to September 2023. The final report was issued on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The report outlined the process of the review by Audit Wales and shared the findings and their recommendations for the Council regarding the local approach to homelessness. The report also outlined the Councils response to those recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Audit Wales report into Homelessness Services at Flintshire County Council be noted;
- (b) That the suggested responses to the recommendations of Audit Wales be supported; and
- (c) That formal thanks be passed on to the Homelessness and Prevention Service Team for their work undertaken on the challenges faced on a daily basis.

**142. POOLED BUDGET AGREEMENT FOR CARE HOME ACCOMMODATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that it was brought before Cabinet to advise on the regional approach to fulfilling the council's legal requirements in relation to a pooled fund for care home accommodation in line with the duties imposed by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") and The Partnership Arrangements (Wales) Regulations 2015 ("the 2015 regulations") and to request an extension to the arrangement's ad infinitum.

In the financial year 2019-2020, one regional non-risk sharing pooled budget was established for North Wales and initially received Cabinet approval from

Flintshire on the 16th July 2019. The arrangement took effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and it was agreed that Denbighshire County Council host the arrangements; thereby operating the pooled fund on behalf of all the partners.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce explained that a decision was now required to continue with the existing arrangements for a non risk sharing pooled fund (to be hosted by Denbighshire County Council on behalf of the six North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board) insofar as regional spend on care home accommodation functions for older people was concerned.

Given the value of the pooled fund, Cabinet authority was required for the council to enter into the updated agreement prepared to regulate our ongoing relationships with partners in relation to the operation of the pooled fund.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the progress made regionally in meeting the Part 9 requirements of the 2014 Act which includes a legal requirement to establish a regional pooled fund for care home accommodation for older people be supported; and
- (b) That approval be given to the Council entering into a legal agreement between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the six local authorities across North Wales, regulating the operation and governance arrangements in respect of the pooled fund until such time as we need to terminate the agreement.

**143. CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING**

Councillor Jones introduced the report which recognised that as young people grew and developed they were influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online.

Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Contextual safeguarding looked at how those risks could be best understood, and to engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

An operational forum had been developed that brought together professional organisations to discuss concerns relating to extra familial harm (harm outside of the family home) and to plan responses that reduced risk. The Contextual Safeguarding Hub did not replace safeguarding of individual young people but recognised the important role that communities and partner agencies had in creating safe places and spaces for the children and young people.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce added that there were, however, opportunities to streamline and align approaches to individual and contextual safeguarding and this would form the second phase of work to develop the Councils approach to effective safeguarding.



**RESOLVED:**

That the ongoing development and co-ordinated approach to contextual safeguarding that maximises resources to enable a streamlined and effective approach to individual and contextual safeguarding be supported.

**144. SOCIAL VALUE UPDATE REPORT**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and explained that generating social value from the Council's commissioning and procurement activities was a significant contributor to increasing social value and delivering added value, it therefore remained a key area of focus for the Council.

The report outlines performance data for the latter six months of the financial year 2022/23, as well as the first six months of the financial year 2023/24. The report also summarised the next areas of focus for the social value programme for the upcoming financial year 2024/25.

The current reporting timescales made reporting for a full financial year difficult. It was recommended that to better align performance reporting to a financial year a change in reporting time was made for future. It was proposed to bring a report for quarters three and four of 2023/24 in September 2024 and to then move to annual reporting in May or June of each year.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the positive performance achieved in relation to generating social value for quarters three and four of the financial year 2022/23, as well as the first two quarters 2023/24, be noted;
- (b) That the next steps for the social value programme, as outlined in the report, be supported; and
- (c) That to better align performance reporting to a financial year with annual social value performance reporting being presented in June each year be approved.

**145. CORPORATE PARENTING CHARTER – A PROMISE FOR WALES**

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that Welsh Government had formally launched a Corporate Parenting Charter: 'A Promise for Wales'. The Charter, set out 11 principles on equality, eradicating stigma, working together, inclusive support, fulfilling ambitions, nurturing, good health, a stable home, education, thriving in the future, and after care support.

The Charter also set 9 promises for how care experienced children and young people would be treated, listened to, and involved in decisions that affected them. The Charter had been published initially on a voluntary basis. Public sector organisations were encouraged to sign a pledge to fully support the principles set out in the Charter. The pledge committed organisations to ensuring that everything they

undertook for care-experienced children and young people was underpinned by empowerment, equality, non-discrimination, participation, and accountability and protection.

The expected approach was to fully respect, protect and promote their human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The pledge included a commitment to engage with children and young people to measure organisational success and commitment to the Charter.

As a Member of the Children's Services Forum, Councillor Eastwood welcomed the report and the feedback to looked after children.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Flintshire County Council signs 'the pledge' and adopts the Corporate Parenting Charter: 'A Promise for Wales'; and
- (b) That Children's Services Forum take a lead in measuring organisational success and commitment to the Corporate Parenting Charter.

**146. RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor Jones introduced the report and explained that it described the role of the Responsible Individual, the requirements of the role and how in house regulated services had performed over the last 12 months.

The Responsible Individual was a statutory requirement for all organisations in Wales who delivered care services. As well as the Responsible Individual visiting all services a minimum of four times per year, must collate evidence to measure services against the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (2016). The services covered were detailed in the report.

The methodology for collecting evidence included, file audits, health and safety visits, record keeping, safeguarding, team meetings and consultation with service users and families. It also used inspections from Care Inspectorate Wales. In summary the Responsible Individual reported a high level of confidence in all areas of the service. The standard of care was high throughout and staff were trained to a high standard. There are a number of areas that did need to be considered as in relation to risks for the provider services as outlined in the report.

The report had been submitted to Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee where Members requested that rota visits should recommence.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and approved.

#### **147. WORKPLACE RECYCLING REGULATIONS**

Councillor Hughes introduced the report and explained that from 6 April 2024, new Welsh Government legislation would come into force requiring all non-domestic premises to separate recyclable materials from all other waste. This would require all workplaces, such as businesses, public sector, and charities to separate their recyclable materials in the same way that required households to do.

The aim of the change was to improve the quality and quantity of commercial recycling collected and separated across Wales.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) would be responsible for making sure that materials were being separated and collected correctly, and that the ban on recycling going to incineration and landfill was being followed. Local authorities would be responsible for making sure that the ban on food waste going to sewer was followed. The report provided an overview of the new legislative requirements and outlined the potential impact on the Council and actions required to achieve compliance.

The Regulatory Service Manager added with the introduction of the new legislation, there may be an opportunity to review the provision of recycling services for businesses, such as extending the Councils trade waste collection service on a chargeable basis.

One other option currently being explored could involve designating a single waste disposal facility (i.e. HRC site) for the receipt of other chargeable recyclable materials (wood, soil, rubble, green waste etc) from businesses. This would require additional back-office support to ensure compliance with waste duty of care for producing, carrying, keeping, disposing of, treating, importing, or having control of waste in England or Wales. The law required anyone dealing with waste to keep it safe, make sure it was dealt with responsibly and only given to businesses authorised to take it. This meant that the environmental permit for the HRC site would also need to be varied, a process that could take between 6-12 months. The intention was to build that option into the future Resource and Waste Strategy.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the changing legislation and the potential impact on Council services be noted; and
- (b) That the option to explore opportunities to develop non-domestic recycling collections and disposal services be supported.

#### **148. SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2025/2026**

Councillor Eastwood introduced the report and explained that in accordance with the School Admissions Code, the Council was required to undertake a statutory consultation exercise on its admission arrangements for the following year.

Consultation must be complete by 1<sup>st</sup> March and the admission arrangements must be determined by 15 April each year. Statutory consultees included all schools in the area, the diocesan authorities and neighbouring authorities.

Consultation must cover the full admission arrangements including the admissions policy, oversubscription criteria, the timetable for admissions and admission numbers (i.e. the maximum number of pupils to be admitted by the admissions authority in to each year group). That information was appended to the report.

Councillor Roberts commented on the declining number of appeals. The current admission arrangements had been in place since 2003 and the majority of parental preferences continued to be met. The number of admission appeals in recent years was detailed in the table in the report.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26 be approved.

## **149. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

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

### **Governance**

- **Street Works Fees and Charges for 2024/25**  
The fees and charges levied for various licenses and applications issued within Street Works have been reviewed and the proposed charges for 2024/25 are set out in the table. The CPIH 12 month rolling rate as of October 2023 was 8.9%. This has been used as the normative inflation index amount and applied to all applicable fees and charges to generate the 2023 fees and charges amount payable. In order to allow applicants to set budgets for the forthcoming financial year, Street Works charge will take effect from 1st April 2024. The fees relating to statutory services are prescribed by statute and cannot exceed the cost of providing the service. However, the Council has scope to set fees for non-statutory services.
- **Proposal to Construct a Zebra Crossing on Coed Onn Road, Flint**  
To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the Proposal to construct a Zebra Pedestrian Crossing on Coed Onn Road, Flint.

### **Housing and Communities**

- **Housing Benefits**  
Financial Procedure Rules (section 9.6) – Income and Expenditure) stipulate that any individual debt between the values of £10,000 and £25,000 shall be reported to the Head of Finance for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance.

The schedule details a Housing Benefit Overpayment where the overall debt is greater than £10,000.

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

**RESOLVED:**

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

**150. NEWYDD BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25**

Councillor Mullin introduced the report which accompanies the NEWydd Business Plan for 2024/25, which was appended to the report, and provided a summary of the key elements of the Business Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the content of the NEWydd Business Plan 2024/25, which includes financial projections, potential business opportunities, and strategic objectives and business priorities, along with identified risks and mitigation be noted; and
- (b) That the NEWydd Business Plan 2024/25 be endorsed.

**151. ARRANGEMENTS WITH NEWYDD CATERING AND CLEANING LIMITED**

Councillor Mullin introduced the report which made recommendations to enter into a new contract. Proposed headline terms and principles for the new contract were provided in this report for consideration and approval.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That entering into a new contract with NEWydd Catering and Cleaning Limited be supported;
- (b) That the proposed terms of the contract, including the proposed financial model, be approved; and
- (c) That a further short extension being granted to the existing contract between the Council and NEWydd Catering and Cleaning Limited, if required, to allow for the new contract, and any associated matters to be finalised, be agreed.

**152. CAMBRIAN AQUATICS**

Councillor Eastwood introduced the report which detailed the latest position in relation to Cambrian Aquatics.

The report was considered at Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee the previous week and feedback was provided to Cabinet.

Details of the financial gap were outlined alongside the requirement for capital investment.

**RESOLVED:**

That up to a maximum of £150k be made available to cover the predicted shortfall in 2024/25 subject to Cambrian Aquatics willingness to run the baths and a report be brought back no later than December 2024 before the budget for 2025/26 is set.

**153. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 1.10 p.m.)

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**Chair**

**CABINET**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting in the Delyn Committee Room and on Zoom, on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)**

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Mared Eastwood, Dave Healey, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Billy Mullin, and Christine Jones.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Community and Business Protection Manager, Streetscene Service Manager, Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development, Strategic Executive Officer, Strategic Finance Manager, Service Manager – Housing Assets, Project Officer, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, Democratic Services Manager and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

**OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Steve Copple, Carol Ellis, Roz Mansell, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst and Linda Thew.

**154. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**155. NORTH EAST WALES ARCHIVE PROJECT**

Councillor Bithell introduced the report and explained that the archive services of Flintshire and Denbighshire Councils had been working collaboratively over the last few years under a Memorandum of Understanding, to share skills and resources to create a more sustainable and improved archive service for the region.

That resulted in the launch of a single shared service, North East Wales Archives (NEWA), in April 2020, working over 2 current sites – The Old Rectory in Hawarden and Ruthin Gaol.

In October 2023, Cabinet approved a joint bid with Denbighshire County Council (DCC) to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, seeking a grant of £7,371,397 towards the construction of a new archive centre in Mold, to house the joint service and the delivery of an engagement programme. Both Councils also agreed match funding contributions of £3,078,537 and £2,052,358 respectively.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) added that the move to a single building enabled NEWA to combine and better utilise its resources, protected the archive collections of the region and enabled the delivery of an exciting activity plan that would introduce archives to a wider and more diverse audience, making a really positive contribution to the learning and wellbeing for residents.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the NLHF informed that the grant application had been successful. The NLHF had agreed to provide a development phase grant that covered RIBA 1-3 initially. NLHF would then review the development phase submission prior to release of the Delivery stage grant RIBA 5-7.

Work was underway to develop a Collaboration Agreement and a Heads of Terms for the Lease, to govern the joint arrangements between both Councils, both for the delivery of the project, and the operation of the joint service. Those agreements, which were being progressed by a multi-disciplinary team of officers from both authorities were due to be completed later this month and would replace the Memorandum of Understanding.

Project activity was due to commence in mid-May, and a delegated decision would enable the contractual discussions with NLHF to take place in sufficient time, to commence the project on time and avoid any additional costs due to delay at the outset.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That Cabinet be apprised that NEWA has been successful in its grant application to the NLHF;
- (b) That the NLHF grant offer on behalf of NEWA be accepted; and
- (c) That delegated authority be authorised to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Cabinet Member – Planning, Public Health and Public Protection, to enable Flintshire County Council to enter into a Collaboration Agreement that covers the construction of the new facility, and operation of NEWA, and a Heads of Terms for the Lease of the new archive centre in Mold.

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

**RESOLVED:**

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

**156. WELSH GOVERNMENT'S (WG) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING ROLLING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND MUTUAL INVESTMENT (MIM)**

Councillor Eastwood introduced the report and explained that Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme required all Local Authorities to submit their rolling Strategic Outline Programmes (SOP) for consideration by Welsh Government (WG) by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.



The Strategic Outline Programme set out a high-level outline of the potential projects that a Council considered it could fund, in partnership with Welsh Government, and which met the funding criteria set by WG.

The report outlined the projects contained within the Council's SOP submission to WG. It explained the principles used and assumptions made to deliver a programme with as minimal an impact on future revenue budgets.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted and the Strategic Outline Programme submission to Welsh Government be approved.

**157. CAPITAL WORKS – PROCUREMENT OF WHQS ENVELOPE WORKS TO COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTIES (ROOFING, POINTING, RENDERING, WINDOWS & DOORS ETC.)**

Councillor Bibby introduced the report which sought approval from Members, to appoint two contractors; by Direct Award through the Procure Plus Framework, to carry out Whole House Envelope works to approximately 1500 properties over the next five financial years.

The work continued the second tranche of planned capital improvements to ensure the council's rented homes continued to meet the current Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) standard and all legislative requirements.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities approve the Direct Award as outlined in the report, to carry out the Whole House Envelope programme, through the Procure Plus framework. The previous tender exercise resulted in those detailed in the report successfully being appointed to deliver the previous programme and are the incumbent contractors.

**158. FUTURE OPTIONS: LEISURE, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUM SERVICES**

Councillor Eastwood introduced the report which provided an overview of the current operating arrangements, an options appraisal for future delivery, and approval for delegated authority for the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure, to progress and implement the preferred option(s).

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the background information and current position in relation to the provision of leisure, libraries, play and museum services be noted;
- (b) That the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to convene a special meeting as soon as possible to consider the options included in the report;

- (c) That a report appraising all of the options be brought back to Cabinet as a matter of urgency, and including the observations of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the views of Aura;
- (d) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to implement these options in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure and the Leader of the Council; and
- (e) That further reports are brought back to Cabinet as the work progresses to provide an update on progress, and any specific actions needed, in addition, wider confidential Member updates will also be undertaken.

**159. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.30 a.m.)

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**Chair**

**CABINET**  
**30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting in the Delyn Committee Room and on Zoom, on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**PRESENT: Councillor Dave Hughes (Chair)**

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Mared Eastwood, Dave Healey, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Ian Roberts and Linda Thomas.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Housing and Communities), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager, Children and Workforce, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development, Strategic Executive Officer, Strategic Finance Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

**OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors: Gillian Brockley, Helen Brown, David Coggins Cogan, Carol Ellis, Dennis Hutchinson, Alasdair Ibbotson, Dave Mackie, Carolyn Preece, Sam Swash.

**160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

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

**RESOLVED:**

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

**161. FUTURE OPTIONS: LEISURE, LIBRARIES, AND MUSEUM SERVICES**

Councillor Eastwood introduced the urgent report which provided a summary and update on leisure, libraries and museum services which was previously reported to Cabinet in April and to two Overview and Scrutiny Committees in May.

Further details of the situation as of that day were also provided.

The Strategic Executive Officer explained the scenarios outlined before Members and the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the communications from Aura be noted;

- (b) That the feedback and opinion from Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted with the recommendation that Cabinet seek to continue with its arrangement with Aura;
- (c) That in light of the information received from Aura today following a request by officers, that officers continue to explore the grant option based upon the provision of a compliant subsidy control assessment. This is dependent upon Aura accepting a new short term grant in order to complete the necessary work on subsidy control;
- (d) That if satisfactory progress is not made in relation to recommendation (c) that a model based upon a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) is progressed; and
- (e) That due to the limited time available and further to the agreement of the Chair of Council, that these decisions are urgent and therefore exempt from call-in.

**162. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.00 p.m.)

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**Chair**



## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Housing Strategy Action Plan Performance Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on delivery of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2019 - 2024 with a particular focus on the financial year 2023/24.

The Housing Strategy has a delivery plan which sets out three strategic priorities and related activity to achieve those priorities:

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

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

Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.	To note the progress on delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2019 - 2024.
2.	To note the changes outlined in the report to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The alignment of standards and intervention rate for acquisitions under the Social Housing Grant (SHG) with those under the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP).</li> <li>• The updated timeframe for renewal of the current Housing Strategy.</li> </ul>

### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN</b>
1.01	Flintshire's Housing Strategy and Action Plan sets out the vision for how the Council will deliver affordable housing, provide relevant support to partner organisations and ensure it creates sustainable homes.

	<b>The Housing Strategy and Action Plan</b>
1.02	<p>The Housing Strategy identifies three priorities with key areas of activity within each priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority 1: Increase supply to provide the right type of homes in the right location.</li> <li>• Priority 2: Provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home.</li> <li>• Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes.</li> </ul>
	<b>Priority 1</b>
1.03	Priority 1 aims to address the lack of supply of affordable housing to meet demand, which is evident on the common housing register for social housing - Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and on the Affordable Housing Register – Tai Teg.
1.04	The action plan sets out how we aim to ensure the provision of the right type of homes in the right locations to meet people’s needs.
	<b>Priority 2</b>
1.05	Priority 2 aims to ensure we have the right type of housing related support in place to prevent issues that can cause vulnerable people to become homeless.
1.06	The principle of housing related support is to support a person to access, maintain and manage their accommodation by assessing and developing or maintaining the necessary skills and confidence to live as independent a life as possible. The priority will focus on prevention and intervention, and complements the priorities set out in the Regional Homelessness Strategy and Flintshire’s Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
1.07	Funding is available to support the prevention of homelessness through the Housing Support Grant (HSG) which enables a wide range of additional services and support. HSG does not, however, fund statutory homelessness service delivery.
1.08	Delivery of priority 2 is broader than homelessness and the action plan identifies interventions for different vulnerable groups including people with specialist needs such as those with learning disabilities and older people.
	<b>Priority 3</b>
1.09	<p>Priority 3 aims to improve the quality of existing housing stock and develop innovative, energy efficient new stock to contribute towards target of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases by 3% per year as set out in the Climate Change Strategy for Wales Delivery Plan for Emission Reduction.</p> <p>Decarbonisation is an evolving agenda and Welsh Government has revised the Welsh Development Quality Requirements (WDQR 2021) that relates to all new affordable housing, setting out space standards and the aim to progress towards homes being carbon zero.</p>

<b>Planned Development Delivery Programme (PDP)</b>																																									
1.10	<p>There have been delays to the delivery of the Planned Development Delivery Programme (PDP). Generic issues around scheme viability remain. As a result, we have seen a significant hiatus in development of new housing across the County. This emanates from the cost-of-living crisis, rising interest rates together with wage and material inflation and delays in material availability.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with our RSL partners to try and mitigate the various challenges which have resulted in delays to schemes. These include the increase in the cost of living which has led to contractors entering administration and withdrawing from contracts due to increased costs and reduced scheme viability.</p> <p>The report advises that completions remain below target in the current year but demonstrates how this will increase in future years as the PDP approved by Welsh Government gears up to deliver around 530 new homes over the next three years (based on PDP for 2023/24).</p> <p>Welsh Government is yet to confirm funding for 2024/25 onwards.</p>																																								
1.11	<p>Progress against established measures:</p> <p><b>Council Stock - 50</b></p> <p>Schemes have slipped in the programme and are currently at Welsh Government Technical Approval stage before the planning applications can be submitted. We anticipate that 55 units will be on site in the last quarter of 2024/25.</p> <p>Mostyn (30) and homeless provision at Duke Street and Park Lane (6) were technically on site at the start of April 2023 i.e., this financial year and are now included in the number of Council Homes completed figure.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site</th> <th>LHMA</th> <th>Property type</th> <th>Funding Stream</th> <th>Funds as per PDP</th> <th>Number of units</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Park Lane, Holywell</td> <td>Flint and Coast</td> <td>4 x 1B homeless units</td> <td>SHG</td> <td>PDP 23/24 £338,673</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Duke Street, Flint</td> <td>Flint and Coast</td> <td>2 x 1B homeless units</td> <td>SHG</td> <td>PDP 2023/24 £151,794</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ffordd Hiraethog and Ffordd Pandarus in Mostyn</td> <td>Flint and Coast</td> <td>16 x 1B flats, 6 x 2B flats &amp; 8 x 2B houses</td> <td>SHG</td> <td>PDP 2023/24 £760,382</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Sub Total</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td><b>36</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Acquisitions</b></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>5 Oak Tree Close, Shotton</td> <td>Connah's Quay, Broughton</td> <td>1 x 2B house</td> <td></td> <td>Councils existing resources</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Site	LHMA	Property type	Funding Stream	Funds as per PDP	Number of units	Park Lane, Holywell	Flint and Coast	4 x 1B homeless units	SHG	PDP 23/24 £338,673	4	Duke Street, Flint	Flint and Coast	2 x 1B homeless units	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £151,794	2	Ffordd Hiraethog and Ffordd Pandarus in Mostyn	Flint and Coast	16 x 1B flats, 6 x 2B flats & 8 x 2B houses	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £760,382	30	<b>Sub Total</b>					<b>36</b>	5 Oak Tree Close, Shotton	Connah's Quay, Broughton	1 x 2B house		Councils existing resources	1
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	and Queensferry				
39 Wern Ucha , Bagillt	Flint and Coast	1 x 3B house	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £129,285	1
5 Larch Avenue Shotton	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 3B House	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £15,9300	1
1 South Bank, Queensferry	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 3B house	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £179 ,950	1
11 Deva Avenue, Connah's Quay	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 2B house	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £133 908	1
1B Cestrian Street, Connah's Quay	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 1B flat	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £59, 737	1
7 Bowlers Court, Mostyn Street Shotton	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 1B flat	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £48, 127	1
35 Bretton Drive Broughton.	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	1 x 2B flat	TACP	TCAP 2023/24 £94, 989	1
39 Ewloe Heath Buckley Ty' Rllwyfen, Buckley	Mold and Buckley	1 x 2B flat	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £109, 434	1
7A & 7B Pierce Street, Queensferry.	Connah's Quay, Broughton and Queensferry	2 x 1B flat	TACP	TACP 2023/24 £103 318	2
50 Meadowbank, Holway, Holywell	Flint and Coast	1 x 2B house	TACP	TACP 2023/24	1
93 & 95 Hawarden Road, Hope	South Boarder	2 x 2B houses	TACP	TACP 2023/24 Acquisition and Construction	2
<b>Sub Total</b>					<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>50</b>



### Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) Stock – 30

RSLs provided 30 additional new homes including 1 unit to meet specialist provision.

RSL	Site	LHMA	Property type	Funding Stream	Funds as per PDP	No
W&W	61, Powell Road, Buckley	Mold & Buckley	1 x 3B house	TACP	TACP £83,977	1
FCHA	17, Elm Road, Queensferry	Connah's Quay, Broughton & Queensferry	Specialist housing provision 3 bed house	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £297,300	1
Grwp Cynefin	Rhewl Fawr, Penyfford Holywell (phase 3)	Flint & Coast	6 x 2B houses & 2 x 3B houses	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £883,468	8
Grwp Cynefin	Homebuy – 4, Bramley Way, Hawarden	Mold & Buckley	1 x 3B house	RCG	PDP 2023/24 £60,530	1
Grwp Cynefin	Homebuy – 15 Llys Brenig, Ewloe	Mold & Buckley	1 x 3 B house	RCG	PDP 2023/24 £ 86,530	1
Clwyd Alyn	Princess Avenue, Buckley	Mold & Buckley	8 x 1B flats, 2 x 2 B flats & 2 x 3B houses	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £1,238,909	12
Clwyd Alyn	Dee Gardens, Garden City	Garden City	4 x 3B houses & 2 x 4B houses	SHG	PDP 2023/24 £ 1,054,984	6
<b>Total</b>						30

1.12 The action plan is presented annually to Cabinet, Communities and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Housing Association partners via the RSL Strategic Housing Group.

1.13 The PDP process moved to an online portal last year allowing RSLs to add updates and schemes directly onto the system for consideration by the Council's housing strategy team.

1.14 Local authorities were previously allowed to use up to 20% of their SHG budget for acquisitions. As at July 2023 the WG recognised that local authorities might continue to experience difficulties in achieving full spend, so to maximise the number of homes brought forward the limit has been removed.

1.15	Welsh Government has aligned the standards and intervention rate for acquisitions (existing dwellings and off the shelf purchases) under SHG with those from the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP), allowing a greater choice of accommodation options to be delivered at pace.
1.16	<p>TACP funding for 2023/24 was announced in July 2023 with updated criteria and eligibility published. FCC submitted an ‘expression of wish’ form in August 2023 for schemes that Flintshire County Council (FCC) would like to bring forward for consideration for TACP funding in relation to acquisitions, voids, and large-scale acquisitions for conversion. The WG then requested details of any reserve schemes included on the original expression of wish form in August 2023. On the 20th of December 2023 the WG announced that, subject to Ministerial approval, some additional funding would be available for TACP from January 2024 and that FCC had been allocated an indicative additional sum of £1,082,426.</p> <p>FCC submitted additional schemes and we were successful in our application. In addition to our initial Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) allocation of circa £1.6m we have been able to access additional TACP funding, taking our allocation to circa £3.5m which, with help of our RSL partners, has enabled us to both acquire additional homes and to assist in bringing over 100 void properties back into use.</p>
<b>RENEWAL OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN</b>	
1.17	The current Housing Strategy and action plan runs from 2019 until 2024. The section below proposes a timetable to review and refresh the Housing Strategy from 2025 until 2030.
1.18	<p>The current Housing Strategy built on previous achievements but was developed within the context of the then current challenges, such as welfare reform, the increase in ‘hidden’ homeless and limited resources. The context has changed significantly since 2019 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UK has left the European Union.</li> <li>• War in Ukraine.</li> <li>• Average house prices have risen across Wales from £160k in 2019 to £219k in 2022.</li> <li>• The Covid Pandemic (first reported in December 2019).</li> <li>• Inflation / CPI 1.4% in 2019, 6.8% last year, and as at March 2004 (for all items) stands at 3.8%.</li> <li>• The pound to the dollar was £1.22 (2019) - £0.79 (2023).</li> <li>• Full implementation of the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 in December 2022.</li> <li>• Significant increase in homelessness.</li> <li>• Local Development Plan (LDP) adopted for FCC.</li> </ul>
1.19	The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) is a key tool in assessing demand for housing locally to inform planning policy and the local housing strategy and is currently in the process of being updated.

	<p>New guidance and LHMA tool have been introduced by Welsh Government on the development and formatting of these assessments. Arc4 have been commissioned to undertake this study in readiness for submission to Welsh Government in early 2024. A draft has been submitted to the WG with the caveat it is not published as we are currently in the process of clarifying some of the information and outcomes outlined in the draft LHMA. We have some concerns over the results and assumptions that the new tool and guidance has produced. Consequently, this has impacted on the outline timeframe for renewal of the Housing Strategy.</p>
1.20	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>The Housing Strategy is a collaborative document and will involve extensive consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders. Following the template of previous iterations of the strategy, the below sets out an updated outline framework for renewal of the strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Council/Officer workshop - May /June 2024</li> <li>• Private Rented Sector partners workshop - May/June/July 2024</li> <li>• RSL partners workshop - May/June/July 2024</li> <li>• An initial draft strategy document as a basis for formal external consultation for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet - September/October 2024</li> <li>• Formal Consultation – October to December 2024</li> <li>• Final Review inclusive of comments received during the consultation period by Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet - December 2024/January 2025.</li> <li>• New plan published - March 2025</li> </ul>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Revenue: The Housing Strategy Action Plan is a strategic document, there are no implications for the approved revenue budget for either the current financial year or for future financial years.</p> <p>Capital: The Housing Strategy Action Plan is a strategic document, there are no implications for the approved Capital programme relating to the Strategy or Action Plan other than already approved borrowing by NEW Homes and through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing capacity.</p> <p>Human resources: The Housing Strategy team is operating with limited resources. There were some actions within the Action Plan in 2023 that referred to the potential for new posts to be recruited to assist in delivering additional services.</p> <p>A systems analyst and project officer post for property acquisitions has been identified and options are being explored as to how best to recruit to these positions.</p> <p>Challenges relating to the recruitment and retention of staff remain.</p>

	<p><u>Agency Staff</u> Two Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme Delivery Managers commenced in February and March 2023 and are now embedded into the Team. A Senior Maintenance Surveyor placement continues.</p> <p><u>Apprentices</u> Two apprentices were recruited in September 2023. The graduate trainee is currently working in the development team but will also work across the Housing Asset team.</p> <p>Both apprentices have settled in well.</p>
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	The reporting of the Housing Strategy Action Plan is a progress report rather than a new policy therefore an impact assessment is not deemed as necessary.
3.02	<p>An internal Audit was undertaken in 2022/23 – Right Type of Home in the Right Location - Housing and Communities. The final report dated March 2022/23 was rated amber / green; key controls generally operating effectively but with recommendations in relation to some fine tuning which we have implemented including the creation of a risk register.</p> <p>Schemes are appraised on a regular basis to ensure that where possible, risks are identified at an early stage and mitigating actions are taken to ensure the timely delivery of schemes within the PDP.</p> <p>For 2023/24 WG advised that the Flintshire County Council (FCC) SHG allocation was £13,352,142. WG set budgets for the next three years. The allocation for years two and three is also £13,352,142.</p> <p>Over this three-year period Flintshire will be allocated circa £40m, however, it has received applications for SHG schemes in excess of this figure. For example, four ‘reserve’ schemes currently have a total grant requirement of circa £18m with two ‘proposed’ schemes circa £11m. We are in the process of reviewing and prioritising SHG Schemes for 2024/25 onwards.</p> <p>Reserve schemes are those which the Local Authority agrees are strategically important and will be brought into the main programme as soon as funding is available or scheme deliverability permits. Reserve schemes act as a backup for the SHG programme i.e., they take up slippage within authorities’ own programmes or can take up slippage from other Wales authorities so are essential to programme delivery.</p> <p>Proposed schemes are those which the Local Authority is likely to support or have long lead in times. Local Authorities should be entirely transparent with their RSL partners / LA development teams on the likelihood of potential schemes being supported within the main programme.</p> <p>In attempting to try and ensure that all viable schemes were included within the PDP some allocated grant funding fell outside the year three funding</p>

window. The WG stipulated that the remaining grant figure in year 4 could not exceed our annual allocation of circa £13.3m. This resulted in a review of schemes with four schemes removed - land at Wern Farm, Bagillt (45 units), former Spectrum Garden Centre, Mold Road, Cefn y Bedd (30 units), older persons scheme, Buckley (60 units) and learning disabilities bungalows, Buckley (13 units).

Moreover, increasing costs have led to some RSLs requiring additional funding to ensure the viability of their schemes. Materials, labour shortages of skilled labour and wider economic pressures on contractor mean some have gone into liquidation.

The intention is to negotiate with the RSLs after reviewing all schemes and be in a position, if later in the year WG offers access to 'slippage' funding, to apply for, and allocate, additional funding to viable schemes this financial year.

Key risks have been identified as follows:

### **Delays to delivery and additional funding requirements**

There are some RSLs whom have received considerable sums of grant monies in previous years, but as additional funding has been required due to increased costs and contractors entering administration the schemes have been delayed.

This includes the following schemes:

- Northern Gateway (100 units) and 66a Mold Road, Mynydd Isa (56 units).
- New Inn, Station Road (8 units) and Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley (9 units).

All four are now on site.

The schemes are being closely monitored to ensure delivery.

- 66a Mold Road – The contractor is now on site. This Scheme has been allocated additional SHG funding of £3,562,887 in 23/24. Contract completion date is set for 15th November 2025 however there will be a phased handover approach and we anticipate phase one handover to be around January / February 2025, circa 10 units.
- Northern Gateway – new contractor on site. This scheme has been allocated additional SHG funding of £ 7,048,883 in 23/24. This will be a phased delivery and we are anticipating circa 15 units at the end of 24/25. Both 66a Mold Road and Northern Gateway are complex sites where piling is required so the RSL is currently adopting a conservative approach as to when the first properties on each site will be completed.
- New Inn, Station Road – initial contract was dissolved. Additional funding of £821,000 has been allocated in 2023/24. Completion is anticipated by end of Q2.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley - Contractor entered Administration. Additional funding of circa £743,975 has been allocated in 2023/24. Anticipated completion by end of Q3.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concentration of allocated funding to one RSL</b> We are closely monitoring this situation. Concerns have been aired previously with both the WG and the RSL. There is also an over subscription of alternative schemes. After encouraging partners to put forward viable schemes for inclusion in the PDP for 2024/25 there is likely to be an over subscription of alternative schemes which we need to prioritise in consultation with RSL Partners and the WG.</p> <p><b>Other identified risks</b> Utilising the risk register there are an additional five schemes (pre-construction) which have been rated red. Of these three relate to RSL schemes and two relate to FCC schemes.</p> <p>RSL Schemes - two RSL schemes in Buckley (older persons / elderly care provision and learning disabilities bungalows) have been delayed due to outline planning having only been obtained in February 2024 and were designated as 'reserve' schemes.</p> <p>One scheme, Wern Farm, Bagillt, was also designated a 'reserve' scheme, as the RSL advised that it may be possible to acquire the site in 24/25 but that may fall into 25/26.</p> <p>Flintshire County Schemes - two FCC Schemes (Canton Depot, Bagillt &amp; High Steet, Connahs Quay (Old Music Shop)) are impacted by the risk of flooding (Tan 15 designation flooding).</p> <p>We do not currently have any schemes on the PDP where they are deemed to be unviable.</p>
3.03	<p>Cost of living pressures, the economic impacts of global shipping disruption and the continuing impacts of the War in Ukraine are continuing to place significant cost and availability pressures placed on labour and materials.</p>
3.04	<p>Environmental impacts of phosphate on drainage systems. As part of the LDP adoption process, the Planning Strategy Team developed a Phosphate Mitigation Strategy in collaboration with Wrexham County Borough Council last year.</p>
3.05	<p>There is a continued risk of increased demand on homeless prevention services as termination notices have risen. As of March 2024, there were 282 placements (363 people) accommodated in emergency and temporary accommodation in Flintshire compared to 55 households in February 2021.</p> <p>As a result of rising interest rates and the potential for rates to rise further or stay at this level for longer there is a potential risk of increased demand on homeless prevention services if repossessions start to grow which may also result in increased demand for social and affordable homes.</p>

3.06	The ability to ensure that planned developments meet the standard viability models as required to access funding from the Welsh Government may be compromised.
3.07	The continuing challenging economic situation and the additional costs of borrowing and servicing debt repayments and meeting updated Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2023 may impact on RSL's ability to borrow.
3.08	Scheme viability may be impacted by rising costs.
3.09	Reduction in funding to LAs following more than a decade of austerity pre pandemic together with increases in pay and utility bills along with other existing and emerging cost pressures means Flintshire County Council is potentially facing a significant forecasted budget gap.
3.10	The private rented sector continues to be adversely affected by the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 in addition to the above issues leading landlords to exit the market.  The Renting Homes Wales Act is also impacting on RSLs and LAs in relation to the definition and circumstances as to when an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is required.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly FCC Development Team meetings</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings with Welsh Government and RSL colleagues</li> <li>• Quarterly and ad hoc meetings with individual RSLs</li> <li>• Consultation takes place with Members and site visits arranged when appropriate.</li> </ul>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - Housing Strategy Action Plan Progress Report 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
5.02	Appendix 2 - Risk Matrix

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Flintshire Housing Strategy &amp; Action Plan 2019 - 2024  <a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Housing/Flintshire-Housing-Strategy-and-Action-plan-2019-2024.pdf">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Housing/Flintshire-Housing-Strategy-and-Action-plan-2019-2024.pdf</a></p> <p>Local Development Plan – Flintshire  <a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning/Flintshire-Local-Development-Plan.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning/Flintshire-Local-Development-Plan.aspx</a></p>

	Flintshire County Council Prospectus Local Authority prospectus (agreed October 2023)
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
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7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Marj Cooper, Housing Strategy Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 70 3721  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:marj.cooper@flintshire.gov.uk">marj.cooper@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
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8.01	<p><b>Budget:</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Financial Year:</b> the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April</p> <p><b>Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) Policy</b> – the regional common policy for all major social landlords allocating social housing properties across Flintshire.</p> <p><b>Social Housing Grant</b> – Welsh Government funding that may be available to housing associations and developing Local Authorities. It is to help fund new affordable housing e.g. for social rent. To qualify for grant homes must comply with Welsh Government Development Quality Requirements (WDQR) and standard viability models.</p> <p><b>Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)</b> - Funding will be available to support Social Landlords on a range of schemes. In summary, the Programme will continue to fund voids and remodelling, demolition and newbuild, and conversion. These scheme types apply to LA/RSL existing stock. TACP will also support MMC, including for ‘meanwhile use’, acquisitions i.e. Existing Dwellings and Off the Shelf purchases as well as ‘acquire to convert’. In some cases, TACP can support the acquisition of tenanted properties from Private Sector Landlords where the tenant will be made homeless.</p>
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## Appendix 1 Local Housing Strategy Action Plan Progress Report March 2024

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

Output	Timescale	Lead organisation/s	Progress
<p>To meet the annual shortfall of 238 affordable housing as identified in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2019 by delivering the following tenures:</p> <p>(i) To increase the number of new social rent properties (RSL or Council) by 86 per annum</p> <p>(ii) To increase the number of intermediate rent properties (NEW Homes or RSLs) by 57 per annum</p> <p>(iii) To increase the number of intermediate ownership properties (through s106</p>	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners	<p>Target not achieved - the number of properties completed was 80.</p> <p>There have been delays to the programme. Generic issues around scheme viability remain. As a result of which we have seen a significant hiatus in development of new housing across the County. This emanates from the cost-of-living crisis, rising interest rates together with wage and material inflation and delays in material availability.</p> <p>This has led to contractors and developers entering administration.</p> <p>Four schemes were affected by the above issues and although they are now on site after receiving additional WG funding, we anticipate that the above issues may well continue to impact on new schemes going forward.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with our RSL partners to try and mitigate the various challenges which have resulted in delays to schemes. These include the increase in the cost of living which has led to</p>

<p>provision or RSLs) by 95 per annum</p>			<p>contractors entering administration and withdrawing from contracts due to increased costs and reduced scheme viability.</p> <p>Completions remain below target in the current year, but we anticipate that this will increase in future years as the Planned Development Programme (PDP) approved by Welsh Government in 2023/24 gears up to deliver around 530 new homes over the next three years (based on PDP for 2023/24).</p> <p>The above figures are broken down as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new social rent properties (RSL or Council) – 80</li> <li>• Number of intermediate rent properties (NEW Homes or RSL's) – nil</li> <li>• The number of intermediate ownership properties (through s106 provision or RSLs) – nil</li> </ul> <p>This year's programme should see the following completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New social rent properties (RSL or Council) – 54</li> <li>• Currently on site – RSL = 173</li> <li>• Due for completion next year - RSL = 42</li> <li>• Due for completion next year NEW homes = 13</li> <li>• Due to be on site next year FCC = 55</li> </ul>
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			<p>Nant y Gro (41) should have been on site but is currently under review due to cost increases and scheme viability.</p> <p>The Programme Development/Delivery Plan (PDP) aims to deliver circa 530 units over the next 3 years. This includes some of the proposed SHARP programme.</p> <p>WG funding for 2024/25 is yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>A summary of the PDP is available at appendix (i)</p> <p>Members should note that schemes are subject to Cabinet / New Homes Board approval, planning decisions, local Ward Member consultation and Welsh Government (WG) Grant approvals.</p>
<p>Deliver 5% (10) new build properties per annum to meet demand specialist provision</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners</p>	<p>Number of new build units to meet specialist provision - target is 10.</p> <p>We had anticipated that 5 units would have been provided in 2023/2024. One unit was developed leaving a shortfall of 9 units against target.</p> <p><u>Completed April 2023 to March 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 Elm Road, Queensferry 1 property</li> </ul> <p><u>Anticipated to complete April 2023 to March 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Westhaven, Holywell Rd, Ewloe 3 units excluding staff provision of 1 unit - did not</li> </ul>

			<p>complete due to delays in acquiring the property. It is due to complete 25.4.24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCHA 2289 - 1 bed complex health provision - Copper Beech Close - the sale of the property is a probate sale, and it was not possible to complete the acquisition by 28.3.24 (the end of the financial year).</li> </ul> <p>Due to the complexity and variety of needs of those on the Specialist Housing Register the Housing Strategy team continues to explore other options including the potential redevelopment of Flintshire County Councils' (FCC) garage sites for specialist accommodation for those with LD. In addition, regular meetings have been convened with the Specialist Housing Register team to develop a brief for this cohort.</p> <p>Visits to potential sites, arranged with the Learning Disabilities Team, in conjunction with the Programme Manager, North Wales Together, Seamless Services for People with Learning Disabilities took place last year.</p> <p>Topographical surveys have been carried out on two of the sites and we shall be looking at appointing architects to produce feasibility schemes in the next couple of months.</p>
Deliver 20 major adaptations on existing properties per annum (all tenures)	Annual	Flintshire County Council	<p>Target not achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority properties – 5 completed.</li> </ul>

		and RSL Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private properties - 9 completed.</li> <li>• Some of these large adaptations may have commenced in the previous financial year.</li> <li>• Currently there are 6 large adaptations in progress on Council properties and circa 12 on private properties.</li> <li>• Clwyd Alyn completed - 15 adaptations (PAGs) in Flintshire costing £62,935.95.</li> </ul>
Increase the percentage of one-bedroom social rented properties by 20% (16) per year of all new build social rented properties	Annual	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners	Achieved - 28 one bed units delivered.
Reduce the number of empty properties by 10% (50) over the lifetime of the strategy	March 2025	Flintshire County Council	<p>With the help of Houses into Home loans, tracking down existing owners and providing other assistance 77 units have been brought back into use: exceeding the target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2019/20 – 19 properties</li> <li>• 2020/21 – 10 properties</li> <li>• 2021/22 – 18 Properties</li> <li>• 2022/23 – 11 properties</li> <li>• 2023/24 – 19 properties</li> </ul>

<b>Priority 1.1 To increase the supply of all types and tenures of affordable housing through new build developments</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>The RSL Welsh Government Social Housing Grant programme</p>	<p>Increasing development capacity in Flintshire through zoning additional Housing Associations.</p>	<p>The FCC Social Housing Grant has increased significantly from the allocation of £5.2 million in 2020/21.</p> <p>The amount allocated for 2021/22 increased to £10.2 million. The allocation for 2022/23 was £13.3 million. This was fully allocated to schemes in the PDP.</p> <p>Over 96% (£12.7 million) of the allocated funding was paid out by the Welsh Government in 2023/2024.</p> <p>SHG budgets for 2024 onwards are due to be announced shortly by the WG.</p> <p>Welsh Government moved the PDP process to an online portal last year named 'Manage Homes and Places'.</p> <p>RSLs are now able to add schemes and updates directly onto the system for consideration by the local authority housing strategy team.</p> <p>We anticipate that our professional, productive relationships will continue with our partner RSLs and that they will continue to feel confident in discussing their schemes prior to adding them to the PDP Portal.</p>

	<p>Ensuring maximum number of properties delivered using the available funding</p>	<p>Should any schemes receive negative pre-planning application advice or be refused planning they will be updated on the Portal and withdrawn.</p> <p>WG has previously allocated Flintshire circa £39m over a 3-year period. However as at April 2024 it has received proposed schemes with total grant requirement of circa £11.2m for SHG together with reserve schemes of circa £18m.</p> <p>The PDP aimed to deliver around 730 units during the PDP 3 year period from 2023/24 (subject to financial appraisals, planning and technical approvals and consultation etc.). The majority, 81% were made up of social rent with around 5% affordable rent properties.</p> <p>Around 26 schemes were originally prioritised for inclusion within the main programme. The WG then stipulated that the grant remaining figure in year 4 could not exceed our annual allocation of circa £13.3m. Schemes were reviewed and four schemes were removed - land at Wern Farm, Bagillt (45 units), former Spectrum Garden Centre, Mold Road, Cefn y Bedd (30 units), Older persons scheme, Buckley (60 units) and LD bungalows Buckley (13 units).</p> <p>In addition, the developer withdrew from the Highmere Drive scheme (49 units).</p> <p>Although the WG has yet to announce SHG grant</p>
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		<p>funding for 2024/25 onwards we expect that we shall face a similar predicament relating to over-subscription in the next financial year.</p> <p>Additionally, not all schemes were able to be progressed for various reasons. This includes unforeseen progress issues with the agent and developer on one site, delays in acquiring sites and the purchase of a property for use by a household on the Specialist Housing register which could not be completed due to issues relating to probate.</p> <p>As referenced earlier there have been delays to the programme. Generic issues around scheme viability remain. We continue to work closely with our RSL partners to try and mitigate the various challenges which have resulted in delays to schemes. These include the increase in the cost of living which has led to contractors entering administration and withdrawing from contracts due to increased costs and reduced scheme viability. Contractor insolvency and repricing/funding pressures impacted on start on site for Northern Gateway (100 units), 66a Mold Road, Mynydd Isa (56 units) and completion of New Inn, Station Road (8 units) and Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley (9 units).</p> <p>As a result of the above a significant proportion of this year's SHG funding was allocated to existing schemes where additional WG funding was required.</p>
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	<p>Ensuring a robust reserve list of schemes.</p>	<p>Nevertheless circa 96% of the allocated Social Housing Grant of £13.3m has been drawn down this financial year.</p> <p>Transitional Accommodation Capital (TACP) Funding was announced in July 2023 with updated criteria and eligibility published.</p> <p>FCC submitted an ‘expression of wish form’ in August 2023 for schemes that Flintshire County Council would like to bring forward for consideration for TACP funding in relation to acquisitions, voids and large- scale acquisitions for conversion.</p> <p>WG allocated Transitional Accommodation Capital (TACP) funding of circa £1.6m. We have also been able to access additional TACP funding, taking our allocation to circa £3.5m, which in conjunction with our RSL partners has enabled us to both acquire 14 additional homes and to assist in bringing over 100 void properties back into use.</p> <p>The Council maintains a list of potential and reserve schemes. Reserve schemes are those which the Local Authority agreed are strategically important and will be brought into the main programme as soon as funding is available or scheme deliverability permits. Reserve schemes act as a backup for the SHG programme i.e., they take up slippage within authorities’ own</p>
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	<p>Ensuring the type and tenure meets local housing needs, primarily social rent properties, informed by the Council's Housing Strategy Team.</p>	<p>programmes or can take up "All Wales" slippage so are essential to programme delivery.</p> <p>Potential schemes are those which the Local Authority is likely to support or have long lead in times.</p> <p>Schemes in the potential list are in the very early stages of development and may be prior to planning application submissions or consultation with local members. Should any schemes receive negative pre-planning application advice or be refused planning they will be withdrawn from the PDP.</p> <p>In 2021 WG opened up zoning so all RSLs that operate across the North Wales region can work in every Local Authority area and request support for Social Housing Grant. Therefore, there are now 7 RSL's who can access Grant in Flintshire.</p> <p>The Welsh Government (WG) have previously requested all Local Authorities produce a Local Authority Prospectus that sets out housing need and priorities for the area. This will help to inform future Social Housing Grant allocation. The draft Flintshire Local Authority Prospectus was approved by Cabinet on the 17th October 2023.</p> <p>This will be updated once the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) has been refreshed.</p>
<p>The Council's</p>	<p>Meeting the HRA Business Plan's ambition to</p>	<p>From 2021 - 2026 WG have an ambitious target</p>

<p>new build programme: SHARP / HRA</p>	<p>deliver 50 new social rent homes per annum up to 2030 in order to meet the demand of the social housing register.</p> <p>Ensuring the delivery of new builds adds value through addressing the pressures for certain housing types by basing development plans on intelligence.</p> <p>Utilising Welsh Government's Affordable Housing Grant to support delivery.</p>	<p>to deliver 20,000 new low carbon social homes and have opened up the Social Housing Grant programme to developing Local Authorities.</p> <p>FCC reviewed the Housing Programmes Team to secure additional resources to deliver new-build housing schemes. Two additional Agency Development Managers were appointed to the Housing Programme team in March 2023.</p> <p>The Housing strategy team also secured two Apprentices who started in September 2023. One Apprentice will also be working across / shared with the Housing Assets team.</p> <p>In 2024/2025 the aim is to commence build of 55 FCC new social rent homes.</p> <p>Future schemes are subject to Cabinet approval, planning etc. and WG Grant approvals. FCC and NEW Homes continue to work proactively to increase the number of social and affordable rent properties available to meet identified housing demand across Flintshire. In accordance with WG strategic housing policy, the Council will work with an increased focus upon working collaboratively with partner housing associations to jointly deliver new housing schemes.</p>
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	Securing a lift in the borrowing cap to enable additional financial resources to meet the Council's delivery ambitions.	New development schemes will be procured either via the Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA) selection process or North Wales Construction Partnership (NWCP3).
NEW Homes investment	<p>Supporting the delivery of affordable rented properties through SHARP for NEW Homes.</p> <p>Ensuring NEW Homes maximises its ability to invest in the delivery of affordable rented properties through using their existing assets.</p>	<p>NEW Homes currently owns and manages 173 units. NEW Homes are in the process of acquiring a further 13 properties.</p> <p>There was slippage in quarter 4 due to some legal issues around s.106 details relating to 6 properties at Maes Gwern and completion delays relating to 7 properties at Penyffordd via Redrow which we expected to have been completed this financial year2023/2024. Maple Way was also due to complete in 2023/2024</p> <p>We anticipate that these 14 properties will complete next financial year.</p> <p>The business plan allows for future schemes, as below subject to Cabinet / NEW Homes Board approval, consultation, planning and technical approvals and WG grant approvals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 2024/2025 and 20255/2026 – circa 74 including 6 at Maes Gwern, 7 at Penyffordd and 1 at Maple Way.</li> </ul>
Maximising the provision of affordable housing on	Ensuring the new LDP affordable housing planning policy requirements maximises appropriate on-site provision.	<p>The Local development Plan (LDP) was formally adopted on the 24th January 2023.</p> <p>HN3: Affordable Housing now requires that</p>



	<p>Considering investing in designs for multi-generational / flexible homes</p> <p>Increasing the use of social value in service planning and procurement in order to maximise opportunities and support vulnerable residents.</p>	<p>value is embedded within procurement.</p> <p>The North Wales construction framework is the second local authority-driven construction framework in the region and will build on the award-winning work that has already changed how construction projects are procured in the region. The framework will be used to deliver a range of major projects across North Wales with a combined value of £500 million, offering a host of opportunities for supply chain development.</p> <p>The aim of the framework is ambitious: to secure improvements to the built environment through delivery of best value, energy efficient, sustainable facilities; utilising the highest possible safety and environment standards, innovation and collaboration, whilst creating a lasting legacy through targeted investment in employment and communities. This will address the Programme for Wales' priorities and deliver a step change in construction procurement for the region.</p>
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<b>Priority 1.2 To increase the supply through better use of existing social housing stock</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The Council's housing stock	<p>Undertaking a review of the stock and tenancies to determine where there is under occupation or where there is capacity to realign the use of the stock</p> <p>Reviewing the existing use of stock to assess best use</p>	<p>A working group to review all sheltered housing schemes was set up last year to assess suitability as older persons housing in the future. Flintshire has a sizeable amount of older persons stock and therefore this review has taken longer than anticipated.</p> <p>The review has widened in scope to consider what the Flintshire 'offer' of sheltered housing should be.</p> <p>A matrix has been developed and will be used to assess sheltered schemes that require substantial investment or that have housing management challenges. A pilot project is being explored that will focus on a specific scheme.</p> <p>The Council has finalised the scoring matrix, including the consultation process that will be used to evaluate each sheltered scheme before we consider reclassification. Areas of consideration consist of but are not limited to, Desirability, Amenities, Access &amp; Egress, Allocation Waiting Lists, Rent Loss and Asset Compliance.</p> <p>FCC is still working with the North Wales housing providers in a 'rightsizing' project This project has stalled but the intention is to recommence the work.</p>

	Developing an incentive scheme to encourage movement in the stock where it can be proven to meet a need from the housing register and address under occupation / overcrowding.	To be agreed
Partner Housing Association stock	Review existing use of stock to assess best use in line with strategic priorities.	FCC continues to work with partner housing associations through the strategic and operational SARTH groups to identify challenges and develop ways of maximising allocations within existing stock.  It is anticipated that all of the RSLs will be involved in the rightsizing project when recommenced as outlined above.
Accessible Housing	Develop an Accessible Housing Register for all social housing stock to enable better use of adapted stock.  Assess the register to identify where there are homes with adaptations that could be utilised.	This is linked to the ongoing sheltered housing review and condition surveys and is therefore dependent on the completion of these workstreams. Once the above is completed this will be explored further.  The Specialist housing register is considered when looking at housing need or new build affordable housing schemes and planning applications. NEW Homes and FCC new build housing schemes include consultation at inception stage (with Housing occupational health and Social Services) to ensure housing requirements for people with accessible needs can be met.  FCC and NEW Homes developments with ground



	<p>Engage with Housing Occupational Health and Social Services as early as possible on all developments to ensure all accessible needs are met.</p>	<p>floor flats/ bungalows will be developed using wheelchair space standards where the site is deemed as suitable. The Local Authority Prospectus emphasises specialist and supported housing provision being included within grant funded developments.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy team attend regular meetings to discuss the needs of those on the Specialist Housing register.</p> <p>We are currently exploring the possibility of repurposing / utilising existing HRA garage sites for the development of suitable accommodation for this cohort.</p> <p>We have had topographical surveys carried out on two of the sites and we shall be looking at appointing Architects to produce feasibility schemes in the next couple of months.</p> <p>The Housing Strategy team also hold regular meetings with the Programme Manager, North Wales Together: Seamless Services for People with Learning Disabilities and their team.</p> <p>FCC recruited an Occupational Therapist (OT) in January 2023. The OT works within the Housing register team and across the DFG Adaptations team to work to improve opportunities for applicants on the Specialist Housing register and build links with other departments.</p>
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		The OT is now embedded into the housing and preventions service, housing management, DFG and social services teams.
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**Priority 1.3 To increase the supply by bringing empty homes back into use**

Action	Task	Progress
Developing relevant policies to maximise legal powers	<p>Develop a policy for Flintshire to maximise legal powers including the potential to compulsory purchase or take ownership on a temporary basis.</p> <p>Explore potential resources with Welsh Government for compulsory purchase orders</p> <p>Developing an initiative, in partnership with our Housing Associations, to bring back empty properties into use to meet specific needs such as for larger families.</p>	<p>Working closely with Council tax and utilising land registry information we are targeting long term empty properties by tracking down and engaging with the owners and offering financial assistance.</p> <p>Flintshire accessed Transitional Accommodation Capital (TACP) Programme funding of circa 3.5m. This, with the assistance of our RSL partners, allowed for more than 100 properties to be brought back into use and includes the conversion of two properties into one large family home.</p>
Reducing empty properties	Working closely with partner Housing Associations and the Council Tax Team to identify those properties which are long term empty and are causing issues to the local community.	It was previously agreed with Council Tax to advertise the houses into home loans scheme by including a leaflet in the council tax bills 2023/24 which are sent to every property in the authority. We are planning to undertake a similar exercise for the next Council Tax bill for 2025/26.
The provision of financial support to bring empty properties back	<p>Promoting 'Houses to Homes' loans, which aims to bring empty properties back into use through providing affordable loans up to £25k in the private sector.</p> <p><i>Amounts were increased last year from £25,000</i></p>	As above.

into use	<i>to £35,000 for each property and up to £250,000 per application.</i>	
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**Priority 1.4 To increase the supply through the private rented sector (PRS)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
A dedicated PRS team / Officer in the Council	Realign existing staffing resources and expertise to develop an improved PRS offer across Flintshire.	Following the shutdown of the FCC Bond scheme this officer has now moved over to private sector and landlord support post. This post will sit within the “Homefinder” team, following a restructure of the Housing and Prevention Service, which will bring together the housing register, advice, homeless accommodation management and private sector support.
The delivery of a bespoke landlord offer	<p>Consulting with private sector landlords through the Landlord Forum to establish a better understanding of the barriers and what the critical success factors would be to provide a successful offer.</p> <p>Providing a range of offers for Landlords to incentivise their engagement and commitment to the Council including the BOND.</p>	<p>Successful Landlord Forums took place in June 2022, November 2022 and May 2023.</p> <p>Due to unforeseen circumstances the Landlord Forum scheduled for September 2023 had to be postponed.</p> <p>Through use of spend to save budgets and discretionary homeless funding we continue to work with landlords through a range of tenancy rescue activities and to assist residents access homeless assistance by securing private rented properties.</p>

	<p>Ensuring the offer is flexible as well as robust and cost effective.</p>	<p>We continue to engage with landlords and will be signing up to the all Wales leasing scheme in 24/25. Landlord forums are held online in partnership with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA).</p>
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<b>Priority 1.5 To provide the right type of homes to meet the increased demand for single person accommodation and larger properties for families</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>The RSL's and Council's new build programmes</p>	<p>Requiring higher numbers of single person accommodation and larger properties as part of all new build developments.</p> <p>Continuous assessment of priorities and regular updates</p>	<p>The Local Authority Prospectus will continue to prioritise the need for single person accommodation and highlights the growing need for smaller and some larger properties. Through the Local Authority Prospectus, the aim is to ensure that we are meeting recognised need and demand. For example, around 80% of applicants on the housing register require 1 or 2 bed accommodation and our PDP programme aims to deliver around 70% smaller 1 and 2 bedroom homes.</p> <p>Evidence of housing need is obtained via the Social and Affordable housing registers and is sought for all new development opportunities and informs the property mix that is to be built.</p> <p>Reference is also made to the LDP in relation to affordable housing. Quarterly meetings are held with RSL development partners to keep them advised about strategic priorities. This is in</p>

		<p>addition to quarterly meetings held with the WG and RSL partners and Regional Strategic Lead meetings.</p> <p>An updated LHMA is in the process of being completed and will influence the refresh of the Local Authority Prospectus</p>
Developing innovative approaches	<p>Reviewing best practice elsewhere and identifying a range of options that could meet our emerging demands for single person and larger units in a cost effective way.</p> <p>Identifying innovative delivery models which can provide smaller units which are flexible and can be altered to meet changes in demand in the future.</p> <p>Considering the appropriateness of different delivery methods such as self-build/custom build and co-operative approaches to meet the need.</p>	<p>New approaches to house building are considered where the site is suitable and to comply with WDQR 2021 which promotes enhanced environmental sustainability.</p> <p>FCC is working with the Active Building Centre to develop a scheme that strives towards carbon zero. Quick build developments using MMC and flexible modular construction is being explored on sites that are suitable and viable.</p> <p>FCC is exploring off site construction viability with a view to improving cost and or programme.</p>
Strategic acquisitions	<p>Providing a strategic acquisition fund for properties which would meet a very specific need and for small numbers of properties.</p>	<p>2024/25 Social Housing Grant and TACP funding has yet to be confirmed by the WG. It is anticipated that funding will be allocated via this year's PDP to fund two property acquisitions in partnership with First Choice Housing Association.</p> <p>These properties will help people who need specialist adapted accommodation and whom</p>

	<p>Requesting partner Housing Associations to utilise Social Housing Grant to acquire individual properties where there is a specific need which is either urgent or cannot be met through current stock.</p>	<p>cannot be easily housed within the existing housing stock.</p> <p>Partners are encouraged via the PDP Partners meetings to utilise Social Housing Grant and TACP where appropriate to acquire individual properties. In addition, the Local Authority Prospectus and Specialist Housing register identifies where there is a specific need which is either urgent or cannot be met through current stock.</p> <p>We anticipate that Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) funding will be made available by the WG for 2024/2025 and partners will be encouraged to submit eligible schemes for consideration.</p>
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<b>Priority 1.6 To provide the right type of homes to improve the offer and scope of specialist housing provision</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>An overarching / strategic framework for determining the most cost effective delivery</p>	<p>Reviewing the options for delivery i.e., adaptations; acquisition or new build and develop a universal assessment mechanism to determine the most cost effective delivery option within an equality framework.</p> <p>Reviewing and mapping resources available to meet the increasing demand for adaptations.</p> <p>Exploring a partnership approach to funding and</p>	<p>An Occupational Therapist (OT) was recruited last year which has led to a more effective coordinated approach across the different service areas in Flintshire that provide adaptations and support for people with disabilities.</p> <p>As part of the restructure of Housing and Prevention services and changes within OT locality services a full review of housing related pathways will be completed in partnership with</p>

	<p>delivery including Council Housing / DFG teams, HAs Housing teams, Supporting People, Social Services, Occupational Health, Health and ICF partnership.</p> <p>Lobbying Welsh Government to simplify funding for adaptations across all delivery partners.</p>	<p>the OT service. An additional OT has been costed into the restructure to support aids, adaptations and related activity. The restructure will be completed 24/25.</p> <p>This is also linked to the stock review and assessment which will be completed this financial year 2024/25.</p>
<p>Meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities</p>	<p>Continuing to deliver as a partnership to meet the needs of people on the specialist housing register (SHR).</p> <p>Maximising the use of adaptations to help sustain tenancies and reduce increased pressure on the housing register.</p> <p>Considering potential strategic acquisitions to meet the needs of particular complex cases.</p> <p>Ensuring adapted properties are included on all Housing Association new build developments to meet the needs of the specialist register.</p>	<p>9 applicants were rehoused from the SHR during 2023/2024</p> <p>Applicants for social housing whose current housing does not meet their needs due to disabilities will be considered for aids and adaptation via Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) or social housing adaptations. If these avenues of housing solution are unavailable the applicant will be considered for relocation via the Common Allocations policy based on urgency and housing need.</p> <p>TACP funding has enabled Flintshire to adopt a new approach and to purchase properties to rescue some of the most complex cases if suitable to remain in their current property.</p> <p>Phil Forbes, Development Manager Supported Housing (Mental Health), Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) is an active member within the SARTH Operational panel.</p>

	<p>Exploring the delivery of adapted properties on market led schemes.</p>	<p>The Local Authority Prospectus prioritises the need for specialist housing provision on Social Housing Grant funded schemes. Funding will be allocated via the PDP to an additional Specialist housing scheme.</p>
<p>Meeting the needs of people with complex health needs</p>	<p>Developing a proactive relationship with the health sector to improve communication with Housing Strategy around housing needs of those in their care.</p> <p>Delivering affordable transitional accommodation to reduce delayed transfer of care – Glan y Morfa – through securing funding and undertaking the necessary works.</p> <p>Working with the Homeless Prevention team to inform provision and identify best practice.</p>	<p>We have developed a wellbeing recovery service offering housing related support for people experiencing mental health issues and historical trauma in response to housing support programme analysis which identified a gap in provision for people with mental health issues but not open to secondary care.</p> <p>Currently we are developing a complex needs support housing complex. This was identified via the housing support programme need and analysis as above.</p> <p>During the second half of 23/24 the council established an Ending Homelessness Board with representatives from all portfolios. A specific delivery group focusing on partnerships, protocols and problem cases has been tasked with developing a complex case panel to tackle and respond to difficult situations for our most vulnerable households in terms of housing, hardship and homelessness.</p> <p>The Ending Homelessness Board and delivery groups will be responsible for oversight and delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.</p>



<p>Providing the right type of housing to meet the needs older people</p>	<p>Understanding the housing needs of the older people.</p> <p>Exploring alternative and innovative housing models for older people such as intergenerational properties or co-operative models, which help to keep older people active and healthier for longer.</p> <p>Providing specialist provision such as extra care and supported housing for those older people with care needs including dementia.</p> <p>Reviewing existing specific older person’s social housing stock to ensure they can sustain tenancies.</p> <p>Exploring potential to include age-friendly properties as part of new build market developments.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the ongoing Sheltered Housing Review. When each scheme is assessed any required improvement works will be scheduled accordingly within the housing assets service.</p> <p>There are currently four Extra Care schemes in Flintshire providing 239 units of accommodation.</p> <p>Housing Strategy team provide comment on demand as per the Local Authority prospectus, LDP and housing waiting lists.</p> <p>As above</p>
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<b>Priority 1.7 To provide the right type of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>Meet the need for residential pitches</p>	<p>Increasing the number of pitches in line with Flintshire’s Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) through market led schemes and the refurbishment of the Council owned site.</p>	<p>Market led schemes continue to increase capacity. There are a number of planning applications being considered for new sites across the County which will potentially meet the requirements of the 2022 GTAA (approved by Welsh Government in 2024).</p>
<p>Provision of a</p>	<p>Identifying and assessing potential sites to deliver</p>	<p>The GTAA 2022, approved by Welsh</p>

County Output	Description	Timescale	Lead organisation/s	Progress
Deliver the actions identified in the Flintshire Homelessness Local Action Plan	a transit site in Flintshire. Applying for planning permission for transit site and secure Welsh Government Grant to deliver provision.	March 2024	Flintshire County Council	Government in 2024, supports the provision of a 6-pitch transit site. A report is due to go through committee cycle in June 2024 for approval by Cabinet to commence the planning consultation process and seek dialogue with the WG around site capital funding. Flintshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been submitted to the WG and delivery of this plan will be overseen by the Ending Homelessness Board. A Rapid Rehousing Strategy Coordinator will be appointed during 2024/25.
Management of the Council owned site	Review different management models for the Council owned site.			In relation to the management of Riverside and transit site this will be developed once we have secured planning permission for the transit provision. As an interim measure we have supported housing for young people is engaged with Care and Repair who provide onsite support at Riverside around repairs.
Develop a Youth Homeless 'hub'		March 2024	Flintshire County	
	<p>Redesigning and delivering the refurbishment of the site to provide modern pitches.</p> <p>Developing an allocation policy for the site.</p>			Expansion of the existing site is on hold whilst the WG decide on the transport links situated nearby.

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

		Council	<p>featured as a priority within the Local Authority prospectus. Identifying a potential location and partner agencies for delivery of this activity will be key to having a shared vision and appropriate setting for this accommodation and service delivery model.</p> <p>Internal social care and housing accommodation needs mapping exercises. There is potential for Social Housing Grant to be used for delivery of the accommodation.</p> <p>These hubs are still under consideration by the housing strategy team. Further feasibility work continues but no specific sites have been identified.</p>
Reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation by 50% (33) over the period of the plan	March 2024	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners	<p>This has not been feasible due to the increases in homelessness coupled with significant barriers to successfully moving people on which has resulted in more people requiring homeless accommodation.</p> <p>Emergency and temporary accommodation is limited in Flintshire and a lot of positive work is undertaken to help people sustain their housing to avoid the need to access emergency and temporary housing through prevention.</p> <p>However, in recent months, the increases</p>

			<p>in homelessness and significant barriers to successfully moving people on has resulted in more people requiring temporary / emergency accommodation.</p> <p>The number of homeless people accommodated across Wales continues to rise and Flintshire is no different. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan provides focussed coordination for our efforts to prevent more homelessness whilst also moving people on from homeless accommodation. This will be achieved by moving people on as quickly as possible through increasing the supply of housing and removal of barriers to both social and private sector housing.</p> <p>At the end of year 2021/22 101 households were accommodated, 184 households in 2022/23. The number as at the end of March 2024 now stands at 282.</p>
Deliver a transit site for the Gypsy and Traveller Community	March 2022	Flintshire County Council	An updated GTAA has been signed off by the WG, which supports the provision of a transit site in the County.
Deliver one Extra Care during the period of the Strategy	March 2024	Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners	There is an ongoing review of older persons /supported housing stock.

**Priority 2.1 To reduce homelessness through prevention**

Action	Task	Progress
<p>Work across the region with partners to prevent homelessness</p>	<p>Working across the region to develop a cross Local Authority Regional Homelessness Strategy, pulling together resources to deliver shared interventions where appropriate and cost effective.</p> <p>Developing a better understanding of the causes of homelessness to inform the development of the right interventions through collective, regional intelligence gathering.</p>	<p>The local private sector housing market continues to see significant challenges with fewer properties available each year and many landlords leaving the market.</p> <p>This creates homelessness as properties are sold, residents asked to leave and the availability of fewer properties resulting in them being increasingly unaffordable.</p> <p>Changes to the Housing Wales Act 2014 (HWA 2014) and specifically the introduction of an eleventh category of priority need for rough sleeping and those at risk of sleeping rough, sees a sustainment of the “no one left out” approach adopted during the Covid pandemic and now firmly establishes the principle on a legal footing and as standard practice in Wales.</p> <p>As a result, more people, and particularly single people, will be owed accommodation duties, significantly increasing demands and cost on already stretched homeless accommodation. External factors associated with the cost-of-living crisis and housing market conditions are increasing the levels of homelessness and place more burden operationally and financially on the Council.</p> <p><b>Homelessness Presentations</b> Numbers of homeless presentations continues to increase. At the end of 2022/23 there were 1,598</p>

		<p>presentations to the homeless service a significant increase from the previous year.</p> <p>This trajectory has continued and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 there were 2005 presentations.</p> <p>Of those households who were identified as 'at risk of homelessness or homeless' and approached the Council for support a total of 1274 progressed to a homelessness assessment. This compares with 911 in the previous year which demonstrates a 39.8% increase in demand for service.</p> <p>There are ongoing concerns around homeless presentations because of landlords serving notice due to them ceasing their landlord functions and selling their assets. Some landlords advise that they no longer wish to rent as a result of Renting Homes (Wales) Act (RHW) implications, rising interest rates and uncertainty about property values.</p> <p>Flintshire's Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022 - 2026 is now in place.</p> <p>Regional Housing Support Grant (RHSG) meetings are held quarterly.</p> <p>Homelessness leads meetings are also held across North Wales. This allows for effective joint and partnership working.</p>
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		In the run up to full implementation of RWH act and specific 6-month notice period expiring June 2023 there was a significant increase in private sector notices which resulted in significant addition presentations to the Council.
Work with partners in Flintshire to prevent homelessness.	<p>Develop a Local Action Plan for homelessness to ensure local issues are addressed.</p> <p>Develop preventative measures by providing tenancy support and crisis management to enable the people to sustain their tenancies.</p>	<p>Flintshire’s Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been submitted to Welsh Government.</p> <p>We continue to work with partners and community services through the Flintshire support network.</p> <p>A recent Audit Wales review of homeless services in Flintshire cited particular strengths and positive feedback from partners during the review in regard to collaboration and multi-agency working.</p>

<b>Priority 2.2 To reduce the demand for temporary accommodation</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of homeless	Develop different models of delivery such as Housing First.	Every effort is made to reduce the need for homeless accommodation, however, as is the case across Wales, homelessness and demand for homeless accommodation continues to increase. Our focus is now on delivering better quality and effective homeless accommodation in the short to medium term with a longer term aspiration of reducing numbers of homeless

	<p>Develop a 'hub' to provide a range of services for the homeless including emergency beds and support services.</p> <p>Working closely with Housing Strategy and development partners to inform the delivery of flexible and suitable accommodation.</p>	<p>accommodation placements.</p> <p>Having initiated partnerships with Conway and Denbighshire County Councils to deliver a sub-regional housing first service we are now going out to tender for a specific FCC housing first service which will support our most complex residents.</p> <p>We continue to operate a range of services from Glanrafon homeless hub. We also now deliver a range of diversionary activities and housing related support services across our temporary and emergency portfolio settings.</p> <p>Significant challenges remain including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of 1 bed accommodation as demand remains high.</li> <li>• Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 (negative impacts in PRS).</li> <li>• Landlords exiting the PRS.</li> <li>• "No one left out" scheme.</li> <li>• Challenges in ensuring tenancies are sustained.</li> <li>• Challenges relating to recruitment and retention of staff.</li> </ul> <p>Further feasibility work remains underway but no further specific sites have been identified.</p>
Increase	Undertake a review of the existing stock and	The Council are in the process of completing



<b>Priority 2.3 To provide the right type of support for the most vulnerable people</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
availability of Strategic Commissioning of support services	<p>explore options for increasing supply of move on accommodation</p> <p>Develop the Local Commissioning Plan incorporating the Regional Homelessness Strategy priorities to ensure a joined-up approach.</p> <p>Support the work of the Regional Collaborative Committee.</p> <p>Ensure commissioning priorities incorporate the necessary support required to sustain tenancies.</p>	<p>internal and external stock condition surveys for all HRA properties. This will inform our housing support grant funded services with a standstill budget for the last 3 years. We are now planning for 2024/25 and the 7.8% increase in appraisals based upon their condition, suitability and investment requirements</p> <p>stabilise service delivery and support Minister ambition of ensuring real living wage within the sector.</p> <p>Reviewing the social housing supply and stock profile is a key action within the Rapid Rehousing Transition plan</p> <p>No Regional Development Co-ordinator (RDC) has been in post for some months. The decision has now been made that Denbighshire County Council will host the RDC with funding from each of the 6 LAs. This post will work across the LAs lined in the transition plan.</p>

	<p>Commission support for priority groups: Youth homeless; Prison Leavers; Rough Sleepers; and Complex Needs.</p>	<p>to ensure regional working in line with the Rapid Rehousing Plan.</p> <p>Opportunities for regional working and collaboration will be identified and referenced within localised plans with delivery of shared activities for North Wales delivered through the Housing Support Regional Delivery Group.</p> <p>As a result of the increasing numbers of people requiring care, support and accommodation, people with Learning Disabilities are often unable to be accommodated within their own communities close to family and friends. This leads to delays in seeking appropriate long-term housing for individuals and causes increased emergency admissions to residential care homes or inappropriate placements often some distance away from home.</p> <p>In 2018 all six Local Authorities and BCUHB developed a North Wales Learning Disability Strategy which includes the aim to reduce the number of people placed out of their area because of a lack of suitable placements locally and for more people with learning disabilities to have choice and control over where they live.</p> <p>The North Wales Together (NWT) programme has been working for some years to scope, promote and, where appropriate, support the development of sufficient tenancy based supported living resources to meet the growing</p>
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		<p>need. As part of this work, NWT has identified the need for supported housing in the Flintshire area. North Wales Together has collated numbers (May 2023) of individuals in need of accommodation between now and 2026 across each North Wales County.</p> <p>Current need is made up of several areas of pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people coming through transition, many with complex needs.</li> <li>• Individuals living with older carers whose placements come about suddenly due to a carer's inability to continue caring.</li> <li>• Individuals living in residential placements out of county who were placed there due to a lack of suitable accommodation at the time of placement.</li> <li>• Individuals living with families who have reached the point of long-term accommodation planning.</li> </ul> <p>In total, Flintshire has 1002 people with LD living within the county. That is the highest number across the North Wales region.</p> <p>Flintshire currently has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56 individuals who are at high risk of needing supported living accommodation within the next 4 years.</li> <li>• 15 adults noted as having priority accommodation needs.</li> <li>• 55 out of county residential placements, 7</li> </ul>
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		<p>of whom wish to move closer to home. This number is comparatively higher than neighbouring counties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 people with LD living at home with elderly carers and likely to need supported accommodation in future years.</li> <li>• 18 young people identified as needing accommodation or at high risk of breakdown between now and 2027.</li> </ul>
<p>Working with partners and other teams in the Council to ensure available support.</p>	<p>Working with key stakeholders e.g., health to provide support packages at an early stage through joint protocols.</p> <p>Working with Social Services and health colleagues to ensure supported living.</p> <p>Working with strategic delivery partners to ensure capacity and scale of support is available to avoid unacceptable delays in provision for the individual.</p>	<p>The Ending Homelessness Board has been established with the delivery group focusing on partnership working. This will provide further opportunities to engage social care and health colleagues to ensure pathways to support and access to specialist services when required.</p>

<b>Priority 2.4 To provide a range of financial and social support</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>Ensuring a range of financial products to support people to access and remain in their home</p>	<p>Promote and develop affordable ownership products including Shared Equity; Homebuy and Rent to Own.</p>	<p>Affordable ownership products are provided via section 106 planning contributions and in partnership with RSLs on suitable developments.</p> <p>Affordable ownership properties are marketed via Tai Teg when available for application.</p> <p>As previously referenced above a range of</p>

	<p>Promote private rent support through the BOND.</p> <p>Develop access to affordable starter furnishing packages.</p> <p>Provide financial management advice and access to financial products with the aim of reducing the risk of rent arrears / eviction.</p>	<p>prevention activities have been developed and will continue to be explored to help people to avoid homelessness. If, despite intervention, homelessness does occur support is available to help secure new homes within the private sector in particular.</p> <p>Following discussions with WG the Bond scheme for Flintshire has been disbanded in 23/24 and our focus is now on supporting access to the PRS through spend to save and discretionary homelessness funding. This is in direct response to feedback from landlords.</p> <p>Residents who are not eligible for a Discretionary Assistance Fund grant (DAF) can access alternative funding through charitable sector or other forms of discretionary funding accessed through the council. This ensures people can exit homeless accommodation promptly and promotes a positive start in their new home.</p> <p>Various Welsh Government funding has enabled the homeless service to provide assistance such as Homestarter packs.</p> <p>The Housing Support Gateway continues to receive a high number of referrals who access needs and signpost to a wide range of commissioned services delivered by and on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>Generic and financial housing support services</p>
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		<p>can be accessed via the Housing Support Gateway. Referrals to the service may be made by social workers, health professionals, or any other professional from agencies (with permission of the individual/s) in addition to self-referrals.</p>
<p>Develop a range of innovative support to address key barriers</p>	<p>Explore a range of initiatives, based on best practice, which will provide cost benefits in the medium term to the public finances. For example, a furniture rental social enterprise.</p>	<p>Further work is required through the development of the Local Action plan for the Housing Support Programme Strategy.</p> <p>During the pandemic excellent joint working was achieved with Flintshire Furniture Recycle Project to enable the provision of fully furnished temporary accommodation units when capacity within homeless accommodation has grown significantly.</p> <p>We continue to deliver a wide range of housing related support services to respond to local needs although this has been a challenge with 3 years of standstill budget for HSG grant.</p> <p>The recent announcement of a 7.8% uplift in HSG for 24/25 is welcomed. However, this funding will only meet and respond to the current financial pressures within the sector and is unlikely to lead to significant increase in service capacity or new services.</p>

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

Action	Task	Progress
Review the SARTH to understand the housing needs of older people in social housing	<p>Develop a plan with our Housing Association partners to address the needs of older people on SARTH.</p> <p>Develop an understanding of demand for adaptations to enable future planning of resources.</p> <p>Links with Social Services; Residential Care homes; Extra Care and supported housing to scope out move on options.</p>	<p>Further work is required with partners to develop localised plans and strategies to meet the needs of older people within social housing across Flintshire.</p> <p>FCC's sheltered housing review will be a significant piece of work in regard to this. The Council are in the process of completing internal and external stock condition surveys for all HRA properties. This will inform our investment programmes and will also identify any properties/assets that require further option appraisals based upon their condition, suitability and investment requirements.</p> <p>This work has yet to be completed and was due to be raised at the SARTH operational meeting.</p>
Develop an understanding of the wider housing requirements for older people	<p>Consult with interest groups to identify key issues, barriers and potential opportunities for an action plan.</p> <p>Review tenancy support and the potential of incentives to encourage downsizing where appropriate.</p>	<p>Further work required with partners.</p> <p>As referenced earlier the Council are in the process of completing internal and external stock condition surveys for all HRA properties. Once the internal and external stock condition surveys for all HRA properties and a full analysis of the stock has been undertaken then further consultations will take place with interest groups</p>

				to identify key issues, barriers and potential opportunities for an action plan.
<b>Output</b>		<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead organisation/s</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Reduce the number of households in the private sector in Flintshire who are in fuel poverty from 10.1% to 8% during the period of the strategy		March 2024	Flintshire County Council	This may include a review of tenancy support and improvements are being made to fuel poor homes, including the installation of fuel-efficient heating systems and improvements to household EPC ratings.
<b>Priority 3: Improve the quality and sustainability of homes</b>				Households are provided with energy efficiency advice and referrals to other support agencies as needed.
				<p>The Domestic Energy Efficiency Team have continued to support the general public within Flintshire and have supported 763 residents from both the private and public sector between October 2023 to April 2024, some of whom would be classed as being vulnerable and in the most need of assistance to help tackle fuel poverty.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the work of the Council and partner agencies, fuel poverty is expected to continue to rise in response to the unprecedented energy costs being experienced during the current energy crisis.</p>



			<p>A stock condition survey will need to be completed to determine the County's fuel poverty ratio; however, this is unlikely to provide a true reflection of the work carried out and may only be of limited use until the current energy crisis stabilises.</p>
<p>Complete the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme by 100%</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Flintshire County Council and RSL Partners</p>	<p>The updated WHQS 2023 standard published in April 2024 contains the following material changes to the standard published in October 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full guidance on Balancing Carbon Emissions across a Housing Portfolio</li> <li>• Full guidance on Whole Stock Assessments and Target Energy Pathway</li> </ul>
			<p>For social landlords to meet the standard, homes must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a good state of repair</li> <li>• Safe and secure</li> <li>• Affordable to heat and have minimal environmental impact</li> <li>• Fitted with an up-to-date kitchen and utility area</li> <li>• Fitted with an up-to-date bathroom</li> <li>• Comfortable and promotes wellbeing</li> <li>• A suitable garden; and have</li> <li>• Attractive outside space.</li> </ul> <p>The Council previously achieved WHQS</p>

		<p>compliance in December 2021 and are now in the process or working towards complying with the new WHQS 2023.</p> <p>We understand that RSL's will also working towards complying with the new WHQS 2023.</p> <p>Adra achieved 100% compliance with WHQS (2008) in March 2015, and are now working on estimating the cost of achieving WHQS 2023 and the level of GAP funding required.</p> <p>Wales &amp; West reported the following.</p> <p>Major Works started between 01.04.23 – 01.04.24 including PAG's.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Bathrooms</td> <td>23 properties</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EWI, Solar &amp; Battery</td> <td>1 scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fencing</td> <td>2 schemes &amp; 1 properties</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sink hole repairs</td> <td>1 property</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Path repairs</td> <td>1 Scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PAGS (£45K)</td> <td>13 properties</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Boiler upgrades</td> <td>14 properties</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cyclical decoration</td> <td>1 Scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kitchen</td> <td>10 properties</td> </tr> </table>	Bathrooms	23 properties	EWI, Solar & Battery	1 scheme	Fencing	2 schemes & 1 properties	Sink hole repairs	1 property	Path repairs	1 Scheme	PAGS (£45K)	13 properties	Boiler upgrades	14 properties	Cyclical decoration	1 Scheme	Kitchen	10 properties
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			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Replacement</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roof Replacement</td> <td>1 property</td> </tr> </table> <p>10 Acceptable fails in the Flintshire area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 x RdSAP &lt;65.</li> <li>• 1 x Kitchen floor covering.</li> <li>• 4 x Level access to garden.</li> <li>• 2 x bathroom extract fan.</li> </ul> <p>Grwp Cynefin (GC) advised 100% of homes have passed the WHQS subject to acceptable fails. We are currently working as per GC Corporate Plan 2019/24 and our investment programme which aims to reduce its number of acceptable fails to ensure tenants live in good quality affordable homes. We are producing a new corporate plan in conjunction with the Strategic Asset management plan and 30 year business plan and will share these completed documents with all of our partners when complete.</p> <p>Clwyd Alyn are currently reviewing and putting plans in place to deliver.</p>	Replacement		Roof Replacement	1 property
Replacement							
Roof Replacement	1 property						

Priority 3.1 Maximising energy efficiency standards and delivery methods		
Action	Task	Progress
Private sector renewal energy loans	Maximise the use of the loan products aimed at owner occupiers to bring properties up to a good standard by making them energy	The private sector loans utilise Welsh Government funding to provide zero percent interest loan for owner occupiers to improve

	efficient and removing hazards.	their properties. The funding has been available to 36 properties since October 2021 and the Council is exploring the option of increasing the amount of Welsh Government funding to offer more loans to the public improving their homes.
Gas infill programme for social housing properties that are off-gas	Working with Wales and West Utilities to extend the gas network to bring more convenient and cost-effective heating to residents across all tenures.	<p>The Domestic Energy Efficiency Team advised last year that they currently provide the Housing Asset Service with various support services including but not limited to, Project Management, Solar PV installations, Planned Heating and Renewable installations and EPC surveys for all HRA properties.</p> <p>The Domestic Energy Efficiency Project Team no longer supports a gas infill programme, however Flintshire Council does have a contract with Wales and West Utilities to administer the distribution of gas connection vouchers, aimed at supporting households without a gas mains connection.</p> <p>Between April 2023 and March 2024, the scheme provided 23 gas vouchers to individual households</p>
Retro fit of energy efficiency measures for vulnerable residents in all tenures	Identify the strategic sites within communities that need redevelopment.	As referenced above the Domestic Energy Efficiency Team have previously advised that currently it provides the Housing Asset Service with various support services including but not limited to, Project Management, Solar PV installations, Planned Heating and Renewable installations and

		<p>EPC surveys for all HRA properties.</p> <p>The Domestic Energy Efficiency Project Team utilise Flintshire Councils energy crisis fund and work in partnership with utility companies to maximise household benefits from the installation of new, efficient heating systems, insulation, and the use of renewable energy. Funding streams, such as Eco4, will help ensure that Flintshire Council is contributing towards a reduction in fuel poverty and the carbon footprint across the county</p>
<p>Deliver the Warm Homes Fund</p>	<p>The Council has secured £3m to tackle fuel poverty in Flintshire by improving efficiency through for example: fitting new heating systems or accessing the gas network.</p>	<p>The Warm Homes Fund programme was drawn to a successful conclusion in 2021 having supported 658 households.</p> <p>A total of 1224 households have been supported and around 3672 residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% supporting those in Housing Association properties.</li> <li>• 29% in Flintshire owned properties.</li> <li>• The remaining 46% private rented and owner occupied.</li> <li>• 3328 interventions were provided looking at affordable warmth, energy advice and support, income maximisation and crisis support, looking at emergency gas and electric top ups, food support, oil and support facilitating three-way phone calls with energy providers to ensure that their</li> </ul>

		<p>gas and electric is affordable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings of around £232,400 giving on average £189.87 per household</li> <li>• 74% saw an improvement of their personal wellbeing.</li> <li>• 79% saw an improvement in their anxiety.</li> </ul> <p>The Domestic Energy Efficiency Team have continued to support the general public within Flintshire and have supported 763 residents from both the private and public sector between October 2023 to April 2024, some of whom would be classed as being vulnerable and in the most need of assistance to help tackle fuel poverty.</p>
Arbed for Wales programme	A spatially targeted WG programme focusing on windows and doors and external wall insulation, to address fuel poverty in the private sector.	The ARBED programme concluded in 2021.

<b>Priority 3.2 Improving the quality and standard of accommodation in the private sector</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Healthy Homes and Healthy People – 2025 project bringing together a voluntary group of concerned people and organisations working	Encourage different teams to think more broadly when undertaking their daily roles to improve the homes of people in the private sector.	Healthy Homes, Healthy People is funded by Wales & West Utilities and is delivered in partnership with Community Energy Plus and National Energy Action. They work in conjunction with a number of agencies and organisations including Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Care & Repair, local authorities and a

with a shared purpose of ending avoidable health inequality in North Wales		range of national and local charities.  Healthy Homes, Healthy People is open to everyone, but some of the services that they refer to have their own eligibility criteria. These criteria usually relate to whether someone is on a low income, on certain means-tested benefits and / or have health conditions.
Rent Smart Wales	Work with Landlords to promote Rent Smart Wales and improve the standards of the private rented stock.	Currently homelessness and other officers liaise and provide signposting to Landlords.

<b>Priority 3.3 Completing the WHQS programme by 2020 across all social housing stock</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
The Council stock	Complete environmental improvements by 2020 and identify funding to undertake the external works.	The Council achieved WHQS compliance in December 2021.  As referenced earlier we are now in the process or working towards complying with the new WHQS 2023.
Housing Association partners' stock	Complete environmental improvements by 2020.	RSLs are expected to be working towards complying with the new WHQS 2023.

**Priority 3.4 Adopt a collaborative approach to preparing for the increase in demand for adaptations in properties to allow residents to remain in their home.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Set appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence	Establish a partnership which incorporates all partners with funding for adaptations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The Council's HRA budget;</li> <li>(ii) Private sector Disabilities Funding Grant;</li> <li>(iii) Care and Repair, ENABLE for minor and major adaptations for those in the private sector;</li> <li>(iv) Housing Associations can access Physical Adaptation Grants for existing tenants.</li> </ul>	In March 2023 Local authority adaptations team and Private sector Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) team amalgamated. Unfortunately, both surveyors who joined the team last year went on long term sick. In addition, the private sector DFG team changed to a new system, so this delayed aligning procedures although this has now commenced.  It will take time to get a good understanding of demand and there are changes to which need further review, for example, it has only been of recent that consideration would be given to extensions on council properties.
Improve the intelligence on the demand for adaptations	Pull together a range of data from all partners to establish a better understanding of future demand.	
Link the systems for managing and delivering adaptations	Collaboratively develop adapted housing policies for all partners as part of the Specialist Housing Group.  Review service standards for adaptations in line with Welsh Government. Consider how the EHRC toolkit can be utilised in Flintshire.	

<b>Priority 3.5 Improve the standard of new build properties built by the Council and Housing Associations</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Utilising the Flintshire House Standards	Continually review and evaluate the standards to ensure they are relevant and contribute to the wider energy efficiency	Flintshire housing standards have been superseded by the Welsh Development Quality Requirements 2021 (WDQR). All



	<p>agenda.</p> <p>Consider introducing further requirements such as solar panels / PVs, electric car charging points.</p>	<p>future affordable housing schemes have to meet this standard. The standards have set space requirements and include higher energy efficiency measures moving towards carbon zero.</p> <p>As referenced earlier the WG has issued new guidance on new WHQS standards in April 2024.</p>
Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements (DQR)	<p>Ensure a consistent standard of quality of internal layout is achieved across a range of standard house types that are as flexible as possible to cater for most resident's needs.</p>	<p>See above</p>
Deliver different construction methods	<p>Deliver new builds using sustainable materials including timber frame / SIPs, and improve SAP ratings as part of SHARP</p> <p>Develop procurement opportunities through collaboration with Housing Association partners to deliver new construction methods.</p> <p>Develop using off site manufacturing to reduce waste and quicker construction methods.</p>	<p>Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) is a priority and featured within WDQR 2021. Therefore, all new affordable housing schemes will be built using MMC and utilising construction methods that minimise environmental impact.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Homelessness phase 2 capital funding helped to deliver 6 units for homeless households. These have been built using MMC (Park Lane x 4 units and Duke Street x 2 units).</p>



**Appendix Updated Summary of expected Programme Development/Delivery Plan 2023/ 2024**

Provider	site	To be determined	1 bed Apt	2 bed Apt	1 bed bungalow	2 bed bungalow	2 bed bungalow adapted	3 bed bungalow	3 bed adapted House	3 bed bungalow adapted	2 bed house	3 bed house	4 bed house	supported housing	Total Units
Clwyd Alyn	66a Mold Road, Mynydd Isa		4			2					1	24	25		56
Clwyd Alyn	Northern Gateway Strategic Site Deeside	21	6	18		5					10	34	6		100
Clwyd Alyn	Princess Avenue, Buckley		8	2									2		12
Clwyd Alyn	Well Street, Buckley Scheme being worked on	56													56
Clwyd Alyn	Wrexham Road, Abermorddu		18								24	22	6		70
Clwyd Alyn	Dee Gardens											4	2		6
First Choice HA	17 Elm Road, Queensferry								1						1
First Choice HA	FCHA 2180 Specialist Housing Provision allocated as 2 bed bungalow conf awaited						1								1
First Choice HA	Westhaven, Holywell Rd, Ewloe													3	3
Flintshire	Alltami Road, Buckley			4							6	4			14
Flintshire	Alyn Road, Buckley										4				4
Flintshire	Borough Grove, Flint										4				4
Flintshire	Canton Depot, Bagillt, orientation to be revisited		14	14							6	17			51
Flintshire	Duke Street, Homeless provision													2	2
Flintshire	Ffordd Hiraethog, Mostyn		4	6											10
Flintshire	Ffordd Llanarth, Connahs Quay		4	4							7	2	3		20
Flintshire	Hebron, Mostyn										4				4
Flintshire	High Steet, Connahs Quay (Old Music Shop)			6											6
Flintshire	Park Lane Homeless Provision													4	4
Flintshire	Penyfford School										12	8			20
Flintshire	School Lane, Greenfield										2	1			3
Flintshire	Station Road, Queensferry		4												4
Flintshire	Ty Mair, Mold		10	10	1	2					6	7			36
Flintshire	Wirral View, Hawarden										4				4
Flintshire	39 Wern Ucha buy back											1			1
Grwp Cynefin	Mortgage Rescue (2-addresses to be advised)	2													2
Grwp Cynefin	Homebuy 4 Bramley Way, Flintshire										1				1
Grwp Cynefin	15 Lllys Brenig - Homebuy								1						1
Grwp Cynefin	Rhewl Fawr, Penyffordd Holywell (phase 3)										6	2			8
Wales & West	Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley		7	2											9
Wales & West	New Inn, Station Road										8				8
Wales & West	Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley		7	2											9
<b>Totals</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>530</b>

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Provider	Site/programme	Need Established	Risk	WMT	Total Units	Last reviewed	PDP	Desk top Feasibility	Viability	LDP	Still viable? SVM?	Within Budget	Funding Stream	Phosphates?	Pre App	SABS	Planning	Tender	Estimated start	Contractor Appointed	Estimated completion date	Mitigating Actions as per notes	Timescales for remediation of risk	Risk Action owners	link to Corp risk risger NR05/NR06
Clwyd Alyn	66a Mold Road, Mynydd Isa	Y	Green	Mold &	56	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SHG	24.11.2	Y	Y	Y	N	10/08/2023	Y	30/03/2024	WG agreed additional fundin		Clwyd Alyn and Pl	RHC12
Clwyd Alyn	Older Persons/Elderly care provision Buckley	Y	Red	Mold &	60	27/03/2024	Y	Y	R	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	Y	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Reserve	Jun-24	Clwyd Alyn/ Plann	RHC11
Clwyd Alyn	LD bungalows Buckley (Older Persons/Elderly care p	Y	Red	Mold &	13	27/03/2024	Y	Y	R	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	Y	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Reserve	Jun-24	Clwyd Alyn/ Plann	RHC11
Clwyd Alyn	Northern Gateway Strategic Site Deeside	Y	Green	Garder	100	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SHG	N	Y	Y	Y	N	TBC	Y	TBC	WG agreed additional fundin		Clwyd Alyn	RHC12
Clwyd Alyn	Princess Avenue, Buckley	Y	Green	Mold &	12	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SHG	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	31/03/2022	Y	27/03/2024				RHC12
Clwyd Alyn	Well Street, Buckley	Y	Amber	Mold &	56	27/03/2024	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	TBC	N	TBC	Outline plann	Jun-24	Clwyd Alyn/Plann	RHC11
Clwyd Alyn	Wrexham road, Abermorddu	Y	Amber	South	70	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	Y	TBC	£50k allocated	Jun-24	Clwyd Alyn	RCH11
First Choice HA	Westhaven, Holywell Rd, Ewloe	Y	Green	Mold &	3	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SHG	N	N	Y	N	N	15/09/2022	N	30/03/2024				RHC12
Flintshire	Alltami Road, Buckley	Y	Amber	Mold &	14	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	Y	N	N	N	N	Mar-24	N	Mar-25	Assess Capac	Sep-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Alyn Road, Buckley	Y	Amber	Mold &	4	27/03/2024	Y	N	N	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	N	N	N	Mar-24	N	Mar-25	Assess Capac	Sep-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Borough Grove, Flint	Y	Amber	Flint &	4	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	N	N	N	N	Mar-24	N	Mar-25	Asbestos rem	Sep-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Canton Depot, Bagillt	Y	Red	Flint &	51	27/03/2024	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	N	N	N	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	review draina	Jun-24	Andy Roberts/Pau	RHC11
Flintshire	Ffordd Llanarth, Connahs Quay	Y	Amber	Connal	20	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	N	N	N	N	Apr-24	N	Oct-25	Lovelock Mitc	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Hebron, Mostyn	Y	Amber	Flint &	4	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	N	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Planning app	Sep-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	High Steet, Connahs Quay (Old Music Shop)	Y	Red	Connal	6	27/03/3024	Y	TBC	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	N	Y	N	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Housing Strate	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Penyfford School	Y	Amber	Mold &	20	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	TBC	N	N	2024/2025	N	TBC	Housing Strate	Sep-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	School Lane, Greenfield	Y	Amber	Flint &	3	27/03/2004	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	31.10.23 chief	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Station Road, Queensferry	Y	Amber	Connal	4	27/03/2024	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	N	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Best layout be	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Ty Mair, Mold	Y	Amber	Mold &	36	27/03/2024	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	meeting to sig	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Flintshire	Wirral View, Hawarden	Y	Amber	Mold &	4	27/03/2024	Y	Y	TBC	Y	TBC	TBC	SHG	TBC	N	TBC	N	N	TBC	N	TBC	Technical revi	Jun-24	Dev Team	RHC11
Grwp Cynefin	Mortgage Rescue (2-addresses to be advised)	Y	Amber	N/A	2	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	N	N	N	N	TBC	N/A	TBC	Each request	N/A	Tai Teg	N/A
Wales & West	Land at Brunswick Road, Buckley	Y	Green	Mold &	9	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SHG	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	01/06/2022	Y	31/03/2025	On site		Wales & West	RHC12
Wales & West	New Inn, Sandycroft	Y	Green	Garder	8	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SHG	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	29/08/2023	Y	01/07/2024	On site		Wales & West	RHC11
Wales & West	Wern Farm, Bagillt	Y	Red	Flint &	45	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	Y	N	N	N	30/06/2024	N	30/06/2026	Reserve	Jun-24	Wales & West/Pla	RHC11
First Choice HA	FCHA 2289 1 bed Copper Beech Close	Y	Amber	Connal	1	27/03/2024	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHG	N	N	N	N/A	N	TBC	N	TBC	complete sale	Jun-24	FCHA	RHC11
NWHA	Former Spectrum Garden Centre, Mold Road, Cefn y	Y	Amber	South	30	27/03/2024	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	TBC	SHg	TBC	TBC	TBC	Y	N	TBC		TBC	Reserve	Jun-24	NWHA	RHC11

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## INFORMAL CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	'Together we can' Community resilience and self-reliance
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the Audit Wales report “‘Together we can’ Community resilience and self-reliance”, which highlights how building community resilience and self-reliance may help reduce reliance on local authority services in future, if local authorities shift from being a ‘direct provider’ to ‘enabler’.

‘Together we can’ is the third report published by Audit Wales in a series focused on poverty and what local government is doing to tackle it.

The report also highlights the recommendations and expectations of Audit Wales in terms of local authorities next steps.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations of the Audit Wales “‘Together we can’ Community resilience and self-reliance” report.
2	Cabinet to note the recommended response in relation to Audit Wales recommendations and support this being reported to appropriate Committees in June 2024.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE AUDIT WALES “TOGETHER WE CAN’ COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE” REPORT</b>
1.01	<p><b>Introduction and overview</b></p> <p>Audit Wales have undertaken a programme of work focused on poverty and how local government is tackling it.</p> <p>“Together we can’ Community resilience and self-reliance” is the third and final report published by Audit Wales in this programme of work. The first report established a baseline of poverty as the major challenge across all levels of government in Wales. The second report explored the use of social enterprises as a means to help deliver more and reduce demand.</p>
1.02	<p>Published in January 2023, the ‘Together we can’ report captures Audit Wales review of how local authorities are helping communities to thrive independently. It explores the priority given to community resilience in local plans and how local authorities are equipping people to be less reliant on public services.</p>
1.03	<p>The report recognises the challenges faced by the public sector over recent years, including austerity and the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst there is appreciation of the innovation and creativity of the sector in response, the current cost of living crisis is highlighted as likely to raise demand for services, with limited capacity and opportunities for further efficiencies within local government to be able to respond to those most in need.</p>
1.04	<p>The ‘Together we can’ report suggests that there is a growing interest in local authorities to encourage community resilience, whereby residents are equipped to do more for themselves to reduce reliance on public services.</p> <p>This concept has been around for some time in relation to responses to local emergencies, i.e., flooding, but Audit Wales highlight that it has now begun to feature in corporate plans and strategies more broadly in terms of equipping people to be able to manage the problems they are facing.</p>
1.05	<p>The key findings are summarised in the Audit Wales report and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities face challenging times and have found it difficult to support greater community resilience and self-reliance.</li> <li>• The focus on community resilience in response to emergencies misses opportunities for ‘broader impact’.</li> <li>• Whilst community resilience is a common priority for local authorities in Wales it is poorly defined and narrowly focused.</li> <li>• Growth in areas such as volunteering, Community Asset Transfers, community hubs, and community co-ordinators are cited as demonstrating the commitment of local authorities to transform how they work.</li> <li>• Barriers include capacity, resources and skills shortage.</li> <li>• The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the significant amount of community goodwill that can be built upon.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local authorities need to seize the opportunity to shift to being an 'enabler' rather than 'provider'.</li> </ul>
1.06	<p><b>Further information</b></p> <p>Audit Wales suggest that through supporting communities to be more self-reliant local authorities can change, or reduce, what they do and provide. However, they advise that for transformation to be successful, it will require local authority leadership.</p> <p>The report suggests that there is a fundamental shift required, from local authorities being 'direct providers' to becoming 'enablers'.</p>
1.07	<p>Audit Wales make the case for local authorities to clearly define and have a shared understanding of community resilience and self-reliance. Their findings suggest this is lacking despite 19 of the 22 local authorities having well-being objectives linked to promoting community resilience.</p>
1.08	<p>The 'Together we can' report indicates that to date local authorities have mainly supported self-reliance through one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteering</li> <li>Empowering communities</li> <li>Community Asset Transfers</li> <li>Promoting access to community-based services</li> </ul> <p>The report provides examples from across Wales in these four areas. We know that there are some good examples of practice within Flintshire and the Council is cited in the Audit Wales report in terms of the positive response to action taken to address the shortages in social care.</p>
1.09	<p>The barriers to increasing self-reliance and greater community resilience were identified in the report as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of resources, skills, and capacity to lead this work.</li> <li>Unable to redirect resources.</li> <li>Lack of trust and perceived lack of appetite in local communities.</li> <li>Delivery culture of councils.</li> <li>Limitations in collaborative or joined up working.</li> <li>No strategic vision.</li> <li>Lack of understanding of needs.</li> </ul>
1.10	<p>Audit Wales highlight an opportunity following the pandemic, which demonstrates that communities can take action and be less reliant, with signs of a 'resurgence in community activism' but to sustain this requires a change in how local authorities work.</p>
1.11	<p>In the report, Audit Wales predict that local authorities will deliver less in future and will look very different in years to come.</p> <p>The report identifies some key approaches that local authorities are seeking to reduce demand through building community resilience and self-reliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a clear future vision.</li> <li>Having two-way conversations – what will change look and feel like?</li> <li>Council Members revitalised as community champions.</li> <li>Reconsidering work of council employees.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of different solutions being needed in different places.</li> <li>• Retaining wealth locally and ensuring it works for the community.</li> </ul> <p>Further detail and examples of all these approaches are provided in the report.</p>
1.12	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>In the recommendations section, Audit Wales highlight that they expect each local authority to consider the findings of the review and the recommendations contained within the ‘Together we can’ report.</p> <p>There is also an expectation that the Councils Governance and Audit Committee receives a copy of the Audit Wales report and monitors response to the recommendations made within it.</p>
1.13	<p>The recommendations made by Audit Wales in the ‘Together we can’ report include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local authorities need to have the right systems and arrangements in place. They should conduct a self-evaluation (one is provided by Audit Wales) to evaluate current practice, performance, etc.; identify where improvement is needed; and develop and implement an action plan to tackle any gaps identified or improvements required.</li> <li>2. The action plan developed following the self-evaluation should be formally approved, and there should be regular reporting and monitoring of performance to scrutiny committees, with flexibility to revise actions in light of evaluation and performance.</li> </ol>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Whilst in principle the recommendations made in the ‘Together we can’ report are desirable, implementation of the recommendations would require cross organisational work, with no dedicated resource or capacity within existing teams to oversee and co-ordinate. Although, it is acknowledged that community resilience sits under the Housing and Communities Portfolio in Flintshire.</p>
2.02	<p>Whilst there may be long-term benefits to all in supporting greater community resilience and self-reliance, it will not be easy to achieve and will require Council resource to drive and implement.</p>
2.03	<p>The report recognises the difficulties facing local authorities, some of which are struggling to maintain statutory services, and that switching resources from stretched services is not easy. However, Audit Wales argue that without investment on the ground to grow capacity and resilience, communities cannot respond.</p>
2.04	<p>The Audit Wales report promotes local authorities building community resilience and self-reliance to reduce demand on local authorities and help address the budgetary challenges. Yet there appears to be no cost benefit analysis to suggest that the examples provided in the report are supporting these outcomes. Indeed, the report recognises that for initiatives to be successful there is a need for ongoing local authority involvement.</p>

2.05	Local experience suggests that the examples provided by Audit Wales in the report are unlikely to pay back the time and investment required to implement, let alone provide ongoing savings. So, whilst building community resilience to support well-being and social capital may be desirable, local experience would suggest framing it as a tool to reduce demand and save costs for local authorities is perhaps misleading.
2.06	<p>Therefore, the recommendations made by Audit Wales have been considered. Whilst these are acknowledged and accepted in principle (that is the right arrangements and processes in place may help strengthen community resilience and self-reliance) local experience is that some of the activities Audit Wales refer to do not achieve the outcomes Audit Wales suggest.</p> <p>In addition, the Council cannot achieve the output of the recommendations. Completion of a self-assessment and subsequent action plan is not achievable in the current climate given the financial constraints on the Council and the lack of available capacity/resource to undertake such a cross organisational piece of work, especially if it is unlikely to yield the outcomes suggested.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has not been completed as this report is to provide an overview of the Audit Wales 'Together we can' report.
3.02	The Council must be content with the risk of not undertaking the recommendations and the Council's Governance and Audit Committee must be satisfied with the response in 2.06.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<p>This report will be presented to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014,</li> <li>• Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024, and</li> <li>• Governance and Audit Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</li> </ul>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Not applicable

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	'Together we can' Community resilience and self-reliance, published by Audit Wales in January 2023 and available online:

	<p><a href="https://www.audit.wales/publication/together-we-can-community-resilience-and-self-reliance">https://www.audit.wales/publication/together-we-can-community-resilience-and-self-reliance</a></p> <p>The material is acknowledged as the Auditor General for Wales copyright.</p>
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7.00 CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS	
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Kelly Oldham-Jones – Strategic Executive Officer Jen Griffiths – Senior Manager, Housing and Communities Niall Waller – Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702143 / 01352 702929 / 01352 702137 Cymraeg/Welsh: 01267 224923</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:kelly.oldham-jones@flintshire.gov.uk">kelly.oldham-jones@flintshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">Jen.Griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk">niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

8.00 GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
	<p><b>Auditor General for Wales:</b> Appointed by the Queen and independent of government the Auditor General for Wales is the statutory external auditor of most of the Welsh public sector.</p> <p><b>Audit Wales:</b> refers to the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office.</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office:</b> works to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.</p>



## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes audit was undertaken to help fulfil the Auditor General's duties under Section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This was a national study and Audit Wales undertook this work at Flintshire County Council during July and September 2023 and report was issued in December 2023.

The audit sought to:

- Gain assurance that the performance information the Council provides to senior officers and elected members enables them to understand the service user perspective and the outcome of its activities;
- Gain assurance that this information forms part of the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources and its application of the sustainable development principle; and
- Identify opportunities for the Council to strengthen its arrangements.

No formal recommendations were identified and three recommendations for improvement have arisen from this audit, with the Council providing a planned action in response to the recommendations for improvement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet endorses the Council's planned action in response to the recommendations for improvement.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION: SERVICE USER PERSPECTIVE AND OUTCOMES REPORT</b>
1.01	<p>The scope of the audit focused on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspective and outcomes, and how this information is used. Audit Wales did not undertake a full review of the Council’s performance management arrangements or an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects. Neither did the review focus on engagement with service users on specific service changes or the development of policies and strategies.</p>
1.02	<p>The scope of the audit was to answer the question ‘Does the Council’s performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?’</p> <p>This was done by exploring the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the perspective of service users?</li> <li>• Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the outcomes of the Council’s activities?</li> <li>• Does the Council have robust arrangements to ensure that the data provided is accurate?</li> <li>• Does the Council use the information to help it achieve its outcomes?</li> <li>• Does the Council review the effectiveness of its arrangements?</li> </ul>
1.03	<p>Audit Wales focused on the Council’s key performance reporting mechanisms:</p> <p>The Council’s Cabinet, Chief Officer Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive six monthly performance reports that include details of service performance, progress towards wellbeing objectives and financial monitoring information. These forums also receive various annual performance reports. These include the Council’s Annual Self-assessment, complaints report and the Director of Social Services’ report.</p>
1.04	<p>Audit Wales found that limited performance information is provided to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council’s activities and proposed three recommendations for improvement.</p>
1.05	<p>The three recommendations for the Council following the audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1: Information on the perspective of the service user The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.</li> <li>• Recommendation 2: Outcomes information The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 3: Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>The Council's response to the Audit Wales report and the three recommendations is attached at Appendix C (Organisational Response Form).</p> <p>Additionally, Flintshire County Council also asked Audit Wales if they could identify another Council to liaise with for best practice or provide examples of what this looked like and Audit Wales are currently reaching out to England for this.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications to Recommendations 1 and 2, however, it has been identified that for Recommendation 3, arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data beyond existing arrangements would require additional capacity and resources that the present financial environment would not allow.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>		
3.01	<p>An Impact Assessment is not required as this report is summarising the work already completed by Audit Wales when undertaken their audit. Findings from the Audit have been risk managed and considered when providing a response to the three recommendations and will be monitored ongoing.</p> <p>It has been identified for Recommendation 3, that it is the responsibility of service area to review the accuracy of their data and the information it provides to senior leaders. Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data beyond existing arrangements would require additional capacity that the present financial environment would not allow.</p> <p>All audits, regulatory and inspection work carried out by Audit Wales, including this report considers the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development Principle and the Well-being Goals as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</li> </ul> <p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Long-term</td> <td>The development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance that services are inclusive for all. Strengthening and evaluating the Council is delivering its objective and the intended outcomes will deliver, short, medium and</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	The development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance that services are inclusive for all. Strengthening and evaluating the Council is delivering its objective and the intended outcomes will deliver, short, medium and
Long-term	The development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance that services are inclusive for all. Strengthening and evaluating the Council is delivering its objective and the intended outcomes will deliver, short, medium and		

	long-term benefit to our citizens and communities.
Prevention	The development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance the opportunities for the Council to consider the needs of the citizens of Flintshire and undertake preventative measures.
Integration	Consultation and Engagement Strategy, and as part of the development of this strategy a key focus will be to consider the needs of citizens of Flintshire and how we gather and use this information and the Council's intended outcomes.
Collaboration	Portfolios already use the opportunity to work collaboratively (also share data and information), where possible. However, an opportunity to further improve collaboration will be through the development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy.
Involvement	The development of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance that services are involving the relevant persons, are inclusive for all and will help to shape services.
<b>Well-being Goals Impact</b>	
Prosperous Wales	To use current resources efficiently and proportionately.
Resilient Wales	Creating services that are prevention focused and support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change, using perspective of service users / citizens of Flintshire to inform decision making and supporting change.
Healthier Wales	Consultation and Engagement Strategy will further enhance that the Council considers and enables the citizens / service user of Flintshire to benefit future health.
More equal Wales	Services are delivered in a way that are inclusive for all. Consideration given to local and regional gaps in provision.
Cohesive Wales	Developing a Consultation and Engagement Strategy and using data to identify gaps for service improvement to ensure communities are well-connected.
Vibrant Wales	Developing a Consultation and Engagement Strategy and using data to



		identify gaps for service improvement to enhance a vibrant Wales.
	Globally responsible Wales	Actions proposed to the recommendations of the audit will support with future improvements to the well-being of the citizens of Flintshire.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<p>Audit Wales engaged with Cabinet Members, Senior Leaders and Officers as part of their audit.</p> <p>Governance and Audit Committee, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will receive this report.</p> <p>In response to the Recommendation 1, a key focus will be to develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy to strengthen how we consult and use this information.</p>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	<p>Appendix A: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes (Welsh)</p> <p>Appendix B: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes (English)</p> <p>Appendix C: Organisational Response Form</p>

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	A number of accessible background documents and information is available on Audit Wales' <a href="#">website</a> .

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Emma Heath (Strategic Performance Advisor)</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702 744</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:emma.heath@flintshire.gov.uk">emma.heath@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>Audit Wales:</b> Work to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.</p>

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## Defnyddio gwybodaeth am berfformiad: persbectif defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau– Cyngor Sir y Fflint

Blwyddyn archwilio: 2022-23

Dyddiad cyhoeddi: Rhagfyr 2023

Cyfeirnod: 3976A2023

Paratowyd y ddogfen hon fel rhan o waith a gyflawnir yn unol â swyddogaethau statudol.

Mewn achos o dderbyn cais am wybodaeth y gall y ddogfen hon fod yn berthnasol iddo, tynnir sylw at y Cod Ymarfer a gyhoeddwyd o dan adran 45 o Ddeddf Rhyddid Gwybodaeth 2000. Mae'r cod adran 45 yn nodi'r arfer wrth ymdrin â cheisiadau a ddisgwylir gan awdurdodau cyhoeddus, gan gynnwys ymgynghori â thrydydd partïon perthnasol. O ran y ddogfen hon, mae Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru a Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru yn drydydd partïon perthnasol. Dylid anfon unrhyw ymholiadau ynghylch datgelu neu ailddednyddio'r ddogfen hon at Archwilio Cymru yn [swyddog.gwybodaeth@archwilio.cymru](mailto:swyddog.gwybodaeth@archwilio.cymru).

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Saesneg. This document is also available in English.

# Cynnwys

Crynodeb o'r adroddiad	4
Yr hyn yr edrychom arno – cwmpas yr archwiliad hwn	4
Pam yr ymgwymerwyd â'r archwiliad hwn	5
Trefniadau adrodd perfformiad y Cyngor	5
Yr hyn a ganfuom	5
Darperir gwybodaeth perfformiad gyfyngedig i uwch arweinwyr i'w galluogi i deall safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau y Cyngor gweithgareddau	
Argymhellion	7
Atodiadau	
Atodiad 1: Cwestiynau allweddol a'r hyn yr ydym yn chwilio amdano	9

## Crynodeb o'r adroddiad

- 1 Gwnaethom ystyried persbectif defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth a'r wybodaeth am ganlyniadau a ddarparwyd i uwch swyddogion ac uwch aelodau (uwch arweinwyr), a sut y defnyddir y wybodaeth hon.
- 2 Yn gyffredinol, canfuom fod gwybodaeth perfformiad gyfyngedig yn cael ei darparu i uwch arweinwyr yng Nghyngor Sir y Fflint (y Cyngor) i'w galluogi i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau ei weithgareddau.
- 3 Rydym wedi gwneud tri argymhelliad i gryfhau'r wybodaeth a roddir i uwch arweinwyr.

## Yr hyn yr edrychom arno – cwmpas yr archwiliad hwn

- 4 Gwnaethom ganolbwyntio ar y wybodaeth perfformiad a ddarparwyd i uwch swyddogion ac uwch aelodau (uwch arweinwyr) ynghylch persbectif a chanlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, a sut y defnyddir y wybodaeth hon. Ni wnaethom gynnal adolygiad llawn o drefniadau rheoli perfformiad y Cyngor nac adolygiad manwl o ansawdd y data y mae'r Cyngor yn ei gasglu. Ni chanolbwyntiodd yr adolygiad ychwaith ar ymgysylltu â defnyddwyr gwasanaeth ar newidiadau gwasanaeth penodol na datblygu polisiau a strategaethau.
- 5 Rydym wedi nodi ein cwestiynau archwilio a'n meini prawf archwilio yn **Atodiad 1**. Mae'r meini prawf archwilio yn y bôn yn nodi sut beth yw da a sut y byddem yn disgwyl dod o hyd iddo.
- 6 At ei gilydd, roeddem yn chwilio am rannu gwybodaeth perfformiad gydag uwch arweinwyr i'w helpu i ddeall pa mor dda y mae gwasanaethau a pholisiau yn diwallu anghenion defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a pha mor dda y maent yn helpu'r Cyngor i gyflawni'r canlyniadau y mae'n gweithio tuag atynt. Roeddem hefyd yn edrych i weld bod uwch arweinwyr yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth hon i fonitro cynnydd a gweithredu lle bo angen i wella canlyniadau.
- 7 Mae hyn yn rhan bwysig o drefniadau i sicrhau bod cynghorau'n sicrhau gwerth am arian wrth ddefnyddio eu hadnoddau. Mae hefyd yn ffordd bwysig y gall y Cyngor sicrhau ei hun ei fod yn gweithredu yn unol â'r ffordd 'ymgysylltiad' o weithio wrth gymryd camau i gyflawni ei amcanion llesiant. Heb y wybodaeth hon, mae'n anodd gweld sut y gall uwch arweinwyr ddeall a yw eu polisiau a'u gweithredoedd yn cael yr effaith a fwriedir a gwneud newidiadau lle nad ydynt.
- 8 Mae ein canfyddiadau'n seiliedig ar adolygiadau o ddogfennau a chyfweliadau gydag Aelod y Cabinet ac uwch swyddogion sy'n gyfrifol am drefniadau rheoli perfformiad y Cyngor. Mae'r dystiolaeth a ddefnyddiwyd gennym i lywio ein canfyddiadau wedi'i chyfyngu i'r ffynonellau hyn. Gwnaethom y gwaith hwn yn ystod mis Gorffennaf a mis Medi 2023.
- 9 Aethom ati i ateb y cwestiwn: **'A yw data perfformiad y Cyngor yn galluogi uwch arweinwyr i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau ei weithgareddau i reoli ei berfformiad yn effeithiol?'** Rydym wedi gwneud hyn drwy archwilio'r cwestiynau canlynol:
  - A yw'r wybodaeth perfformiad a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn cynnwys gwybodaeth briodol am safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth?
  - A yw'r wybodaeth perfformiad a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn cynnwys gwybodaeth briodol am ganlyniadau gweithgareddau'r Cyngor?

- A oes gan y Cyngor drefniadau cadarn i sicrhau bod y data a ddarperir yn gywir?
- A yw'r Cyngor yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth i'w helpu i gyflawni ei ganlyniadau?
- A yw'r Cyngor yn adolygu effeithiolrwydd ei drefniadau?

## Pam yr ymgwymerwyd â'r archwiliad hwn

- 10 Cynhaliwyd yr archwiliad hwn i helpu i gyflawni dyletswyddau'r Archwilydd Cyffredinol o dan adran 17 o Ddeddf Archwilio Cyhoeddus (Cymru) 2004 (Deddf 2004) ac adran 15 o Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015.
- 11 Rydym yn ceisio:
- cael sicrwydd bod y wybodaeth perfformiad y mae'r Cyngor yn ei darparu i uwch swyddogion ac aelodau etholedig yn eu galluogi i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniad ei weithgareddau;
  - cael sicrwydd bod y wybodaeth hon yn ffurfio rhan o drefniadau'r Cyngor i sicrhau gwerth am arian wrth ddefnyddio ei adnoddau a'i gymhwyso'r egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy; a
  - nodi cyfleoedd i'r Cyngor gryfhau ei drefniadau.

## Trefniadau adrodd perfformiad y Cyngor

- 12 Mae Cabinet, Tîm Prif Swyddogion y Cyngor a'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu yn derbyn adroddiadau perfformiad chwe mis sy'n cynnwys manylion perfformiad gwasanaethau, cynnydd tuag at amcanion llesiant a gwybodaeth fonitro ariannol. Mae'r fforymau hyn hefyd yn derbyn adroddiadau perfformiad blynyddol amrywiol. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys Hunanasesiad Blynyddol y Cyngor, adroddiad cwynion ac adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.
- 13 Canolbwyntiodd ein hadolygiad ar y mecanweithiau adrodd perfformiad allweddol hyn.

## Yr hyn a ganfuom

### Darperir gwybodaeth perfformiad gyfyngedig i uwch arweinwyr i'w galluogi i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau gweithgareddau'r Cyngor

#### **Darperir gwybodaeth perfformiad gyfyngedig i uwch arweinwyr i'w helpu i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth**

- 14 Nid yw'r Cyngor yn cynnwys gwybodaeth am safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth o fewn y wybodaeth perfformiad a gyflwynir i uwch arweinwyr fel mater o drefn. Gwelsom rai enghreifftiau cyfyngedig lle mae uwch arweinwyr y Cyngor yn cael gwybodaeth sy'n rhoi cipolwg ar safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth. Roedd y rhain yn cynnwys yr arolwg o denantiaid tai a'r arolwg cyfiawnder ieuencid. Mae tystiolaeth bod y Cyngor yn dadansoddi'r adborth y mae'n ei dderbyn ar y gwasanaethau hyn yn ôl grwpiau sy'n rhannu nodweddion gwarchoddedig.

- 15 Mae gan dempledi adroddiad Cabinet a Chraffu y Cyngor adran o'r enw 'ymgyngori gofynnol / a gynhaliwyd', ond ar wahân i un achos, defnyddir hyn i nodi y bu ymgyngoriad yn unig, yn hytrach na darparu gwybodaeth i helpu uwch arweinwyr i ddeall yr hyn y mae hyn yn ei ddweud wrthynt am safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth.
- 16 Mae'r Cyngor wedi drafftio dogfen 'Sut y bydd Cyflawniadau'n cael eu Mesur' i gyd-fynd â'i Gynllun Cyngor 2023-28. Fodd bynnag, dim ond un o'r 154 mesur yn y ddogfen hon sy'n ymwneud â safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth. Mae hyn yn dangos y gallai'r mewnwelediad cyfyngedig barhau yn rhan o'r trefniadau adrodd newydd ar gyfer amcanion llesiant diweddaraf y Cyngor.
- 17 At ei gilydd, mae'r wybodaeth y mae'r Cyngor yn ei darparu i uwch arweinwyr ynghylch safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth yn gyfyngedig. Felly, mae'n anodd gweld sut y byddai uwch arweinwyr yn gallu deall o'r wybodaeth hon pa mor dda y mae gwasanaethau a pholisïau yn diwallu anghenion defnyddwyr gwasanaeth.

### **Mae'r wybodaeth a ddarperir mewn adroddiadau perfformiad i uwch arweinwyr yn canolbwyntio'n bennaf ar weithgareddau, gan gyfyngu ar eu gallu i ddeall canlyniadau'r gweithgareddau hyn**

- 18 At ei gilydd, mae'r wybodaeth a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn canolbwyntio'n bennaf ar weithgareddau yn hytrach na chanlyniadau. Mae hyn yn cyfyngu ar allu uwch arweinwyr i ddeall effaith gweithgareddau'r Cyngor ac a yw'n cyflawni ei amcanion.
- 19 Mae'r mesurau y mae'r Cyngor wedi'u drafftio i fonitro cynnydd gyda'i gynllun Cyngor newydd yn cynnwys gwybodaeth gyfyngedig yn unig a allai helpu uwch arweinwyr i ddeall canlyniadau ei weithgareddau.
- 20 Gwelsom rai enghreifftiau cyfyngedig lle darperir gwybodaeth am ganlyniadau. Fel y nodwyd ym mharagraff 16, mae adroddiad perfformiad gwasanaeth cyfiawnder ieuencid y Cyngor yn rhoi cipolwg manwl i uwch arweinwyr ar effaith ei weithgareddau. Mae'r Cyngor hefyd yn rhannu canlyniadau o ymchwiliadau ac ymyriadau cwynion gydag uwch arweinwyr.

### **Nid oes gan y Cyngor drefniadau i wirio fel mater o drefn bod data am bersbectif a chanlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaeth yn gywir**

- 21 Mae gan y Cyngor drefniadau cyfyngedig i sicrhau bod y data a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn gywir. Mae meysydd gwasanaeth unigol yn gyfrifol am eu trefniadau cywirdeb data eu hunain, ond ni roddodd y Cyngor unrhyw enghreifftiau i ddangos bod y trefniadau hyn yn cynnwys gwirio cywirdeb gwybodaeth am safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth. Er enghraifft, mae tîm corfforaethol y Cyngor yn gwirio bod data yn gwneud synnwyr, i ddeall unrhyw anghysondebau mewn perfformiad, ond nid yw hyn yn gwirio bod y wybodaeth a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn gywir.
- 22 O ganlyniad, mae perygl y gall y Cyngor wneud penderfyniadau, cymryd camau, a dyrannu adnoddau yn seiliedig ar wybodaeth anghywir.



## **Gan fod y wybodaeth a ddarperir am ganlyniadau a safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth yn gyfyngedig, mae i ba raddau y gall y Cyngor ddefnyddio'r wybodaeth hon i'w helpu i gyflawni ei ganlyniadau hefyd yn gyfyngedig**

- 23 Fel y nodwyd uchod, ein prif ganfyddiad yw nad yw'r wybodaeth berfformiad a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn eu galluogi i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau gweithgareddau'r Cyngor. O ganlyniad, mae'n rhesymegol yn dilyn bod y graddau y mae'r Cyngor yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth hon i'w helpu i gyflawni ei ganlyniadau hefyd yn gyfyngedig.
- 24 Gallem weld bod y Cyngor wedi gwneud newidiadau ar lefel weithredol yn dilyn gwybodaeth a rannwyd yn ei adroddiadau cwynion, ond mae hon yn enghraifft gyfyngedig.

## **Nid yw'r Cyngor yn adolygu effeithiolrwydd ei drefniadau adrodd perfformiad mewn perthynas â phersbectif a chanlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaeth**

- 25 Er bod y Cyngor wedi nodi yn ei Ddatganiad Llywodraethu Blynyddol diweddar a'i Hunanasesiad Blynyddol fod ganddo fewnwelediad cyfyngedig i safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, nid yw wedi adolygu'r wybodaeth a ddarparwyd i uwch arweinwyr i sicrhau ei bod yn briodol ac yn berthnasol.
- 26 Nid yw'r Cyngor yn cymharu'r math o wybodaeth y mae'n ei chasglu na dulliau casglu ar bersbectif neu ganlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaeth gyda'r wybodaeth a gesglir gan sefydliadau tebyg. Nid ydym yn golygu cymharu perfformiad y Cyngor fel y cyfryw, ond i'w helpu i ddysgu sut mae sefydliadau eraill yn darparu gwybodaeth am safbwyntiau a chanlyniadau defnyddwyr gwasanaeth i helpu i gryfhau ei drefniadau ei hun. Mae hon yn elfen bwysig o drefniadau i sicrhau gwerth am arian.

## **Argymhellion**

### **Arddangosyn 1: argymhellion**

#### **Gwybodaeth am safbwynt defnyddiwr y gwasanaeth**

**A1** Dylai'r Cyngor gryfhau'r wybodaeth y mae'n ei darparu i'w uwch arweinwyr i'w galluogi i ddeall pa mor dda y mae gwasanaethau a pholisïau yn diwallu anghenion defnyddwyr gwasanaeth.

#### **Gwybodaeth am ganlyniadau**

**A2** Dylai'r Cyngor gryfhau'r wybodaeth a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr i'w helpu i werthuso a yw'r Cyngor yn cyflawni ei amcanion a'r canlyniadau a fwriadwyd.

### **Trefniadau i wirio ansawdd a chywirdeb data**

**A3** Mae angen i'r Cyngor sicrhau ei hun bod ganddo drefniadau cadarn i wirio ansawdd a chywirdeb y data y mae'n ei ddarparu i uwch arweinwyr sy'n ymwneud â phersbectif defnyddwyr gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau.

# Atodiad 1

## Cwestiynau allweddol a'r hyn yr ydym yn chwilio amdano

### Arddangosiad 2: cwestiynau allweddol a'r hyn yr ydym yn chwilio amdano

Mae'r tabl isod yn nodi'r cwestiwn yr oeddem yn ceisio ei ateb wrth gynnal yr archwiliad hwn, ynghyd â'r meini prawf archwilio a ddefnyddiwyd gennym i gyrraedd ein canfyddiadau.

Lefel 1	
A yw data perfformiad y Cyngor yn galluogi uwch arweinwyr i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau ei weithgareddau i reoli ei berfformiad yn effeithiol?	
Lefel 2	Meini prawf archwilio <sup>1</sup> (yr hyn yr ydym yn chwilio amdano)
2.1 A yw'r wybodaeth perfformiad a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn cynnwys gwybodaeth briodol am safbwynt defnyddwyr gwasanaeth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Y wybodaeth yw:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– berthnasol i'r amcanion y mae'r Cyngor wedi'u gosod ei hun;</li><li>– yn ddigon i alluogi dealltwriaeth o safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth;</li><li>– yn ddigon i ddarparu dealltwriaeth o gynnydd tuag at y canlyniadau y mae'r Cyngor yn bwriadu eu cyflawni;</li><li>– yn deillio o amrywiaeth defnyddwyr gwasanaeth gan gynnwys grwpiau sy'n rhannu nodweddion gwarchoddedig; a</li><li>– defnyddir i lywio cymariaethau â pherfformiad cyrff tebyg lle bo hynny'n berthnasol.</li></ul></li><li>• Mae'r Cyngor wedi cynnwys defnyddwyr gwasanaeth wrth benderfynu pa wybodaeth i'w chasglu.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Mae ein meini prawf archwilio wedi cael eu llywio gan ein gwybodaeth gronol o waith archwilio blaenorol, yn ogystal â'r hierarchaeth gwestiynau a'r dangosyddion cadarnhaol yr ydym wedi'u datblygu i gefnogi ein harchwiliadau egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy.

## Lefel 1

A yw data perfformiad y Cyngor yn galluogi uwch arweinwyr i ddeall safbwynt defnyddwyr y gwasanaeth a chanlyniadau ei weithgareddau i reoli ei berfformiad yn effeithiol?

## Lefel 2

### Meini prawf archwilio<sup>1</sup> (yr hyn yr ydym yn chwilio amdano)

2.2 A yw'r wybodaeth perfformiad a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr yn cynnwys gwybodaeth briodol am ganlyniadau gweithgareddau'r Cyngor?

- Mae'r wybodaeth yn defnyddio amrywiaeth o ffynonellau tystiolaeth i roi golwg gyfannol ar gynnydd.
- Mae'r wybodaeth yn galluogi uwch arweinwyr i fonitro cynnydd yn y tymor byr, canolig a hir.
- Mae'r wybodaeth yn galluogi uwch arweinwyr i fonitro darpariaeth canlyniadau sy'n cwmpasu sawl maes gwasanaeth a/neu sefydliad.

2.3 A oes gan y Cyngor drefniadau cadarn i sicrhau bod y data a ddarperir yn gywir?

- Mae gan y Cyngor drefniadau clir i wirio ansawdd a chywirdeb y data y mae'n ei ddarparu i uwch arweinwyr.
- Lle nodir gwendidau o ran ansawdd data, mae'r Cyngor yn mynd i'r afael â nhw.

2.4 A yw'r Cyngor yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth i'w helpu i gyflawni ei ganlyniadau?

- Lle nodir perfformiad gwael, mae'r Cyngor yn defnyddio'r wybodaeth i wneud newidiadau/ymyriadau.
- Mae tystiolaeth bod y Cyngor yn gwella ei gynnydd tuag at ei ganlyniadau o ganlyniad i ymyriadau.

2.5 A yw'r Cyngor yn adolygu effeithiolrwydd ei drefniadau?

- Mae'r Cyngor yn adolygu'r wybodaeth a ddarperir i uwch arweinwyr er mwyn sicrhau ei bod yn briodol ac yn berthnasol.
- Mae'r Cyngor yn cymharu'r wybodaeth y mae'n ei chasglu gyda'r wybodaeth a gesglir gan sefydliadau tebyg i nodi cyfleoedd i gryfhau ei drefniadau.





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## Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes – Flintshire County Council

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# Contents

Report summary	4
What we looked at – the scope of this audit	4
Why we undertook this audit	5
The Council's performance reporting arrangements	5
What we found	5
Limited performance information is provided to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council's activities	5
Recommendations	7
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Key questions and what we looked for	9

## Report summary

- 1 We considered the service user perspective and outcome information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders), and how this information is used.
- 2 Overall, we found that limited performance information is provided to senior leaders at Flintshire County Council (the Council) to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities.
- 3 We have made three recommendations to strengthen the information given to senior leaders.

## What we looked at – the scope of this audit

- 4 We focused on the performance information provided to senior officers and senior members (senior leaders) about service user perspective and outcomes, and how this information is used. We did not undertake a full review of the Council's performance management arrangements or an in-depth review of the quality of the data that the Council collects. Neither did the review focus on engagement with service users on specific service changes or the development of policies and strategies.
- 5 We have set out our audit questions and audit criteria in **Appendix 1**. The audit criteria essentially sets out what good looks like and what we would expect to find.
- 6 Overall, we were looking for performance information to be shared with senior leaders to help them understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users and how well they are helping the Council to achieve the outcomes it is working towards. We were also looking to see that senior leaders use this information to monitor progress and take action where necessary to improve outcomes.
- 7 This is an important part of arrangements to ensure that councils are securing value for money in the use of their resources. It is also an important way in which the Council can assure itself that it is acting in accordance with the 'involvement' way of working in taking steps to meet its well-being objectives. Without this information, it is difficult to see how senior leaders can understand whether their policies and actions are having the intended impact and make changes where they are not.
- 8 Our findings are based on document reviews and interviews with the Cabinet Member and senior officers with responsibility for the Council's performance management arrangements. The evidence we have used to inform our findings is limited to these sources. We undertook this work during July and September 2023.
- 9 We set out to answer the question '**Does the Council's performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?**' We did this by exploring the following questions:
  - Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the perspective of service users?
  - Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the outcomes of the Council's activities?

- Does the Council have robust arrangements to ensure that the data provided is accurate?
- Does the Council use the information to help it achieve its outcomes?
- Does the Council review the effectiveness of its arrangements?

## Why we undertook this audit

- 10 This audit was undertaken to help fulfil the Auditor General's duties under section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) and section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 11 We sought to:
- gain assurance that the performance information the Council provides to senior officers and elected members enables them to understand the service user perspective and the outcome of its activities;
  - gain assurance that this information forms part of the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources and its application of the sustainable development principle; and
  - identify opportunities for the Council to strengthen its arrangements.

## The Council's performance reporting arrangements

- 12 The Council's Cabinet, Chief Officer Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive six-monthly performance reports that include details of service performance, progress towards well-being objectives and financial monitoring information. These forums also receive various annual performance reports. These include the Council's Annual Self-Assessment, complaints report and the Director of Social Services' report.
- 13 Our review focused on these key performance reporting mechanisms.

## What we found

### Limited performance information is provided to senior leaders to enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council's activities

#### Senior leaders are provided with limited performance information to help them understand the perspective of service users

- 14 The Council does not include information about the perspective of service users within the performance information presented to senior leaders as a matter of course. We saw some limited examples where the Council's senior leaders are provided with information which gives an insight into the perspective of service users. These included the survey of housing tenants and the youth

justice survey. There is evidence that the Council analyses the feedback it receives on these services according to groups sharing protected characteristics.

- 15 The Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny report templates have a section titled 'consultation required / carried out', but apart from one instance, this is used to just note consultation, rather than provide information to help senior leaders understand what this tells them about the perspective of service users.
- 16 The Council has drafted a document 'How Achievements will be Measured' to accompany its 2023-28 Council Plan. However, only one of the 154 measures within this document relates to the service user perspective. This indicates that the limited insight could continue into the new reporting arrangements for the Council's latest well-being objectives.
- 17 Overall, the information the Council provides to senior leaders about the service user perspective is limited. It is, therefore, difficult to see how senior leaders would be able to understand from this information how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.

### **Information provided within performance reports to senior leaders largely focuses on activities, limiting their ability to understand the outcomes of these activities**

- 18 Overall, the information provided to senior leaders is mainly focused on activities rather than outcomes. This limits senior leaders' ability to understand the impact of the Council's activities and whether it is meeting its objectives.
- 19 The measures the Council has drafted to monitor progress with its new Council plan only include limited information which could help senior leaders understand the outcomes of its activities.
- 20 We found some limited examples where information is provided about outcomes. As noted in paragraph 16, the Council's youth justice service performance report provides senior leaders with a detailed insight into the impact of its activities. The Council also shares outcomes from complaints investigations and interventions with senior leaders.

### **The Council does not have arrangements to routinely check that data about service user perspective and outcomes is accurate**

- 21 The Council has limited arrangements to ensure that the data provided to senior leaders is accurate. Individual service areas are responsible for their own data accuracy arrangements, but the Council provided no examples to show that these arrangements included checking the accuracy of information about the perspective of service users. The Council's corporate team sense-check data, for example to understand any anomalies in performance, but this does not check that the information provided to senior leaders is accurate.
- 22 As a result, there is a risk that the Council may take decisions and action, and allocate resources based on inaccurate information.

### **As information provided on outcomes and the perspective of service users is limited, the extent to which the Council can use this information to help it achieve its outcomes is also limited**

- 23 As set out above, our main finding is that performance information provided to senior leaders does not enable them to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of the Council's activities. As a result, it logically follows that the extent to which the Council uses this information to help it achieve its outcomes is also limited.
- 24 We could see that the Council had made changes at an operational level following information shared within its complaints reports, but this is a limited example.

### **The Council does not review the effectiveness of its performance reporting arrangements in relation to service user perspective and outcomes**

- 25 Although the Council has identified in its recent Annual Governance Statement and Annual Self-Assessment that it has limited insight into service user perspective, it has not reviewed the information provided to senior leaders to ensure it is appropriate and relevant.
- 26 The Council does not compare the type of information it collects or collection methods on service user perspective or outcomes with the information collected by similar organisations. We do not mean comparing the Council's performance as such, but to help it learn how other organisations are providing information about service user perspectives and outcomes to help strengthen its own arrangements. This is an important element of arrangements to secure value for money.

## **Recommendations**

### **Exhibit 1: recommendations**

#### **Information on the perspective of the service user**

**R1** The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.

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#### **Outcomes information**

**R2** The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.

**Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data**

**R3** The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.

# Appendix 1

## Key questions and what we looked for

### Exhibit 2: key questions and what we looked for

The table below sets out the question we sought to answer in carrying out this audit, along with the audit criteria we used to arrive at our findings.

Level 1	
Does the Council's performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?	
Level 2	Audit Criteria <sup>1</sup> (what we are looking for)
2.1 Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the perspective of service users?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information is:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– relevant to the objectives the Council has set itself;</li> <li>– sufficient to enable an understanding of the service user perspective;</li> <li>– sufficient to provide an understanding of progress towards the outcomes the Council is planning to achieve;</li> <li>– drawn from the diversity of service users including groups who share protected characteristics; and</li> <li>– used to inform comparisons with the performance of similar bodies where relevant.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Council has involved service users in determining which information to collect.</li> </ul>
2.2 Does the performance information provided to senior leaders include appropriate information on the outcomes of the Council's activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information draws on a range of evidence sources to provide a holistic view of progress.</li> <li>• The information enables senior leaders to monitor progress over the short, medium and long term.</li> <li>• The information enables senior leaders to monitor the delivery of outcomes that cover multiple service areas and/or organisations.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Our audit criteria have been informed by our cumulative knowledge of previous audit work, as well as the question hierarchy and positive indicators we have developed to support our sustainable development principle examinations.

## Level 1

Does the Council's performance data enable senior leaders to understand the service user perspective and the outcomes of its activities to effectively manage its performance?

## Level 2

### Audit Criteria<sup>1</sup> (what we are looking for)

2.3 Does the Council have robust arrangements to ensure that the data provided is accurate?

- The Council has clear arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders.
- Where weaknesses in data quality are identified, the Council addresses them.

2.4 Does the Council use the information to help it achieve its outcomes?

- Where poor performance is identified, the Council uses the information to make changes/interventions.
- There is evidence of the Council improving its progress towards its outcomes as a result of interventions.

2.5 Does the Council review the effectiveness of its arrangements?

- The Council reviews the information provided to senior leaders to ensure it is appropriate and relevant.
- The Council compares the information it collects with the information collected by similar organisations to identify opportunities to strengthen its arrangements.







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## Organisational response

**Report title:** Use of performance information: service user perspective and outcomes – Flintshire County Council

**Completion date:**

**Document reference:** 3976A2023

Ref	Recommendation	Organisational response Please set out here relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Please set out by when the planned actions will be complete	Responsible officer (title)
R1	<p><b>Information on the perspective of the service user</b></p> <p>The Council should strengthen the information it provides to its senior leaders to enable them to understand how well services and policies are meeting the needs of service users.</p>	<p>Service level user information is reported at the discretion of services to relevant influencing managers or portfolio leaders as appropriate. However, as part of the Council's Corporate Self-assessment 2022/23, the Council identified consultation and engagement as an opportunity for improvement and an action plan was devised to address and improve consultation and engagement across the Council. This includes developing a Consultation and Engagement Strategy, and as part of the development of this strategy a key focus will be to consider the needs of the service users and how we gather and use this information</p>	July 2025	Customer Contact Service Manager / Customer Service and Communications Manager
R2	<p><b>Outcomes information</b></p> <p>The Council should strengthen the information provided to senior leaders to help them evaluate whether the Council is delivering its objectives and the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>To strengthen how the Council is delivering its outcomes and intended outcomes of service user perspectives, the annual review of the actions and measures detailed with the Council Plan 2023-28 will ensure, where applicable, information is captured and recorded on this specific subject matter, with outcomes that seek to deliver, short, medium and long-term benefit to our citizens and communities. This will be achieved by engaging with Portfolios directly to finalise the content review for 2024-25 of the Council Plan 2023-28</p> <p>Additionally quarterly Council Plan 2023-28 performance reports are presented to senior leaders which would include this information.</p>	June 2024	Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager / Strategic Performance Advisor

R3

**Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data**

The Council needs to assure itself that it has robust arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of the data it provides to senior leaders relating to service user perspective and outcomes.

It is the responsibility of service area to review the accuracy of their data and the information it provides to senior leaders. Arrangements to check the quality and accuracy of data beyond existing arrangements would require additional capacity that the present financial environment would not allow.

However, as an additional step, Performance Leads will be asked to confirm the monitoring arrangements they have in place to ensure data accuracy and that they arrangements are operating effectively. This would cover both data relating to service user perspectives and performance management outcomes for the Council Plan.

December 2024

Internal Audit,  
Performance and  
Risk Manager /  
Strategic  
Performance  
Advisor

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Manager – Capital Programme & Assets
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire County Council is required to adhere to Welsh Language Standards, as set out in a Compliance Notice that was served on the Council in 2015.

The Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice for Flintshire County Council places a statutory duty on the Council to publish an annual report that sets out how it has met the Welsh Language Standards.

The purpose of this report is to present the Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24, providing an overview of the Council's progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards and identifying areas for further progress and improvement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To present the draft Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report for 2023/24 for approval and subsequent publication on the Council's website.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/24</b>
1.01	<p><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 enables the Welsh Ministers to specify standards for the Welsh language. The aims of the Standards are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the services Welsh speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh.</li> <li>• Increase the use people make of Welsh language services.</li> <li>• Make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.</li> </ul>
1.02	<p>The Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC) served Compliance Notices on each of the 22 local authorities in Wales in September 2015, identifying the Standards by which they must comply.</p> <p>Compliance Notices are unique to each organisation and specify what each organisation is expected to implement in Welsh and the date by which to comply.</p>
1.03	<p>The Welsh Standards Compliance Notice for Flintshire County Council lists 171 standards for service delivery, policy making, operational matters, promotion, and record keeping.</p> <p>The standards also require the Council to publish an annual report setting out how the standards have been met. The WLC has set out guidance on the format and content of the annual report.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report provides an opportunity to show what the Council has done to meet the standards and to facilitate and promote the use of Welsh. The Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24 can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.</p>
1.04	<p><b>Flintshire County Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24</b></p> <p><u>Increased Initiatives</u> During 2023/24 there has been an increase in initiatives to promote the use of Welsh, including:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating in Bangor University’s ARFer project, which aims to increase the use of incidental Welsh between employees.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of employees learning Welsh; 174 registered to learn Welsh during 2023/24 compared to 110 employees in 2022/23.</li> <li>• Recordings of words and phrases to support employees to use Welsh on the telephone. The recordings also contain the written word/phrase and the phonetics, this means that there are visual prompts so they can be seen as well as heard.</li> </ul>
1.05	<p><u>Recruitment of Welsh speakers</u></p> <p>In partnership with Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam, Wrexham County Borough Council, Coleg Cambria and other organisations in North East Wales, a promotional video has been produced to show potential job applicants how organisations provide support to employees who wish to use Welsh at work.</p> <p>The aim is to reassure prospective job applicants who are unsure whether their Welsh is “good enough” of the support available to develop their skills.</p> <p>Two Flintshire County Council employees participated in this video.</p>
1.06	<p>The North Wales Public Services Boards commissioned IAITH: the Welsh centre for language planning to investigate the issues and solutions in the recruitment of Welsh speakers, as all public bodies in North Wales are facing similar difficulties recruiting Welsh speaking employees.</p> <p>This “Recruitment and Welsh Language Project” started in 2023/24. The final report and recommendations will be published during 2024/25.</p>
1.07	<p><u>Areas for further improvement</u></p> <p>Although there are positive areas of progress, some issues remain as areas in which to progress and improve. Given the challenges recruiting to vacant posts, and filling Welsh essential posts, key areas for improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing our employees’ Welsh language skills, particularly those in public facing posts, to support services to be delivered bilingually. This will be addressed by developing and implementing a Welsh Language Skills Strategy.</li> <li>• Supporting employees to use Welsh, naturally, in the workplace, to increase the audibility of the language and opportunities to use Welsh. More initiatives will take place to encourage employees to use Welsh, whatever their level of skill.</li> </ul>

1.08	<p><u>Complaints</u></p> <p>During 2023/24, we received one complaint directly from a customer who received an English only version of a form to book the Chair of the Council to attend events. An apology was issued to the customer and a Welsh form was sent to the complainant. To prevent this happening again the form is now bilingual.</p>
1.09	<p>Five complaints were made directly to the WLC, details of the complaints are provided on page 17 of the Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report.</p> <p>Of the five complaints, the WLC decided not to undertake a full investigation into three complaints as corrective action had been taken for two complaints and the WLC was investigating similar issues raised in another complaint and did not feel another investigation was needed.</p> <p>The WLC imposed Enforcement Action for the other two complaints requiring the Council to undertake specified action to prevent recurrence.</p>
1.10	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>During the next 12 months, as a Council, we aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Welsh Language Skills Strategy to increase the number of employees using Welsh to be able to deliver bilingual services.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of employees who report that they do not have any Welsh language skills.</li> <li>• Continue completing self-assessments against the Welsh language standards to ensure services continue to comply.</li> </ul>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Human Resources:</b> A training programme is required to ensure employees have the skills and knowledge to meet these statutory duties. A budget for Welsh language training is held by the Learning and Development Team.</p> <p><b>Revenue/Capital:</b> There are no revenue / capital implications.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>A full integrated impact assessment is not required for this report, as it is a report on progress and compliance with the Welsh language standards.</p>

3.02	<b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b>	
Long-term	Positive - safeguarding the Welsh language for future generations and increasing access to services through the medium of Welsh.	
Prevention	Positive - increasing the number of people using and speaking Welsh.	
Integration	No change	
Collaboration	Positive - through supporting other plans and strategies such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and “More than Words” Framework which aims to increase the use of Welsh in health and social care services.	
Involvement	No change	
3.03	<b>Well-being Goals Impact</b>	
Prosperous Wales	No impact	
Resilient Wales	No impact	
Healthier Wales	No impact	
More equal Wales	Positive - through increasing access to bilingual services and ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.	
Cohesive Wales	No impact	
Vibrant Wales	Positive - through promoting the Welsh language	
Globally responsible Wales	No impact	

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	No formal consultations were required for this report, but key officers and services have contributed to the content of the report. A copy of this report was presented to the Council’s Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting in June 2024.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="#">Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Fiona Mocko, Strategic Policy Advisor <b>Telephone:</b> <b>English</b> 01352 702122 <b>Welsh</b> 01267 224923 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:Fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk">Fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>Compliance Notice:</b> specifies the exact Welsh language standards with which each organisation should comply and the date by which they are required to comply with a standard.</p> <p><b>Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam:</b> an organisation funded by Welsh Government to support and promote the Welsh language in the county.</p> <p><b>Welsh Language Measure:</b> Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 confirms the official status of Welsh, creates a new system of placing duties on bodies to provide services through the medium of Welsh and creating the post of Language Commissioner with enforcement powers.</p> <p><b>Welsh language standards:</b> specify standards of conduct in relation to the Welsh language.</p>

# Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

Cymraeg

April 2023 -  
March 2024

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn  
ar gael yn Gymraeg

# Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report April 2023 – March 2024

## **Executive Summary**

1. Introduction
2. Background and current situation
3. Complying with the standards during 2023/24
4. Promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language
5. Welsh language skills and training
6. Complaints
7. Conclusion and Future Action

## **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 Welsh Language Skills Self-Assessment Tool

# **Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report**

## **April 2023 - March 2024**

### **Executive Summary**

The Welsh language standards came into force on 30 March 2016 and the Council was required to comply with 146 standards by this date. Further standards came into force at a later date, totalling 171 in all. Many of the standards that apply to the Council reflect the commitments in our previous Welsh Language Scheme and our existing practice and commitments to Welsh language.

This Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. It shows actions we have been taking to comply with the standards and includes data that we are required to publish.

We are pleased to report that we have continued to support Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam to celebrate Dydd Gŵyl Dewi and promote and share our Welsh heritage. Activity packs were provided to all care homes in the county, including to those within the independent sector, supporting older people to participate in the celebrations.

Several teams are participating in Bangor University's ARFer project which aims to increase the use of incidental Welsh amongst employees, which is just one of the initiatives we have in place to increase the use of Welsh amongst employees.

To help increase the use of Welsh in the workplace during 2024/25 we asked employees to complete a Welsh language attitude survey. We will use the information from this survey to develop initiatives to promote the Welsh language and evaluate the success of these by reviewing attitudes to Welsh language.

Neal Cockerton

Chief Executive

Councillor Mared Eastwood

Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

# Welsh Language Standards

## Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC) served a Compliance Notice on the Council in 2016, identifying the 171 standards with which we must comply. These standards set out what the Council is expected to do and deliver in Welsh. Compliance Notices are unique to each organisation reflecting the linguistic profile of the local community and organisational capacity to meet the standards.
- 1.2 The Council is required to publish an annual report by 30th June each year, as set out in standards 158, 164 and 170. The full list of standards with which we are required to comply is available [here](#). This report is also received annually by the Council's Cabinet for approval prior to publication.
- 1.3 This annual report is our eighth annual report and covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024, setting out actions we have been taking to comply with the standards and the areas where we need to improve.

### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 confirms the official status of Welsh in Wales, alongside the English language, and established a legal framework to impose a duty on public bodies in Wales to comply with the new Welsh standards. The introduction of the Welsh language standards builds on the commitment previously made by the Council within our former Welsh language scheme.
- 2.2 The aims of the standards are to:
  - Improve the services Welsh speakers can expect to receive from organisations in Welsh.
  - Increase the use people make of Welsh language services.
  - Make it clear to organisations what they need to do in terms of the Welsh language.
  - Ensure that there is an appropriate degree of consistency in terms of the duties placed on bodies in the same sectors.
- 2.3 The WLC has powers to investigate and take action against those organisations who fail to comply with the standards. This includes imposing financial penalties for non-compliance.



- 2.4 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the standards. The Strategic Policy Advisor is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Welsh language standards. Our Welsh Language Network, Rhwydwaith yr Iaith, provides strategic leadership and is chaired by the Chief Officer for Education and Youth. The Welsh language champion is the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure.
- 2.5 Complaints about failure to meet the Welsh language standards can be made by using our [Complaints Procedure](#). Employees can raise concerns through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

### **3.0 Complying with the standards during 2023/24**

- 3.1 We are required to report on our arrangements for complying with the following standards:
- Service delivery standards
  - Policy making standards
  - Operational standards

Actions we have taken to comply with the standards are available on the [Council website](#) and within previous [annual reports](#). This report sets out additional actions we have taken during 2023/24.

#### **3.2 Compliance with Service delivery standards**

- 3.2.1 Employees are reminded periodically about the Welsh language standards and their responsibilities. New employees are made aware of the standards during induction and are asked to complete the Welsh language awareness e-learning module.
- 3.2.2 During 2023/24, Portfolios have continued to complete self-assessment against the Welsh language standards to identify areas for improvement. The self-assessments form part of our priorities set out in the Council Plan 2023-28.
- 3.2.3 During 2022/23, a mystery shopper exercise was completed on a sample of telephone numbers published on the Council website to ensure a bilingual greeting was offered and initial calls were held in Welsh. The results were reviewed by the Council's Welsh Language Network, Rhwydwaith yr Iaith. Several mystery shopper exercises were completed again during 2023/24. It has been agreed that this exercise will be completed regularly to ensure initial calls in Welsh are held in Welsh when making calls to direct dial numbers, which are available to the public.
- 3.2.4 During 2022/23 there was a drop in visits to the Welsh pages and an increase to the English pages, with 25,133 page views to the Welsh pages of the

website and 4,556,364 page views to the English version. However, during 2023/24 there was an increase in visits to the Welsh pages and a decrease to the English pages, with 27,218 page views to Welsh pages of the website, and 3,814,574 page views on the English version. Reviews of our website take place regularly through Rhwydwaith yr Iaith and by the Customer Services Team making regular checks of content to ensure Welsh is equal to English. Additional guidance has been produced for web editors to support them to comply with the Welsh language standards when uploading content onto the website.

3.2.5 We also monitor visits to our social media sites. The results are set out below.

Twitter/X	Welsh	English
Views	15937	699300
Engagement rate	1.7%	2.8%
Link clicks	62	7800
Retweets (without comments)	55	1021
Likes	93	1578
Replies	16	373

3.2.6 Since launching our Facebook page in January 2024, there were:-

**Welsh**

50 inbound messages (total number of comments, mentions, and private messages) – most of these are other organisations (e.g. Menter Iaith, Tai Teg, Addysg Gymru).

**English**

478 inbound messages.

3.2.7 Customers’ language preference is captured at the first point of contact with services. Social Services provide an “Active Offer” which means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. Out of 6,779 adult Social Services assessments completed during 2023/24, 58% of those were given an Active Offer (3,948) and 45 people accepted the offer.

### 3.2.8 Services offered in Welsh:

#### Births and Marriages

	2022/23		2023/24	
	English (number)	Welsh (number)	English (number)	Welsh (number)
Birth registrations	31	2	28	2
Notices of Marriage	1286	6	1233	22
Marriage ceremonies	471	5 (with a Welsh element e.g., bilingual introduction and ending, bilingual legal vows or bilingual certificates but the actual ceremony is in English).	472	3 (with a Welsh element e.g., bilingual introduction and ending, bilingual legal vows or bilingual certificates but the actual ceremony is in English).

#### Telephone calls

Contact Centre	2022/23		2023/24	
	Number of Calls offered in English	Number of calls offered in Welsh	Number of Calls offered in English	Number of calls offered in Welsh
Main Contact Centre (01352 752121)	28,685	337	25,358	333
Council Tax	35,849	52	35,502	49
Business Rates	2,480	15	2,318	7
Enforcement	4,699	8	4,237	15
Sundry Debts	4,820	57	5,735	53

3.2.9 The Council uses Microsoft Teams to host virtual meetings and events. Licences have also been purchased for Zoom. This means that employees who facilitate virtual meetings or events can access Zoom when an interpretation service is needed, ensuring the relevant Welsh language standards are met.

3.2.10 Following the WLC's annual review of the Council's compliance with the standards, arrangements to ensure Welsh translation is offered at committee meetings open to the public have been strengthened.

3.2.11 Guidance for contractors and employees, setting out how to comply with the standards for signage, was developed. This has been published on the Council procurement system so that contractors can access these when submitting tenders.

3.2.12 We have continually experienced challenges recruiting Welsh speakers, which have been exacerbated with the current recruitment difficulties for all posts. The Contact Centre successfully recruited more Welsh speakers to their Team.

3.2.13 We have worked with Wrexham County Borough Council and partners, including Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam, Mudiad Meithrin and Coleg Cambria, to look at solutions to attracting and recruiting more Welsh speakers to our organisations. This has involved employees being involved in promotional videos to show how we support employees to use Welsh at work.

3.2.14 The North Wales Regional Public Services Board (PSB) has commissioned Iaith, the Welsh centre for language planning, to look at issues and solutions to recruiting and retaining Welsh speaking employees. This work started in 2023 and will be completed during 2024.

### 3.3 Compliance with Policy making standards

3.3.1 We worked with our colleagues from other public bodies in North Wales to develop a regional Impact Assessment template which includes Welsh language. This template was forwarded to the Welsh Language Commission for comments which have been incorporated within the template.

3.3.2 We provide various grants which are managed by other organisations on our behalf. Application forms and criteria are bilingual and include a statement to say that there will not be a delay in responding to applications submitted in Welsh.

3.3.3 The number of grant applications made through the medium of Welsh during 2023/24 is set out below:

Grant	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	Total number of applications	Number of applications made in Welsh	Total number of applications	Number of applications made in Welsh	Total number of applications	Number of applications made in Welsh
Community Endowment Fund	9	1	16	1	11	0
Welsh Church Act Fund	7	1	9	0	11	1
Community Chest	58	0	27	0	40	1

3.3.4 Details of how we comply with the Policy making standards is available on our [website](#). Advice and guidance for employees is published on the Council intranet.

### **3.4 Compliance with Operational standards**

3.4.1 Full details of how we are complying with the Operational standards are available on our [website](#).

3.4.2 Welsh taster courses are now being offered to employees. These have proven to be popular from which employees are opting to attend further Welsh language training.

3.4.3 The Welsh in the Workplace Policy, which was adopted in 2017, will be refreshed and updated during 2024/25. This policy applies to the use of Welsh internally and aims to increase the number of Welsh speaking employees and encourage our employees to use Welsh both in work and at work. We are participating with Bangor University's ARFer pilot project. The ARFer project, based on behaviour change principles, supports employees to use Welsh at work, whatever their level of skill. Teams participating in the pilot project include:

- Contact Centre;
- Children's Residential Care;
- Fostering Team; and
- Families First.

3.4.4 New employees are asked in which language they would like their employment contract to be issued. Employees can choose to receive business correspondence in Welsh. Of contracts issued to new employees during 2023/24, 14 were provided in Welsh.

3.4.5 Appraisal documentation is published on the intranet in Welsh. Employees have the option of disciplinary and grievance interviews/meetings being held in Welsh. No grievance or disciplinary hearings were held in Welsh during 2023/24.

3.4.6 The following policies are published in Welsh:

- Attendance Management Policy
- Benefits of Working at Flintshire County Council
- Capability Policy
- Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Diversity and Equality Policy
- Flexible Working application form
- Flexible Working Hours Policy
- Foster for Flintshire Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Welsh in the Workplace Policy

3.4.7 We asked employees to complete a Welsh language attitude survey to develop a baseline assessment of where we are as an organisation in our journey to becoming a bilingual organisation. The outcome of the survey will contribute towards identifying initiatives to promote the Welsh language.

### **3.5 Monitoring arrangements**

3.5.1 Our Welsh Language Network, Rhwydwaith yr Iaith, includes representatives from all portfolios. The Network meets quarterly. Standing items on the agenda include Welsh language training, the profile of employees' Welsh language skills, Welsh language promotion and complaints. Calls to the Welsh and English Contact Centre telephone lines are also reviewed at these meetings to identify any difference in waiting times.

3.5.2 Reports on compliance with the standards are presented monthly to the Chief Officer for Education and Youth (as lead for Welsh language) and quarterly to our Chief Officer Team. The annual report is presented to Cabinet for approval prior to being adopted.

## **4.0 Promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh**

4.1 Employees are encouraged to develop their Welsh language skills through attending training provided by the local college. Employees are supported to attend lessons within worktime. "Panad a Sgwrs" sessions are also held once a week to support learners to practise their Welsh in a safe environment, these sessions are facilitated by Welsh speakers.

4.2 Cysgliad (Welsh grammar, spellchecker and dictionary) has been uploaded on to all employee devices available for employees. This is uploaded automatically on devices for new employees.

4.3 Resources to support Welsh learners and Welsh speakers are available on the intranet on a dedicated page for Welsh learners. Activities to support learners which take place in the community are promoted to the workforce.

4.4 A series of recordings, comprising phrases and words that can be used in meetings by councillors and officers has been produced. The recordings include the phonetics of each word and phrase, so they can be seen as well as heard. A series of recordings have also been made of phrases to use on the telephone, with phonics, to help employees with pronunciation.



I will call back tomorrow - Byddaf yn galw yn ôl yfory

## 4.5 The Youth Service and Play Development Team

- 4.5.1 Flintshire’s Youth Service and Play Development’s commitment to promoting the Welsh language within delivery remains steadfast. Flintshire Play Development continues its efforts to encourage Welsh language usage in community provisions, fostering an environment that embraces bilingualism. Through initiatives such as the PlayPals project, which educates children on the benefits of play in child development while promoting Welsh language advocacy, we aim to empower young individuals to embrace the Welsh language in informal settings.
- 4.5.2 Flintshire Youth Clubs continue to deliver activities that promotes both Welsh language and Culture to young people. Efforts extend beyond their delivery, as they actively recruit Welsh speakers and foster a Welsh ethos within their team. This ethos instils confidence and passion among staff, enabling them to actively support Welsh language initiatives throughout the county.
- 4.5.2 The appointment of a Welsh Language Officer in the Youth Service marks a significant milestone in our efforts to promote Welsh language usage among young people. This role, which emphasises front-facing delivery in schools, youth clubs, and community settings, aims to address the challenge of integrating Welsh language into informal social and leisure environments.
- 4.5.3 The Officer will spearhead new projects within Flintshire Youth Service, enhancing the breadth of bilingual youth work offerings. Collaborating closely with a fully bilingual Welsh Language youth worker, the Officer ensures a consistent approach to bilingual delivery across all aspects of service.
- 4.5.4 Flintshire Youth Service collaborates with external partners such as the URDD and Ysgol Maes Garmon (Welsh medium secondary school) to facilitate Welsh language transition activities and clubs.
- 4.5.5 We provided playschemes to 15,389 children during 2023/24. In addition to our 57 Summer Playscheme sites, we also extended our outreach through community provisions during school term-time, the PlayPals project in schools, and we even delivered winter and spring provisions. During all our provisions including open access, we made a concerted effort to encourage more conversational Welsh among the team, using the language patterns children are taught in school.

4.5.6 The Welsh language has now been ingrained into the service delivery and all team members are encouraged to use as much incidental Welsh as they are comfortable to use. We also, support our team with using Welsh in our office and during meetings and other correspondence. As a result, the team became much more at ease greeting children in Welsh utilising the Welsh resources provided.

#### **4.6 Social Services**

4.6.1 The Presbyterian Church of Wales/Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru have produced a CD of Welsh medium Hymns and Readings to support those living with Dementia under their “Golud” Programme. We have shared this resource with our Residential Care Homes. Welsh Medium Schools are still visiting schools to care homes to sing and perform for residents.

#### **4.7 Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus**

4.7.1 Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus frameworks introduced by Welsh Government aim to promote the Welsh language in schools, encourage pupils to improve their Welsh language skills and increase the use of Welsh outside of school. The Siarter Iaith framework focuses on Welsh medium schools and Cymraeg Campus framework has been developed for English medium schools in Wales.

4.7.2 Primary schools in Flintshire continue to embrace the Siarter Iaith and Cymraeg Campus objectives to increase the social use of Welsh. In total, one school has been awarded the Aur Cymraeg Campus award, six schools have been awarded the Arian Cymraeg Campus award and 35 schools have been awarded the Bronze Cymraeg Campus award. Since April 2023, 10 schools have been awarded the Bronze award and one school has been awarded the Arian (Gold) Cymraeg Campus award. The ‘Criwiau Cymraeg’ in all schools work actively to determine the school priorities and help to decide on activities for their schools and some are effective in involving the wider school community.

#### **4.8 Welsh Medium Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**

4.8.1 As part of ongoing commitment to supporting the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Flintshire Cabinet has approved significant capital investment for Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint. The proposed new Welsh medium school will replace the existing Ysgol Croes Atti, located on Chester Road, in Flint and is a significant project supporting the WESP, as this will be the first new Welsh medium school build by the Council since its inception in 1996. The Project will also be a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) school.

4.8.2 Included in the Project is a standalone facility that will provide a wraparound childcare provision, a space for adult community learning and an immersion resource to support newcomers to Welsh medium provision, including



transition from primary school to Welsh medium secondary school. Construction commenced in early 2024 and is due to be completed in Autumn 2025.

#### **4.9 Events**

Throughout the year we have participated in key activities and events to promote the Welsh language. These include:

- Diwrnod Shw'mae/Sumae – we encouraged all our employees to say something in Welsh and use Welsh in meetings.
- Diwrnod Hawliau'r Gymraeg – we participated in this event , posting social media messages to encourage Welsh speakers to contact us in Welsh.
- Dydd Miwsig Cymru – we played Welsh language music on the IT Help Desk hold line.
- Dydd Gŵyl Dewi- this was celebrated in our care homes and extra care schemes as well as community events held in Holywell, Mold and Buckley town centres.

### **5.0 Welsh language skills and training**

- 5.1 Welsh language skills are self-assessed against the Welsh Language Proficiency Framework. (Appendix 1). The profile of employee Welsh language skills by Portfolio is set out in Table 1. The tables show that the number and percentage of employees who state that they do not have any Welsh language skills has slightly increased since March 2023. 1,109 (36.94%) employees reported that they do not have any Welsh language skills in March 2024, compared to 1,061 (35.97%) employees who reported that they did not have any Welsh language skills in March 2023.
- 5.2 There have been slight increase in the number and percentage of employees who report that their Welsh language skills are at levels 4 and 5. 102 (3.06%) employees reported that they were at level 4 and 101 (3.36%) employees reported that they were at level 5 in March 2024 compared to 101 (level 4) and 89 (level 5) employees respectively in March 2023.

Table 1: Profile of Welsh language skills of the workforce as at March 31st 2024

Portfolio	Headcount	Level 0		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5		Not Recorded	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
Chief Executives	64	19	29.69%	24	37.50%	10	15.63%	4	6.25%	4	6.25%	3	4.69%	0	0.00%
Education and Youth	309	69	22.33%	114	36.89%	44	14.24%	21	6.80%	19	6.15%	21	6.80%	21	6.80%
Governance	211	46	21.80%	100	47.39%	40	18.96%	6	2.84%	10	4.74%	8	3.79%	1	0.47%
Housing and Communities	339	128	37.76%	133	39.23%	39	11.50%	13	3.83%	11	3.24%	10	2.95%	5	1.47%
People and Resources	200	54	27.00%	82	41.00%	37	18.50%	9	4.50%	9	4.50%	7	3.50%	2	1.00%
Planning, Environment and Economy	215	49	22.79%	88	40.93%	30	13.95%	9	4.19%	10	4.65%	8	3.72%	21	9.77%
Social Services	1,134	463	40.83%	406	35.80%	158	13.93%	35	3.09%	33	2.91%	33	2.91%	6	0.53%
Streetscene and Transportation	530	281	53.02%	168	31.70%	39	7.36%	8	1.51%	6	1.13%	11	2.08%	17	3.21%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,002</b>	<b>1,109</b>	<b>36.94%</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>37.14%</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>13.22%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3.50%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>3.36%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2.43%</b>

5.3 Activities to develop a bilingual workforce include initiatives to enhance the skills within our existing workforce and to attract and recruit more Welsh speakers.

For existing employees, we have been:

- Encouraging employees to attend Welsh language training.
- Offering Welsh language taster sessions through Coleg Cambria, two-hour sessions for a six week period. These courses are for employees who do not have any Welsh language skills.
- Offering Panad a Sgwrs weekly sessions to provide learners with the opportunity to speak and practice Welsh language skills within an informal and supportive environment and within worktime.
- Targeting employees who do not have any Welsh language skills to ensure they complete the Work Welsh e-learning taster course provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh [Cymraeg Gwaith/Work Welsh](#).
- Continuing to release employees to attend Welsh language skills training.
- Providing Welsh language training as part of the Play Leaders' training.
- Providing Welsh language training to our cohort of Apprentices.
- We have embarked on project to ensure all employees complete their language skills assessment.
- We have plans, during 2024/25, to target those who describe themselves as having zero skills with face to-face workshops to ensure everyone has skills at level 1 as a minimum.
- We have developed and delivered, with our colleagues, from laith a new programme called “Welsh matters for everyone” and a follow on for managers called “Welsh matters for managers”. The aim of the programmes is to demonstrate the importance of using the language in the workplace and how to encourage others to do so.

5.4 **Welsh language skills training.**

Promotion of Welsh language training has continued across the workforce. Paid time to attend Welsh courses is provided to employees. There has been a significant increase in the number of employees attending basic Welsh language skills training. We have also seen an increase in those progressing from Entry level to Foundation level.

Table 2: Number of employees attending Welsh language skills training.

Level	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
Basic Language Skills	48	1	15	11	4	64	129
Entry	50	34	22	28	28	29	28
Foundation	7	12	6	10	8	7	13
Intermediate	23	3	2	1	6	9	2
Advanced	1	9	7	6	3	1	2
Proficient	10	5	5	3	0	0	0
Total	139	64	57	59	49	110	174

5.5 To comply with the Welsh language standards we are required to report:

- i) the number of employees who attended courses through the medium of Welsh.
- ii) if a Welsh version of a course was offered – the number and % of employees who attended the Welsh version.

5.6 There is information on the Council’s intranet pages to inform employees that if they wish to complete any of the courses in Welsh to contact the Corporate Learning and Development Team. The Council has an informal agreement with Gwynedd County Council which means that employees can attend their Welsh medium courses.

The number of employees who attended specific courses in Welsh is set out in the following table:

**Table 3: Profile of training provided through the medium of Welsh**

Type of training	2022/23		2023/24	
	Number who attended the Welsh version	Number who attended the English version	Number who attended the Welsh version	Number who attended the English version
Complaints and disciplinary procedures	0	129	0	153
Dealing with the public	0	0	0	0
Health and safety	0	34	0	136
Induction	0	0	0	24
Performance Management	0	0	0	9
Recruiting and interviewing	0	0	0	0

5.7 Welsh language awareness - our e-learning course has seen 715 employees complete the module.

5.8 A process to assess the linguistic skills required for new posts is in place. A method to record the number of posts that have been assessed as desirable or essential has been developed. The Council is required to report the number of new and vacant posts which were categorised as posts where:

- i) Welsh language skills were essential.
- ii) Welsh needed to be learnt when appointed.
- iii) Welsh desirable.
- iv) Welsh language skills were not necessary.

The data for 2023/24 is set out below:

Category	Number of posts categorised	Percentage of posts categorised
Welsh language essential	5	11.11%
Welsh desirable	27	60.00%
Need to learn Welsh	0	0
No Welsh language skills required	13	28.89%

In comparison with previous years:

Category	Number							
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Welsh language essential	17	8	14	2	3	4	1	5
Welsh desirable	9	40	42	12	2	2	0	27
Need to learn Welsh	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
No Welsh language skills required	277	185	207	66	46	46	40	13

## 6.0 Complaints

6.1 The Council's website advises people that the Complaints policy also applies to complaints about Welsh language, and any such complaints are routinely copied to the Strategic Policy Advisor for monitoring. The Complaints procedure can be found [here](#).

6.2 Complaints about Welsh language is a standing item at Rhwydwaith yr Iaith meetings.

6.3 During 2023/24, we received one complaint directly from a customer who received an English only version of a form to book the Chair of the Council to attend an event. An apology was issued to the customer and a Welsh form was sent to the complainant. To prevent this happening again the form is now bilingual.

6.4 Five complaints were made directly to the Welsh Language Commissioner. The detail of these complaints is set out below:

<b>Complaints made directly to the Welsh Language Commissioner</b>		
<b>Complaints Service Delivery</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Outcome and action taken</b>
Governance – website, forms and receipts	A customer found that Welsh was not equal to English on the Council Tax e-form and that the Welsh receipt was not fully in Welsh.	The WLC issued Enforcement Action and instructed the Council to amend the e-form and provide evidence of the Welsh receipt being fully in Welsh. We have complied with all instructions.
Streetscene/ Governance – correspondence and telephones	A customer complained about the quality of Welsh in a letter sent from Streetscene. A Welsh speaker was not available when the complainant contacted the Contact Centre and nobody returned call within 10 working days.	The WLC decided not to proceed to a full investigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was not an obvious error in the Welsh translation of the letter.</li> <li>• There were already two on-going investigations into telephone calls.</li> <li>• The length of time to return telephone calls was not subject to the Welsh language standards.</li> </ul>
Governance - website	A customer complained about the My Councillor page on the website. The toggle button to switch between Welsh and English was not taking customers to the correct pages. The information on councillors was not correct.	The WLC decided not to proceed to a full investigation as the errors had been corrected and evidence to demonstrate this had been provided.
Governance - correspondence	An English only letter was sent to a customer.	The WLC decided not to investigate as corrective action had already been taken, including reminding contractors about complying with the Welsh language standards.

Governance- website	A complaint was made about the My Councillor page of the website - Welsh place names were incorrect, English page was in English only, Welsh page was in English and Welsh.	The WLC has investigated and will issue an Enforcement Action with which the Council must comply. All the pages have been corrected.
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## 7.0 Conclusion and Future Actions

- 7.1 Moving forward during 2024/25 we will be updating the Welsh in the Workplace Policy and Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. These will contribute to raising the visibility and audibility of the Welsh language.
- 7.2 We will be developing a Welsh Language Skills Strategy to develop a proactive approach to develop the Welsh language skills of our employees. We will be working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to support implementation of this strategy.
- 7.3 We will be contacting all employees who report that they do not have any Welsh language skills to offer them basic courtesy level Welsh. This will ensure we reduce the number and percentage of employees who do not have any Welsh language skills.
- 7.4 We will continue to complete self-assessments against the Welsh language standards to provide assurance services are complying and identify further areas for improvement.

## Appendix 1 WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

	<b>LISTENING / SPEAKING</b>	<b>READING / UNDERSTANDING</b>	<b>WRITING</b>
<b>LEVEL 0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No appreciable ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No appreciable ability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No appreciable ability</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronounce Welsh words, place names, department names, etc.</li> <li>• Greet and understand a greeting.</li> <li>• Use basic every day words and phrases, e.g. thank you, please, excuse me, etc.</li> <li>• Understand / pass on simple verbal requests of a routine / familiar / predictable kind using simple language, e.g. 'May I speak to...'</li> <li>• State simple requests and follow up with extra questions / requests in a limited way</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand simple key words and sentences on familiar / predictable matters relating to my own job area, e.g. on signs, in letters.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill in simple forms, note down simple information, e.g. date and venue of a meeting, Welsh address, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the gist of Welsh conversations in work</li> <li>• Respond to simple job-related requests and requests for factual information</li> <li>• Ask simple questions and understand simple responses</li> <li>• Express opinions in a limited way as long as the topic is familiar</li> <li>• Understand instructions when simple language is used</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand factual, routine information and the gist of non-routine information on familiar matters related to my own job area, e.g. in standard letters, leaflets, etc.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write short simple notes / letters / messages on a limited range of predictable topics related to my personal experiences or my own job area</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand much of what is said in an office, meeting, etc.</li> <li>• Keep up a simple conversation on a work related topic, but may need to revert to English to discuss / report on complex or technical information</li> <li>• Answer predictable or factual questions</li> <li>• Take and pass on most messages that are likely to require attention</li> <li>• Offer advice on simple job-related matters</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan texts for relevant information</li> <li>• Understand a fair range of job-related routine and non-routine correspondence, factual literature, etc. when standard language is used.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a detailed / descriptive letter relating to my own job area, but will need to have it checked by a Welsh speaker</li> <li>• Make reasonably accurate notes while someone is talking</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep up an extended casual work related conversation or give a presentation with a good degree of fluency and range of expression but may need to revert to English to answer unpredictable questions or explain complex points or technical information</li> <li>• Contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work</li> <li>• Argue for/against a case</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and understand information fairly quickly as long as no unusual vocabulary is used and no particularly complex or technical information is involved</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare formal letters of many familiar types such as enquiry, complaint, request and application</li> <li>• Take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or straightforward dictation</li> <li>• Write a report / document relating to my own job area, but will need to have it checked by a Welsh speaker</li> </ul>
<b>LEVEL 5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise on / talk about routine, non-routine, complex, contentious or sensitive issues related to own experiences</li> <li>• Give a presentation/demonstration</li> <li>• Deal confidently with hostile or unpredictable questions</li> <li>• Carry out negotiations using complex / technical terms</li> <li>• Give media interviews</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand complex ideas and information expressed in complex or specialist language in documents, reports correspondence and articles, etc.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I Can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write letters on any subject</li> <li>• Write full / accurate notes of meetings while continuing to follow discussions and participate in them</li> <li>• Write reports / documents with confidence but they may need to be checked for minor errors in terms of spelling and grammar</li> </ul>





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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18th June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Audit Wales Report “Equality Impact Assessments: More Than a Tick Box Exercise?”
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Manager – Capital Programme and Assets
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2022, Audit Wales published a report on its findings of the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Wales. The aim of the audit was to provide insight about the approach to EIAs undertaken across the public sector in Wales.

The report “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?” sets out four recommendations and seven key improvement areas for Welsh Government and public bodies.

This report provides an update on actions being taken to meet the recommendation that applies to public bodies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | To update Cabinet on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?” |
|----|--|

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE AUDIT WALES REPORT “EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: MORE THAN A TICK BOX EXERCISE?”</b>
1.01	<p>In September 2022, Audit Wales published a report on its audit of the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Wales; “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?”</p> <p>The aim of the audit was to provide insight about the approach to EIAs undertaken across the public sector in Wales.</p>
1.02	<p>EIAs are an important part of the approach to reducing inequality in Wales, supporting public services to meet their legal duties to avoid discrimination in decision making.</p>
1.03	<p>Audit Wales state in the summary of their findings:</p> <p>“...what we have seen and heard tells us that public bodies in Wales tend to use their EIAs defensively. Too often, they seem like a tick box exercise to show that the body has thought about equality issues in case of challenge. While legal challenge is of course an important risk to manage, this approach means public bodies are not using EIAs to their full potential, especially in terms of promoting equality and cohesion”.</p>
1.04	<p>The Audit Wales report sets out four recommendations and seven key improvement areas for Welsh Government and public bodies. These are set out in Appendix 1, along with the Council's response having considered them.</p> <p>Three of the four recommendations are for Welsh Government to implement. The fourth recommendation applies to public bodies:</p> <p><i>Public bodies should review their overall approach to EIAs considering the findings of this report and the detailed guidance available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the NHS Practice Hub.</i></p>
1.05	<p>Audit Wales also made a similar recommendation in their report “‘Time for Change’ – Poverty in Wales”, which was published in November 2022.</p> <p>To ensure effective compliance with the Socio-economic Duty, the report includes a recommendation (Recommendation 8) that applies to local authorities:</p> <p><i>We recommend that councils review their integrated impact assessments or equivalent to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ensure that they draw on relevant, comprehensive and current data (nothing over 12 months old) to support analysis;</i></li> <li>• <i>ensure integrated impact assessments capture information on:</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>involvement activity setting out those the service has engaged with in determining its strategic policy such as partners, service users and those it is coproducing with;</i></li> <li>○ <i>the cumulative impact/mitigation to ensure the assessment considers issues in the round and how it links across services provided across the council;</i></li> <li>○ <i>how the council will monitor and evaluate impact and will take corrective action; and</i></li> <li>○ <i>an action plan setting out the activities the Council will take as a result of the Integrated Impact Assessment.</i></li> </ul>
1.06	<p>The recommendation made by Audit Wales in their report “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?”, and which applies to the Council, has been considered.</p> <p>The Council agrees with the recommendation and work had already commenced to review the mechanism and approach taken locally to completing Assessments.</p> <p>Further information on a pilot project which is due to complete in 2024, and that will demonstrate the Council’s approach to implementing Audit Wales recommendation in relation to EIAs, is provided below.</p>
1.07	<p><b>Update on actions being taken within Flintshire County Council</b></p> <p>The University of Manchester, working in collaboration with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, had developed a Carbon and Co-Benefits Decision Support Tool.</p> <p>The Tool aims to support a holistic approach to decision-making through a process that embeds review and assessment of all policies, initiatives, or services against statutory impact assessments.</p>
1.08	<p>The Tool was being piloted in the Greater Manchester and Greater London authority areas and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) was supportive of this tool being piloted in Wales.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council is the only Council in Wales and outside London or Greater Manchester taking part in this project.</p>
1.09	<p>The Council pilot has been overseen by the Corporate Equalities Board since June 2023, with an initial workshop with users facilitated by the University of Manchester in September 2023.</p> <p>The workshop sought to identify any issues or concerns so that final amendments to the Tool could be made before it was available to pilot.</p>
1.10	<p>For the Tool to be piloted in Wales amendments were made by the University of Manchester and Flintshire County Council to ensure compliance with the statutory impact assessments including equality, the Socio-economic Duty and Welsh language, as these assessments do not apply in England.</p>

	Amendments were also made to encompass the recommendations from the two Audit Wales reports, which were published after discussions had started with the University about the potential use of this Tool within the Council.
1.11	<p>As part of the evaluation of the Tool, the University of Manchester are interviewing users and decision makers during April and May 2024.</p> <p>The evaluation will look at not just the usability of the Tool but also how it helps inform decision making.</p> <p>The outcomes of the evaluation will be reported to Cabinet so that consideration can be given as to if the Council should adopt the Tool and approach for conducting impact assessments.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Completing impact assessments effectively requires additional time from officers, which means there are resource implications for employees responsible for impact assessments.</p> <p>Further costs associated with implementing impact assessments will be identified in the evaluation report being completed by the University of Manchester.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>																												
3.01	<p>An Impact assessment is not required as this a report on an Audit Wales report and action being taken to implement recommendations.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ways of Working</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive - creating long term change to ensure decisions made reduce inequalities.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive - through reducing inequalities.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Well-being Goals Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Well-being Goal</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> <td>Positive – through reducing inequalities.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohesive Wales</td> <td>Positive - through tackling hate crime and discrimination.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vibrant Wales</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Globally responsible Wales</td> <td>No change.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ways of Working	Impact	Long-term	Positive - creating long term change to ensure decisions made reduce inequalities.	Prevention	Positive - through reducing inequalities.	Integration	No change.	Collaboration	No change.	Involvement	No change.	Well-being Goal	Impact	Prosperous Wales	No change.	Resilient Wales	No change.	Healthier Wales	No change.	More equal Wales	Positive – through reducing inequalities.	Cohesive Wales	Positive - through tackling hate crime and discrimination.	Vibrant Wales	No change.	Globally responsible Wales	No change.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	A copy of this report will be presented to the Council's Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1: Recommendations and response to Audit Wales report "Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?"

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="#">Equality Impact Assessments: More than a tick box exercise?. Audit Wales</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Fiona Mocko - Strategic Policy Advisor <b>Telephone:</b> <b>English:</b> 01352 702122 <b>Welsh:</b> 01267 224923 <b>E-mail:</b> fiona.mocko@flintshire.gov.uk

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b> An equality impact assessment (EIA) is an evidence-based approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, and decision-making processes are fair, promote equality and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage people with protected characteristics.</p> <p><b>Socio-economic Duty:</b> The socio-economic duty is part of the Equality Act 2010. It aims to reduce inequality for people who experience socio-economic disadvantage. Public bodies must pay due regard to the socio-economic duty when making strategic decisions.</p>

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Audit Wales**

#### **Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?**

##### **Recommendation 1 (Welsh Government)**

###### **Clarifying the scope of the duty to impact assess policies and practices.**

There is scope for confusion about which type of policies and practices must be subject to an assessment for their impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The Welsh Government should clarify its interpretation of the duty, including whether and how it expects public bodies to apply any test of proportionality and relevance.

##### **Recommendation 2 (Welsh Government)**

###### **Building a picture of what good integrated impact assessment looks like.**

Many public bodies carry out integrated impact assessments that include consideration of the PSED alongside other duties. However, practice is inconsistent and often involved collating multiple assessments in one place, rather than being truly integrated, to help maximise the intended benefits of integrated impact assessments. The Welsh Government should work with key stakeholders with an interest in the areas commonly covered by integrated impact assessments and those with lived experiences, to share learning and work towards a shared understanding of what good looks like for an integrated impact assessment.

##### **Recommendation 3 (Welsh Government)**

###### **Applying the equality duties to collaborative public bodies and partnerships.**

The public sector landscape has changed since the introduction of the PSED and the Welsh specific duties, with an increasing focus on collaborative planning and delivery. The Welsh Government should review whether it needs to update the Wales specific regulations to cover a wider range of collaborative and partnership arrangements. These include public services boards, regional partnership boards and other service specific partnerships.

##### **Recommendation 4 (Public Bodies)**

###### **Reviewing public bodies' current approach for conducting EIAs.**

While there are examples of good practice related to distinct stages of the EIA process, all public bodies have lessons to learn about their overall approach. Public bodies should review their overall approach to EIAs considering the findings of this report and the detailed guidance available from the Equality and Human Rights

Commission (EHRC) and the Practice Hub. We recognise that developments in response to our other recommendations and the Welsh Government's review of the PSED Wales specific regulations may have implications for current guidance in due course.

**Response:** This recommendation has been considered and we agree to this. We are reviewing the approach to completing EIAs through a pilot project with Manchester University, which is due to be completed in 2024. The guidance from the EHRC and the Practice Hub is provided to our employees and available on the Infonet.

### **Key Improvement Areas**

#### **Area 1: Greater clarity over which type of policies and practices must be impact assessed.**

**Response:** This has been considered and we agree with the recommendation. We would appreciate greater clarity from Welsh Government and will implement their guidance when available.

#### **Area 2: Greater clarity about the arrangements for assessing the impact of collaborative policies and practices.**

**Response:** This has been considered and we agree with the recommendations. There is currently no defined process for assessing the impact of collaborative policies and practices and guidance from Welsh Government is welcomed. Locally, in North Wales public bodies have worked together to produce a Tool to assess the impact of collaborative policies.

#### **Area 3: Greater clarity about expectations to consider the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of an integrated impact assessment.**

**Response:** This has been considered and we agree with the recommendation. We have already brought together the statutory impact assessments into one Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) tool. We would welcome further guidance from Welsh Government.

#### **Area 4: Better and more timely identification of the practical impacts of decisions on people and how different protected characteristics intersect.**

**Response:** We have considered this recommendation and agree with it. We have been piloting an IIA Tool with Manchester University. More training and support will be available for IIA authors, which should lead to more timely identification of impacts. There needs to be more guidance and support on how to deal with

intersectionality from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Government.

**Area 5: More engagement and involvement of people with protected characteristics**

**Response:** We have considered this recommendation and agree with it. We are currently working with the Regional Community Cohesion Team and with the North Wales Public Sector Equality Officer's Network to look at how we can improve engagement with people with protected characteristics.

**Area 6: Better monitoring of the actual impacts of policies and practices on people.**

**Response:** We have considered this recommendation and agree with it. As Audit Wales have identified very few organisations do this. Further guidance and support is needed from Welsh Government.

**Area 7: A shift in the mindsets and cultures to move EIA away from being seen as an add-on 'tick box' exercise.**

**Response:** This has been considered and we agree with the recommendation. The Tool used by the Council provides IIA authors the opportunity to record the data, research and consultation outcomes that will impact on equality and cohesion.

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales, Performance Evaluation Inspection November 2023 – Action Plan Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October, CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) announced that they would be visiting Flintshire to undertake a full, routine PEI (Performance Evaluation Inspection) of both Adult's and Children's Services.

The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers.

This was to be the first full inspection the portfolio has received for over 8 years and an opportunity to showcase the creative and innovative practice undertaken here in Flintshire.

The full report was published on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 and was largely positive in their findings across Social Services (See appendix 1).

An action plan has now been produced based on the recommendations made by inspectors (see appendix 2).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet note the outcome of the report and support the resulting Action Plan.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
1.01	In total seven inspectors were involved in the inspection, operating on a hybrid basis with some inspectors visiting Flintshire in person and some working remotely. The in-person inspectors were based at Tŷ Dewi Sant but also travelled around to meet staff, partners, service users and their families. The remote inspectors held Microsoft Teams meetings as well as case file reading.
1.02	The inspection lasted for two weeks, starting on 27 <sup>th</sup> November (file reading began on 20 <sup>th</sup> November) and ended on 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023.
1.03	<p>The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The inspectors sought to answer the following questions aligned under the principles of the Social Service (Wales) Well-being 2014 Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People - voice and control</li><li>• Prevention</li><li>• Well-being</li><li>• Partnerships</li></ul>
1.04	<p><u>The scope of the inspection was:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation of the experience of adults and children at the point of performance evaluation inspection.</li><li>• Evaluation of the experience and outcomes people achieve through their contact with services.</li><li>• Evidence of the local authority and partners having learnt lessons from their recent experiences and plans for service developments and improvement.</li><li>• Consideration of how the local authority manages opportunity and risk in its planning and delivery of social care at individual, operational and strategic levels</li><li>•</li></ul>
1.05	<p>The full report was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> February and can be found in appendix 1, however, from the report they summarised the findings as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>“There is a stable and experienced senior management team in place across both services providing continuity of leadership.</i></li><li>• <i>Partner agencies, providers and stakeholders told us that leaders are visible and there are good relationships at a senior level with open communication.</i></li><li>• <i>Practitioners also stated leaders are accessible, approachable, and supportive, and overall, ensure practitioners have the right training and skills. A few practitioners (16%) from children’s services who responded to the staff survey noted the leadership and culture within the local</i></li></ul>

*authority needed to improve, although (86%) said they were well-supported by managers. Similarly, practitioners (91%) from adult services who responded to the staff survey also stated they were well supported by managers.*

- There are procedures in place to induct new staff members, although at times they would benefit from increased pastoral support. It is acknowledged that a new face-to-face social work collective has been set-up to offer peer support to all social workers across children's and adult services.*
- Practitioners clearly know the people they support very well. In response to a survey by CIW, many people said they felt respected and listened to by practitioners.*
- Recruitment and retention of social care practitioners is a national challenge across Wales. The local authority continues to work hard on strategies to support continued recruitment and retention of staff. Examples include commissioning a communications agency to promote working for the local authority and increasing capacity in the workforce development team.*
- The recent restructure across both services is acknowledged and has potential to provide more resilience, opportunities for greater support and managerial oversight, as well as career progression. A few practitioners across both services felt the consultation about changes in structure had not adequately considered practitioner's views and had impacted their morale as it did not benefit everyone.*
- The local authority is well sighted on market stability in its area and the needs of its population. There are examples of the local authority implementing successful strategic plans in response to identified need and the lack of certain support services in its area. This has been achieved by working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and other relevant partners to develop innovative services with significant capital investment. Examples include Marleyfield Care Home and Tŷ Nyth Children's Care Home.*
- The local authority has a comprehensive supervision policy. Practitioners benefit from regular supervision although the practice and standard of recording is inconsistent. The best supervision records focus on reflective practice and professional development. In other examples, more reflection on practice, and an improved focus on professional curiosity, outcomes and staff well-being is required.*
- The local authority benefits from good corporate and political support. There is a focus on ensuring statutory duties are met. Senior leaders,*

	<p><i>managers and politicians recognise significant action and resource is required to ensure the local authority's ability to deliver statutory safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, the local authority commissioned two managed care agency teams in children's services to provide additional capacity. This is impacting positively on the outcomes for children and families."</i></p>
1.05	<p>An action plan has been produced based on the recommendations from the Inspection Report which can be found in appendix 2. However, a summary of the main actions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Practice Directive to practitioners covering inspectors' findings of inconsistency in practice of case recording, including good practice examples to drive improvement.</li> <li>• Drive recruitment and retention through the Workforce Resilience Project to address local workforce shortages caused by national issues.</li> <li>• Advocacy training sessions delivered by newly commissioned providers to update practitioners on practice requirements and new processes.</li> <li>• Review of Adults Safeguarding documentation templates to ensure that outcomes are clear and evidenced effectively.</li> <li>• Introduction of a new case note format on Paris to ensure the effective management of enquiries and the recording of actions are clear.</li> <li>• Review of Children's Safeguarding documentation to ensure that that evidence is clearly set out to show completion within set timescales.</li> <li>• Programme of core group training to support Children's Safeguarding and ensure consistency in processes.</li> <li>• The already planned introduction and implementation of the "Effective Child Protection Model" will contribute significantly to support across Children's Services.</li> <li>• Implementation of the NSPCC Child Neglect Tool will support to identify and appropriately manage risks.</li> <li>• Commissioning "Leaderful Action" to deliver compassionate leadership workshops with Management Team.</li> <li>• Continue and build upon the work to develop relationships with our partners, ensuring communication is strengthened.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with Housing Portfolio to develop strategies to improve housing options for care leavers.</li> </ul>



1.06	The action plan will be completed by March 2025.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> There are currently no implications for the approved revenue budget for this service for either the current financial year or for future financial years. Some actions identified for investigation may have implications for revenue going forward, however, these will be investigated and reported on individually should this be the case.</p> <p><b>Capital:</b> There are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years. Some actions identified for investigation, may have implications for capital going forward, however, these will be investigated and reported on individually should this be the case.</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> Actions with proposed implications to human resources are limited to process changes. Actions should not require additional resources or result in additional workload for current workforce.</p>
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	Impact assessment is not required for this report. Impact Assessments will be undertaken individually (where required) for each action point.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	Consultation with service users, staff and partners was carried out as part of the inspection as detailed above.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	Appendix 1 - Performance Evaluation Report. Appendix 2 – Action Plan.
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	None.
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Naomi Harper, Planning and Development Officer.  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702544  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:naomi.harper@flintshire.gov.uk">naomi.harper@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW):</b> is a public body that inspects, regulates and improves the quality and safety of services in Wales.</p> <p><b>Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI):</b> is a routine inspection to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers.</p> <p><b>Social Service (Wales) Well-being 2014 Act:</b> This Act sets out the legal duties and powers of local authorities in Wales to provide care and support for adults, children and carers. It also covers the assessment, charging, financial assessment, looked after children and looked after children's accommodation.</p>

# Performance Evaluation Report Flintshire County Council





## **Introduction**

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) undertook a performance evaluation inspection of children's and adult services in Flintshire County Council (FCC/the local authority) in November and December 2023. This in accordance with CIW's Framework for Performance Evaluation of Local Authority Social Services and Cafcass Cymru.

The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers.

We consider the quality standards in the Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales and key lines of enquiry. We seek to answer the following questions aligned to the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (The Act):

### **People - voice and control**

- How well is the local authority ensuring all people are equal partners who have voice, choice and control over their lives and can achieve what matters to them?
- Is effective leadership evident at all levels with a highly skilled, well-qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision?

### **Prevention**

- How well is the local authority ensuring the need for care and support is minimised, and the escalation of need is prevented, whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved?
- How well is the local authority promoting resilience within communities and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society?

### **Well-being**

- How well is the local authority ensuring that people are protected and safeguarded from abuse, neglect and any other types of harm?
- How well are people supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible?

## Partnership

- How well is the local authority able to assure itself that effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver fully integrated, high quality, sustainable outcomes for people?
- Are people encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners?

### 1. **Summary - Adult and Children's Services**

- 1.1. There is a stable and experienced senior management team in place across both services providing continuity of leadership.
- 1.2. Partner agencies, providers and stakeholders told us that leaders are visible and there are good relationships at a senior level with open communication.
- 1.3. Practitioners also stated leaders are accessible, approachable, and supportive, and overall, ensure practitioners have the right training and skills. A few practitioners (16%) from children's services who responded to the staff survey noted the leadership and culture within the local authority needed to improve, although (86%) said they were well-supported by managers. Similarly, practitioners (91%) from adult services who responded to the staff survey also stated they were well supported by managers.
- 1.4. There are procedures in place to induct new staff members, although at times they would benefit from increased pastoral support. It is acknowledged that a new face-to-face social work collective has been set-up to offer peer support to all social workers across children's and adult services.
- 1.5. Practitioners clearly know the people they support very well. In response to a survey by CIW, many people said they felt respected and listened to by practitioners.
- 1.6. Recruitment and retention of social care practitioners is a national challenge across Wales. The local authority continues to work hard on strategies to support continued recruitment and retention of staff. Examples include commissioning a communications agency to promote working for the local authority and increasing capacity in the workforce development team.
- 1.7. The recent restructure across both services is acknowledged and has potential to provide more resilience, opportunities for greater support and

managerial oversight, as well as career progression. A few practitioners across both services felt the consultation about changes in structure had not adequately considered practitioner's views and had impacted their morale as it did not benefit everyone.

- 1.8. The local authority is well sighted on market stability in its area and the needs of its population. There are examples of the local authority implementing successful strategic plans in response to identified need and the lack of certain support services in its area. This has been achieved by working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and other relevant partners to develop innovative services with significant capital investment. Examples include Marleyfield Care Home and Tŷ Nyth Children's Care Home.
- 1.9. The local authority has a comprehensive supervision policy. Practitioners benefit from regular supervision although the practice and standard of recording is inconsistent. The best supervision records focus on reflective practice and professional development. In other examples, more reflection on practice, and an improved focus on professional curiosity, outcomes and staff well-being is required.
- 1.10. The local authority benefits from good corporate and political support. There is a focus on ensuring statutory duties are met. Senior leaders, managers and politicians recognise significant action and resource is required to ensure the local authority's ability to deliver statutory safeguarding responsibilities. As a result, the local authority commissioned two managed care agency teams in children's services to provide additional capacity. This is impacting positively on the outcomes for children and families.

### **Key findings and evidence**

We present our key findings and evidence below in line with the four principles of the 2014 Act.

## **2. People – Voice & Control**

### **Strengths - Adult Services**

- 2.1 There are examples of person-centred and comprehensive social care assessments which evidence practitioners have taken time to get to know people. Practice in this area, however, needs to be more consistent because there were also examples of less comprehensive and person-centred assessments.

- 2.2 There are good examples of assessments being written in the first person, evidencing well what matters to people. **This is positive practice.**
- 2.3 Unpaid carers' assessments are appropriately offered. Carers of adults told us they significantly benefitted from carers' assessments and provision of support. There is a wide range of innovative practical support to promote carer well-being including counselling, grants, short-term direct payment provision, and short-term break arrangements.
- 2.4 The well-established direct payment service is valued by people and professionals. It is utilised creatively to support people's well-being outcomes. There is a skilled team who support people to have more control over their care and support arrangements through the flexibility of a direct payment to meet their personal outcomes and promote independence. The local authority's user-friendly direct payment portal provides helpful resources for people. This includes a list of personal assistants and relevant details about them. This assists people to choose who they wish to support them and promotes self-control and autonomy and is reflective of **positive practice**. One carer told us of the significant positive impact direct payments had made on both her and her daughter's life, enabling her daughter to live at home with support and care workers they trust.
- 2.5 People's Welsh language needs are considered and recorded.
- 2.6 The majority of staff (85%) who responded to CIW's staff survey from adult services said they had a manageable workload, and they were well supported by managers (91%). Good morale and peer support within teams was also highlighted.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 2.7 Care and support plans could be further developed by setting clearer SMART outcomes and consistently taking a proactive strengths-based approach. Also, whilst people's voices are clear in some assessments, this approach should be further developed in care and support plans. **Reference should be made to what matters to the individual and personal outcomes should be recorded more consistently in the first person.**
- 2.8 People are sometimes supported through a duty system whilst on a waiting list for allocation to a specific worker. This can be challenging for people as there is insufficient oversight of their circumstances, lack of continuity of support, and people have to re-tell their story. **The local authority should continue with its current efforts to ensure a consistent sufficient,**



**qualified, and competent workforce to lessen the need for people to be supported by different practitioners who are unknown to them.**

- 2.9 There are examples of direct payment reviews being held. However, there was one example which had not received a review. **The local authority must review the arrangements for the making of direct payments and how they are being used in line with Code of Practice 4 (Meeting Needs) to assess whether personal outcomes continue to be met.**
- 2.10 **When practitioners attempt communication with individuals, the local authority should ensure a more consistent evidence base that reflects the communication methods that have been considered and attempted.**
- 2.11 There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that advocacy is consistently considered and offered when it would have been appropriate. **This is an area that must be strengthened to demonstrate routine consideration of advocacy particularly in adult safeguarding.**

### **3. People – Voice & Control**

#### **Strengths – Children’s Services**

- 3.1 Overall children and young people’s voice and choice is heard and well reflected in records. Section 47 enquiry records include direct quotes from children, focusing on what is important for them and what worries they have. A few core group minutes contained a voice of the child section which is **positive practice** although such practice would benefit from being more consistent.
- 3.2 Children and young people have opportunities to make their voices heard. We found **positive practice** with children having an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions with a conference buddy prior to a conference held in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP).
- 3.3 Children and young people are overall well-supported by Personal Advisers (PAs). They benefit most from regular communication, with PAs taking a proactive approach in contacting young people and seek to obtain answers to concerns or issues young people may have. A care leaver told us “Mine [PA] is helpful and would find the answers if she didn’t know. Previously I had a bad experience but now she is the first person I go to if I have a problem.”
- 3.4 Care experienced children and young people also benefit from access to a peer support group. Children and young people told us they value this

opportunity to socialise with others who have had similar experiences. They told us; “I like meeting people who have experience of care,” “I’ve been coming to this group for eight years. It gets me out of the house.” This group has enabled some young people to advocate on behalf of care experienced children in formal meetings with the local authority, ensuring their voices are heard.

- 3.5 The local authority has also procured with a neighbouring local authority the ‘Mind of My Own’ app. It is an app that can be downloaded to a digital device with simple pictures and child-friendly words. It is designed for children and young people to share experiences and views on topics relevant to them. This will further enhance a digital offer for children and young people to make their views known in real time.
- 3.6 Children are provided with sufficient time and opportunities to share their views through direct child-centred work. In the pathway planning records for one young person, the social worker explicitly discussed and amended the plan following consultation with the young person, evidencing the young person had been heard.
- 3.7 There are good examples of documentation which clearly captured the voice of a child, and positive examples of records written directly to the child, providing clarity and focus as to why the WSP have been instigated which is **positive practice**. This practice could be more consistent.
- 3.8 Staff spoken with routinely acknowledged the support of managers. This is important in conversations about risk and safety of children as it promotes organisational accountability with practitioners feeling supported in decision-making.
- 3.9 Staff welcome the learning and development opportunities available to them, including support to attend training in certain areas when this was identified as a specific learning need for them.
- 3.10 There are systems in place to review the standard and quality of practice which include file audits. However, some practitioners were unaware of these systems. Therefore, whilst there is evidence of learning across the workforce, this could be improved with wider dissemination of relevant information.
- 3.11 Overall, there are good management mechanisms in place to support frontline practice. Supervision, management oversight records, and authorisations demonstrate there is line manager oversight in key practice areas. We were told by practitioners they value their managers.

- 3.12 The majority of staff who responded to CIW's staff survey from children's services said they had a manageable workload and (78%) also said they were well-supported by managers (86%). We also heard from practitioners who had progressed through different roles within the local authority and how well-supported they had felt. A few respondents (16%) expressed concerns about leadership and culture. They wanted their feedback and concerns to be taken into greater account, to feel more valued and respected, and they wanted the management and support of staff to be more consistent. CIW has received swift responses from the local authority in relation to how the issues raised are/will be addressed, including commissioning of leadership training, and convening of collaborative conversations to further promote and embed a positive culture across the service.
- 3.13 People's Welsh language needs are considered and recorded. We saw an example of the Active Offer being implemented in practice and a parent being able to converse verbally in the Welsh language in line with their wishes. **However, when Welsh is noted as a preferred language, this should also be the language in which documentation is written.** Unless it is the person's preference to have documentation in the English language and a record is made to that effect.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- 3.14 Disabled children and young people have to wait long periods of time for short overnight breaks in a residential provision. The local authority aims to provide alternate support in the meantime through direct payments for example. However, **the local authority must so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure it is able to provide looked after and other accommodated children with accommodation that is within the local authority's area and that meets the children's needs. This in line with Code of Practice 6 (Looked After and Accommodated Children).**
- 3.15 As a result of the fragility in the social care workforce, children and young people experience changes in social workers. Children are supported through a duty system rather than an allocated worker at times. Changes in social workers makes it challenging for children to develop trusting relationships. We heard from one young person how they are aware their social worker will soon change. Parents also have to repeat their stories and views to social workers. As a result of changes in practitioners, support can be delayed, with oversight of children and young people's situation also impacted. **The local authority must continue with its current efforts to ensure a consistent, sufficient, qualified, and competent workforce to meet its statutory duties, and should consider an exit strategy for ending the reliance on the commissioned managed agency team.**

#### 4. Well-being

##### **Strengths – Adult Services**

- 4.1 There are examples of practitioners appropriately establishing whether a person is an adult at risk, as defined in the WSP, prior to implementing the procedures. From the social care records we reviewed, we found strategy meetings are generally well attended, and Section 126(1) (s.126) enquiries are largely undertaken and completed within statutory timescales.
- 4.2 The local authority offers safeguarding training to providers as well as in-house practitioners which is **positive practice**. This promotes consistency of practice and ensures that the roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are widely understood.
- 4.3 There is a strategic commitment to develop community services. The investment in local hubs and other capital investment supports this agenda. For example, Hwb Cyfle is a purpose-built service for disabled people offering different activities in community-based environments to promote people's well-being. The provision would benefit from increased opportunities to support people to maximise their independence in relation to daily living skills.
- 4.4 There are good examples of the development of innovative teams/posts such as the progression and well-being team. These teams are designed to support people and to prevent escalation of needs.
- 4.5 We saw examples of people being discharged from hospital with support in a timely manner. In 2022, the council reviewed and then made changes to how older people are supported in their discharge planning from hospital through the formation of a Discharge to Assess and Recover Team (DART). The DART service has clear roles and responsibilities supported by effective governance.

##### **Areas for improvement**

- 4.6 In relation to adult safeguarding, we saw variation in social care records. Greater clarity is required in relation to the views of the adult at risk, decision making, determinations, and whether subsequent actions have addressed the original concern. The outcomes of the enquiries must be shared with the reporter. **The local authority must ensure that adult safeguarding practice consistently meets with the requirements of the WSP.**

- 4.7 There are examples of people's social care assessments and safeguarding reports indicating they lack mental capacity to make decisions about their care. The quality and decision making of these records is variable. **The local authority must ensure practice consistently aligns with the requirements and principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the relevant Code of Practice.**
- 4.8 In common with many other local authorities across Wales, people's rights are impacted by the waiting lists for Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS) assessments. **The local authority must ensure that arrangements for the provision for DoLS assessments are fit for purpose and responsive.**
- 4.9 The current recording system does not support practitioners to capture people's strengths and outcomes in a meaningful way. **The local authority should take this into consideration, with the imminent procurement of an updated recording system.**

## 5. Well-being

### **Strengths – Children's Services**

- 5.1 Children and families' needs in Flintshire are complex and demand is increasing, as is the picture across Wales. Two agency teams have been commissioned to assist the core staff team to meet demand and the local authority's statutory duties. There is corporate and political support for this, evidencing continued support to prioritise services for vulnerable children, young people and their families. It is noted that there is corporate support to maintain the agency team until the time is appropriate to end their contract.
- 5.2 Overall, safeguarding responses, such as convening initial strategy discussions, are timely.
- 5.3 There is evidence of exceptional strengths-based practice utilised by individual practitioners. This is **positive practice. For this approach to become embedded, the local authority should consider a model of practice that highlights what needs to change in families, with greater focus on how family and wider community networks can be facilitated to keep children safe.** A model would promote a shared understanding across agencies of safeguarding practice and management of risk. It would also provide practitioners with consistent tools and templates in relation to recording and maintaining focus on risk. It is acknowledged that the local authority is on a journey to fully implement a model of practice. This has already commenced with an initial focus on neglect, with the local authority having purchased a neglect-graded profile tool through the National Society

for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to support practice. This is a **positive** response by the local authority to a high number of children affected by neglect on the child protection register (CPR).

- 5.4 In the specific early phase of a Section 47 enquiry, the standard of practice is good and there is evidence of appropriate managerial oversight to inform and support practice.
- 5.5 We saw an example of **positive practice** where a health professional chaired a core group meeting, evidencing in line with the WSP, that chairing and minuting of these meetings is a joint responsibility between children's services and relevant partners.<sup>1</sup>

### **Areas for improvement**

- 5.6 There is indication the threshold for significant harm is not always applied consistently when considering removing children from the CPR. We heard this may be as a result of a misplaced conception that maintaining a child's name on the CPR is a means of ensuring continued support services for a child and their family. **The local authority should consider sharing guidance more widely with relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure consistent and shared understanding of thresholds and information sharing protocols.**
- 5.7 Risks are appropriately considered, with timely progression to the right service for children and families. There are, however, delays for some families subject to child protection procedures as enquiries are not always completed promptly. It is not always clear what the determination is post completion of a Section 47 enquiry. **Managers must ensure that, following the timely conclusion of a child protection enquiry, next steps are explicitly recorded with clarity and rationale in relation to the determinations under Section 3 Part 1 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.**
- 5.8 As Section 47 enquiries are not always completed in the required timescales, this impacts on timely decision making as to whether a child's name should be included on the CPR. **The local authority should ensure that when it has been determined that a child is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, a child protection conference is convened within 15 working days of the strategy discussion/meeting, or the last strategy discussion/meeting (if more than one has occurred), which initiated the Section 47 enquiry.**

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<sup>1</sup> [Full report - Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements FINAL FOR PUBLICATION \(careinspectorate.wales\)](#)

- 5.9 Some care and support protection plans viewed are service led, with a focus on compliance instead of outcomes. Care and support protection plans are not routinely updated after core group meetings. It is acknowledged that recent training commissioned by the local authority has focused on clarifying roles and responsibilities for social workers. **An outline care and support protection plan devised at first conference should be developed into a more detailed plan at the first core group meeting as is highlighted in the WSP. Subsequent core groups should specifically review progress of outcomes for the child's safety. Leaders should ensure practitioners have clear systems and standards for developing plans which are child-centred and outcome-focused.**
- 5.10 We saw examples of disclosures by police about an individual's criminal background, with a potential risk for a child, having been appropriately considered to promote children's safety. However, sharing of the information was not always completed in a timely manner with pressures of work cited in one example as the reason for the delay. **When the local authority is aware of such information, and it has been agreed they can share information with relevant individuals to promote a child's safety, this must be done in a timely manner.**

## 6. Prevention

### Strengths – Adult Services

- 6.1 Capacity has been created to enable applications for grant funding to be made. This is coordinated through a designated officer, and evidences good corporate support for promoting the preventative agenda.
- 6.2 There are good examples of the local authority working hard to reshape and redesign its service in lines with its vision of people receiving reablement and community-based rehabilitation support. For instance, the expansion of Marleyfield Care Home which enables people to recover following a hospital stay and return to live independently. The local authority invested from its own capital programme supported by Welsh Government grants. The development and implementation of the operational model has been co-produced with BCUHB. This supports the local authority's plan to increase its own residential care capacity, whilst also supporting BCUHB with additional Step-Up Step-Down bed capacity.
- 6.3 Further demonstration of FCC's commitment to support people to return home and to live independently is its plan to expand step-down provision through the development of Croes Atti Newydd, building on their learning from Marleyfield Care Home. Croes Atti Newydd is being developed as part of the

local authority's own capital development supported by Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund and will offer other services in addition to a step-down facility.

- 6.4 The local authority is proactive in promoting different types of services to support people to reach their outcomes, and to enable people to live in their own homes for longer. An example of this **positive practice** is the local authority's promotion and support for micro carers. Similar to the direct payment portal, the local authority has an easy to navigate micro carer portal. This enables people to be able to find and manage their own support. The micro carers are on a specific framework, evidencing their suitability to support people and enabling the local authority to directly commission a service from them.
- 6.5 As is common across Wales, people in some areas of the county are having to wait for domiciliary care packages to support them with their care and support needs. This means people may be inadequately supported during this time, and this may place additional responsibilities on unpaid carers. The Council's Plan for 2023-2028 highlights innovative ideas to try and expand options to provide support. Examples include continuing to grow their in-house homecare service, utilising a rolling scheme of recruitment and promoting and supporting the expansion of micro carers. There is also the availability of pooled cars, and **positive practice** of the local authority commissioning paid drivers to transport care workers who are non-drivers as means of ensuring people are supported.
- 6.6 Single Point of Access (SPoA) in Flintshire provides a swift and responsive service seven days a week which is **positive practice**. We observed the high number of calls coming in and practitioners respectfully answering the calls. This has been corroborated by a person who spoke with us "*They were swift and I'm always confident I can speak to people in SPOA.*" They were equally complimentary of other parts of adult services, evidencing adult services as a whole is focused on preventing escalation of need.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 6.7 Waiting lists for social care assessments and reviews are high and can impact negatively on people. Oversight of waiting lists for social care assessments is inconsistent across teams. Whilst we received verbal reassurance about oversight of waiting lists in teams, there was limited records to evidence this. **The local authority must ensure that waiting lists are appropriately and consistently monitored and key information is recorded to evidence appropriate prioritisation of cases.**



- 6.8 Care and support plans are not always reviewed in a timely manner. **The local authority must keep care and support plans under review to understand whether the provision of care and support is meeting the identified needs of the individual, and to consider if their needs have changed and if a re-assessment is required.**

## 7. Prevention

### Strengths – Children’s Services

- 7.1 The local authority is focused on ensuring the need for care and support is minimised and escalation of need is prevented. There is a well-established Early Help Hub, which includes a range of partners and third sector agencies. The focus is on delivering more timely and appropriate support to families with greater levels of need to those who are supported by universal service solely. In addition, the local authority has created an Information, Advice and Assistance service (IAA) at the beginning of this year. This was a response to the pressure of increase in contacts with the focus on continuing to support families at an early stage.
- 7.2 There is a focus on promoting the well-being of young carers. Children were observed to benefit from the availability of support in a young carers support group. They clearly enjoyed the activities on offer and the company of both practitioners and peers alike.
- 7.3 There is a clear strategic focus on supporting placements in a care home and foster placements, as well as supporting children to remain in the care and/or return to the care of their families through Multi Systemic Therapy (MST). The teams provide support 24 hours a day 7 days a week. One of the teams, North East Wales MST- FIT, supports children who live in Tŷ Nyth as well as children who live at home with their parents. Tŷ Nyth is the first Integrated Treatment Model Home in Wales and is subject of tripartite funding between the local authority, BCUHB and a neighbouring local authority. Children and young people’s outcomes have improved following support from MST.
- 7.4 The local authority has developed a toolkit in response to the Public Law Outline (PLO) refresh implemented in January 2023 by the judiciary across England and Wales. It contains a range of new documentation which will further promote continuity of strengths-based practice. It also provides clarity to parents about what the concerns are about their children, and what changes are required to reduce the concerns. Children who are ten years of age or over will also be allocated a PLO buddy, similar to a conference buddy, to ensure their voice is obtained as part of these pre-court proceedings specifically. This is **positive practice** as it further promotes the voice of

children and their families. Practice can be improved by ensuring that records sufficiently detail when and where a decision was made to commence PLO proceedings, and to reflect that decision making in this respect is timely.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 7.5 Children who are neurodiverse or who are awaiting diagnosis of a potential neurodiverse condition, and their parents, do not always receive prompt and adequate support and communication. Delays in support impact on their well-being. It is acknowledged that the local authority is well-sighted on this and has recently developed their service to include having a dedicated role to respond and support parent/carers sooner, whilst their children are awaiting a neurodiverse assessment/diagnosis. **The local authority should continue to have oversight and monitor the effectiveness of this development and the impact of this for children and families.**

## **8. Partnership**

### **Strengths – Adult Services**

- 8.1 The local authority works well with providers across Flintshire at an operational level to support service delivery and efficiency. Providers told us they have open lines of communication with staff in the local authority and feel comfortable to use them as a ‘sounding board’ for new ideas and projects.
- 8.2 The local authority holds frequent meetings with colleagues in BCUHB to discuss quality of care and provision in care homes in the area. We observed how this forum promotes effective information sharing and informed decision-making in relation to subsequent actions that agencies would take.
- 8.3 The Progress for Providers scheme is highly regarded by practitioners and providers alike. The scheme enables care home and domiciliary support providers to work towards different awards of bronze, silver and gold in relation to how well they deliver personalised support to people. The approach is **positive** as it promotes outcome-based practice rather than traditional task-based support and the range of tools and guidance to support providers is valuable. The local authority regrades providers according to their performance.
- 8.4 The local authority supports young people with a learning disability up to the age of 25 years to obtain work placements with the aim of paid employment. A more recent development is that this will now be offered to individuals over the age of 25 years with a learning disability. This is a positive joint approach between the local authority, HFT (an established charity supporting people

with learning disabilities), housing association Clwyd Alyn, and Coleg Cambria.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 8.5 Most partnerships are working well at an operational level; however, information is not always shared effectively due to different methods and systems for recording information. This means information regarding people's care and support needs is not easily available across partners, to include some practitioners employed by the local authority. **The local authority should consider, whilst they are procuring a new recording system, how they can further promote information sharing.** All relevant practitioners in different teams within FCC such as locality, substance misuse, and community mental health teams should be able to access all records of the person they support. This would support information sharing and promote a greater oversight and understanding of a person's circumstances.
- 8.6 The local authority must strengthen its systems around carers assessments to ensure the rights and voice of all carers are fully promoted. Carers assessments are not adequately recorded or communicated with the local authority. We saw examples where practitioners are not aware of whether a carer's assessment had been undertaken, and if so, the outcome of the assessment. **The local authority must have greater oversight of these assessments to be confident that it fully meets its responsibilities in line with the requirements of Part 3 and Part 4 of the Code of Practice (assessing and meeting the needs of individuals).**

## **9. Partnership**

### **Strengths – Children's Services**

- 9.1 Systems and relationships are mainly in place to facilitate effective partnership working. Both internal to children's services and in working with partners, there is a shared ethos to safeguard and promote the well-being of children.
- 9.2 Overall, at a strategic level, work with partners is based on a shared understanding and cooperation. Partners described leaders as being transparent and open to challenge. There is regular communication across sector leads, although persistent change in managers in partner agencies was cited as a challenge in working consistently. Some third sector partners considered their work with children's services could be improved in relation to inclusivity and their participation in planning of services.

- 9.3 Information sharing between agencies through Section 47 enquiries, initial child protection conferences and core groups is evident. In further meetings such as review conferences, there can be diminishing contribution from partner agencies. Partner agencies expressed they wished to be more involved in initial strategy discussions/meetings. There is work already underway to establish a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) within the local authority which will further promote involvement and multi-agency working.
- 9.4 Placement sufficiency is a challenge across Wales and the local authority has in the past placed children in services which are operating without registration. However, the local authority has utilised significant capital investment to meet its duty of providing sufficient accommodation within its own area to children looked after. An example of this **positive practice** is the recent investment in in house residential care including the recent build of Y Dderwen and the development of 2 small group homes. Children benefit from living close to their family, friends, and community.
- 9.5 Care leavers benefit from continued support once they leave care. This in the form of the 'When I am Ready' scheme, whereby young people remain with foster carers whilst they transition into adulthood. Young people told us how they valued this provision. However, they said they feel hurt that the documentation refers to them as tenants rather than family members of the foster carers they choose to continue to live with. They very much regard themselves as part of the foster carers' family and vice versa. **The local authority should consider how they can influence a change in terminology.**

#### **Areas for improvement**

- 9.6 **Children's services must communicate information about duty to report outcomes in a timely manner to the person who made the initial report.** There are inconsistencies in current practice in relation to this.
- 9.7 **Children's services must ensure that appropriate agencies are invited to strategy discussions/meetings in line with the WSP, to include but not limited to, a practitioner making the report and practitioners from education and community-based health services if relevant.**
- 9.8 The views and experiences of parent/carers of disabled children indicated that the availability of support to them could be strengthened and more flexible. They told us the support offered was not always suitable for their and their child's needs. **The local authority must ensure the parent/carer is involved as a full partner in assessing to what extent they are able to**

**meet their personal outcomes, or with the support of others who are willing to provide that support; or with the assistance of services in the community to which they have access.**

- 9.9 We saw examples of children who were leaving care having to present as homeless to receive housing support. Practitioners also shared that accommodation for young people is an ongoing challenge and an area for improvement. There are clear longer-term options to support young people in general with housing support, in line with the well-being objectives in the Council Plan for 2023-2028. An example is a strategic plan, informed by a multi-agency approach, to create a young person's homeless hub which will offer accommodation as well as support services. **However, the local authority must continue to prioritise its programme of ensuring appropriate housing options for young care leavers and relevant 16–17-year-olds.** This in both the longer and shorter term, and where possible, avoiding the need for care leavers to present as homeless.

## 10. Next Steps

We expect Flintshire County Council to take appropriate action to improve the areas identified for improvement. We will monitor progress through our ongoing performance review activity with the local authority. We welcome the local authority sharing the positive practice identified with other local authorities, to share learning and help drive continuous improvement in statutory services throughout Wales.

## 11. Methodology

### Fieldwork

- Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of 45 people through review and tracking of their social care record. We reviewed 34 social care records and tracked 10.
- Tracking a person's social care record includes having conversations with the person in receipt of social care services, their family or carers, key worker, the key worker's manager, and where appropriate other professionals involved
- We engaged, through interviews and/or focus groups, with 40 people receiving services and/or their carer.
- We engaged, through interviews and/or focus groups with 133 local authority employees and elected members (this included but was not limited to social workers, team managers, operational managers, senior managers and director of social services).
- We interviewed a range of partner organisations.

- We reviewed a sample of staff supervision records.
- We observed a resource panel and an interagency meeting in adult services.
- We reviewed supporting documentation sent to CIW for the purpose of the inspection.
- We administered surveys to local authority social services staff, partner organisations and people.

Our Privacy Notice can be found at <https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information>.

## 12. Welsh Language

CIW is committed to providing an active offer of the Welsh language during our activity with local authorities.

The active offer was not required on this occasion. This is because the local authority informed us that people taking part did not wish to contribute to this performance evaluation inspection in Welsh.

## 13. Acknowledgements

CIW would like to thank staff, partners and people who gave their time and contributed to this inspection.

## 14. Glossary

**Must** -Improvement is deemed necessary in order for the local authority to meet a duty outlined in legislation, regulation or code of practice. The local authority is not currently meeting its statutory duty/duties and must take action.

**Should** - Improvement will enhance service provision and/or outcomes for people and/or their carer. It does not constitute a failure to meet a legal duty at this time; but without suitable action, there is a risk the local authority may fail to meet its legal duty/duties in future.

**Positive practice** - Identified areas of strength within the local authority. This relates to practice considered innovative and/or which consistently results in positive outcomes for people receiving statutory services.

**Prevention and Early Intervention** - A principle of the Act which aims to ensure that there is access to support to prevent situations from getting worse, and to enhance the maintenance of individual and collective well-being. This principle

centres on increasing preventative services within communities to minimise the escalation of critical need.

**Voice and Control** - A principle of the Act which aims to put the individual and their needs at the centre of their care and support, and giving them a voice in, and control over, the outcomes that can help them achieve well-being and the things that matter most to them.

**Well-being** - A principle of the Act which aims for people to have well-being in every part of their lives. Well-being is more than being healthy. It is about being safe and happy, having choice and getting the right support, being part of a strong community, having friends and relationships that are good for you, and having hobbies, work or learning. It is about supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.

**Co-Production** - A principle of the Act which aims for people to be more involved in the design and provision of their care and support. It means organisations and professionals working with them and their family, friends and carers so their care and support is the best it can be.

**Multi-Agency working** - A principle of the Act which aims to strengthen joint working between care and support organisations to make sure the right types of support and services are available in local communities to meet people's needs. The summation of the Act states that there is a requirement for co-operation and partnership by public authorities.

**SMART** - SMART is a best practice framework for setting goals. A SMART goal should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

**What matters** - 'What Matters' conversations are a way for professionals to understand people's situation, their current well-being, and what can be done to support them. It is an equal conversation and is important to help ensure the voice of the individual or carer is heard and 'what matters' to them

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Adult’s Services					
Finding		Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success
<b>People - Voice and Control - Strengths</b>					
2.1	There are examples of person-centred and comprehensive social care assessments which evidence practitioners have taken time to get to know people. <i>Practice in this area, however, needs to be more consistent because there were also examples of less comprehensive and person-centred assessments.</i>	Practice Directive to be created to remind practitioners on the requirements of a comprehensive and person-centred assessment. The Practice Directive will include a refresher on the basics as well as including some good practice examples.	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
<b>People - Voice and Control - Areas for improvement</b>					
2.8	Care and support plans could be further developed by setting clearer SMART outcomes and consistently taking a proactive strengths-based approach. Also, whilst people’s voices are clear in some assessments, this approach should be further developed in care and support plans. <b>Reference should be made to what matters to the individual and personal outcomes should be recorded more consistently in the first person.</b>	Practice Directive to be created to support practitioners with the creation of outcomes utilising SMART objectives with a strengths-based approach. The Practice Directive will include some good practice examples.	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
	People are sometimes supported through a duty system whilst on a waiting list for allocation to a specific worker. This can be challenging for people as there is insufficient oversight of their circumstances, lack of continuity of support, and people have to re-tell their story. <b>The local authority should continue with its current efforts to ensure a consistent sufficient, qualified, and competent workforce to lessen the need for people to be supported by different practitioners who are unknown to them.</b>	Progressing through the Workforce Resilience Project workstreams, looking at a) improving our success in recruitment and b) what can be done to retain our current workforce.  Consideration is to be given to introducing a consistent duty social worker role to each Locality Team pending outcome of current trial.	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	Ongoing with monthly meetings  Review by 30th June 2024	

2.9	<p>There are examples of direct payment reviews being held. However, there was one example which had not received a review. <b>The local authority must review the arrangements for the making of direct payments and how they are being used in line with Code of Practice 4 (Meeting Needs) to assess whether personal outcomes continue to be met.</b></p>	<p>This is an isolated incident due to circumstances of a particular case. There is good practice and processes in place to ensure the robust review of Direct Payments.</p> <p>A recent review of the Direct Payment financial processes has been undertaken and actions from this will be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to proportionate monitoring using new risk assessment matrix.</li> <li>• Reduce surplus funds allowance from 8 to 6 weeks.</li> <li>• Move all Direct Payments to more effective management solutions i.e., remove all PADP and paper monitoring.</li> <li>• Improve completion of correct service information data.</li> </ul>	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
Page 202 2.10	<p><b>When practitioners attempt communication with individuals, the local authority should ensure a more consistent evidence base that reflects the communication methods that have been considered and attempted.</b></p>	<p>Practice Directive to be created to remind practitioners on the requirements of recording and evidencing communication attempts.</p> <p>The Practice Directive will include a refresher on the basics as well as including some good practice examples.</p> <p>This will be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis through casefile audit process.</p>	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
2.11	<p>There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that advocacy is consistently considered and offered when it would have been appropriate. <b>This is an area that must be strengthened to demonstrate routine consideration of advocacy particularly in adult safeguarding.</b></p>	<p>Practice Directive to be created to remind practitioners of the advocacy offer available, information on the new advocacy contracts as well as detail on the differences and appropriateness for family advocacy vs. formal advocacy will be included in this directive. The Practice Directive will emphasise the need to record the advocacy offer in documentation along with the considerations given during the investigation of whether advocacy is required.</p>	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor Jane Davies Jayne Belton Michele Hingston	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

		Audit checklist to be amended and expanded to ask if advocacy was used and if not, why not.	Jacque Slee	Complete	Audit checklist now includes this question.
		Advocacy providers will be invited to deliver information sessions for teams, giving information about the new offer and answer questions.	Workforce Development Team	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Create a report in Paris to investigate how many are completing advocacy information to monitor the progress with commentary.	Jacque Slee	Complete	Data is available and able to be provided from Paris as and when required. This will be monitored at the Quarterly Performance Review meeting.

Adult's Services					
Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success	
<b>Well-being - Strengths</b>					
Page 203 4.3	<p>There is a strategic commitment to develop community services. The investment in local hubs and other capital investment supports this agenda. For example, Hwb Cyfle is a purpose-built service for disabled people offering different activities in community-based environments to promote people's well-being. <a href="#">The provision would benefit from increased opportunities to support people to maximise their independence in relation to daily living skills.</a></p>	<p>We readily accept this recommendation through the tender process for our day services. All day services contacts are due for renewal in the next 12 months and will be reviewed in line with these recommendations.</p> <p>A different approach will be adopted to stipulate a requirement in the new contracts for people to learn new skills, increasing independence and improving daily living skills, progressing to fulfil their potential as well as take part in fun activities. Increasing opportunities for people to participate in Supported Employment and other forms of Community Support will be featured in Service Specifications for the future.</p> <p>This will also be expanded to include short term care.</p>	Jan Bellis Jo Taylor	By February 2025	
<b>Well-being - Areas for Improvement</b>					

4.6	In relation to adult safeguarding, we saw variation in social care records. Greater clarity is required in relation to the views of the adult at risk, decision making, determinations, and whether subsequent actions have addressed the original concern. The outcomes of the enquiries must be shared with the reporter. <b>The local authority must ensure that adult safeguarding practice consistently meets with the requirements of the WSP.</b>	Review of closure forms to ensure that subsequent actions have met the original concerns.	Michele Hingston Jayne Belton	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 and ongoing	
		Discussions with the team to ensure recording and reporting back is consistent.		By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Review of the Paris form to ensure that there is a relevant space to capture this.		By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
4.7	There are examples of people's social care assessments and safeguarding reports indicating they lack mental capacity to make decisions about their care. The quality and decision making of these records is variable. <b>The local authority must ensure practice consistently aligns with the requirements and principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the relevant Code of Practice.</b>	Practice Directive to be created to remind practitioners of the expectation of the quality of their recording their evidence.	Janet Bellis Chris Phillips Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		One particular case highlighted an issue. Lessons Learnt will be undertaken and will drive further actions.	Jane Davies Jayne Belton Michele Hingston	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
Page 48 204	In common with many other local authorities across Wales, people's rights are impacted by the waiting lists for Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS) assessments. <b>The local authority must ensure that arrangements for the provision for DoLS assessments are fit for purpose and responsive.</b>	Robust process is in place and is continually under review. Urgent cases are prioritised, the process is reactive.	Jane Davies Jayne Belton Michele Hingston	Complete / Ongoing	Process will remain continually under review.
4.9	The current recording system does not support practitioners to capture people's strengths and outcomes in a meaningful way. <b>The local authority should take this into consideration, with the imminent procurement of an updated recording system.</b>	Circulation of good practice cases identified at monthly casefile audit sessions will continue to support compliance with the recording policy.	Jacque Slee	Complete	Will be circulated to Team Managers to review with Teams on an ongoing basis.
		Procurement for the new system will be approximately 3 years, this will be taken into consideration during this process.	Jane Davies Jacque Slee Claire Clements	In progress / Long term	

Adult's Services					
Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success	
<b>Prevention - Areas for Improvement</b>					
6.7	Waiting lists for social care assessments and reviews are high and can impact negatively on people. Oversight of	Paris will be updated to include a new enquiry priority option and a new casenote	Jan Bellis Chris Phillips	Complete	Paris has been updated to include the new casenote type/reason.

	waiting lists for social care assessments is inconsistent across teams. Whilst we received verbal reassurance about oversight of waiting lists in teams, there was limited records to evidence this. <b>The local authority must ensure that waiting lists are appropriately and consistently monitored and key information is recorded to evidence appropriate prioritisation of cases.</b>	type/reason. This will ensure that action taken on Enquiries Manager before allocation can be clearly identified and evidenced.	Jacque Slee Claire Clements		Communication has been sent to Team Managers.
6.8	Care and support plans are not always reviewed in a timely manner. <b>The local authority must keep care and support plans under review to understand whether the provision of care and support is meeting the identified needs of the individual, and to consider if their needs have changed and if a re-assessment is required.</b>	Implemented changes to process for hospital discharges. Cases now sent directly to review meaning that they are reviewed sooner than going to locality.  Further consideration of changes to processes is being undertaken within current resource restrictions.	Janet Bellis Chris Phillips Hannah Thomas	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

Adult's Services					
Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success	
<b>Partnership - Areas for Improvement</b>					
Page 205  8.5	Most partnerships are working well at an operational level; however, information is not always shared effectively due to different methods and systems for recording information. This means information regarding people's care and support needs is not easily available across partners, to include some practitioners employed by the local authority. <b>The local authority should consider, whilst they are procuring a new recording system, how they can further promote information sharing.</b> All relevant practitioners in different teams within FCC such as locality, substance misuse, and community mental health teams should be able to access all records of the person they support. This would support information sharing and promote a greater oversight and understanding of a person's circumstances.	Procurement of system to replace Paris is underway and will be complete in approximately 3 years.	Jacque Slee Claire Clements	In progress / Long term	
		Consider potential for access to Paris for FCC MH Social Workers.		By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Discussion with Jo Taylor to investigate wider access to Paris for other team members – Jacque Slee to arrange a meeting.		By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	Meeting has been booked. Update following meeting

8.6	The local authority must strengthen its systems around carers assessments to ensure the rights and voice of all carers are fully promoted. Carers assessments are not adequately recorded or communicated with the local authority. We saw examples where practitioners are not aware of whether a carer's assessment had been undertaken, and if so, the outcome of the assessment. <b>The local authority must have greater oversight of these assessments to be confident that it fully meets its responsibilities in line with the requirements of Part 3 and Part 4 of the Code of Practice (assessing and meeting the needs of individuals).</b>	Explore options for specific Social Services individuals to have access to the NEWCIS Charity Log system to be able to access Carers Needs Assessments as and when required.	Jane Davies Janet Bellis Naomi Harper NEWCIS	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
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Children's Services					
Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success	
<b>People - Voice and Control - Strengths</b>					
3.1	Overall children and young people's voice and choice is heard and well reflected in records. Section 47 enquiry records include direct quotes from children, focusing on what is important for them and what worries they have. A few core group minutes contained a voice of the child section which is <b>positive practice</b> although such practice would benefit from being more consistent.	TAF group established to conduct file audits on core group documentation and consider if they are they presenting the daily lived experience of the child and is that then fed through into the recording.	Jayne Belton	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Dedicated core group training will be rolled out again. 12-month programme is set to start in May.	Safeguarding and Workforce Development Teams	Beginning on 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
		Specified minute taker assigned for core groups. Individual will be included in training and will be key in ensuring the voice of the child is captured.	Jayne Belton Shireen Rogers	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
3.7	There are good examples of documentation which clearly captured the voice of a child, and positive examples of records written directly to the child, providing clarity and focus as to why the WSP have been instigated which is <b>positive practice</b> . This practice could be more consistent.	Practice Directive to be created. Establish TAF group to write this as a training support.  Information: Consideration of tailoring the information to the age of the child and the literacy age of the parent.	Jayne Belton Brigid Gribbin	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

		This will be reinforced through roll out if the programme the “ <i>Effective Child Protection</i> ” model.			
3.10	There are systems in place to review the standard and quality of practice which include file audits. However, some practitioners were unaware of these systems. Therefore, whilst there is evidence of learning across the workforce, <b>this could be improved with wider dissemination of relevant information.</b>	Review communication lines for information dissemination.	Peter Robson Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Ensure that feedback from File Audits is presented at Team managers Meetings.	Peter Robson Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Include information on File Audit process in the Induction Pack to inform newly qualified, newly appointed team members.	Naomi Harper	End March 2024	Complete, documents published.
		Develop peer audit model.	Peter Robson Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
Page 207 12	A few respondents (16%) expressed concerns about leadership and culture. They wanted their feedback and concerns to be taken into greater account, to feel more valued and respected, and they wanted the management and support of staff to be more consistent.	Commissioned “ <i>Leaderful Action</i> ” to deliver compassionate leadership workshops with Management Team.	Craig Macleod	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
		Progressing through the Workforce Resilience Project workstreams, in particular the creation of a staff Retention Plan	Craig Macleod Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey	Ongoing with monthly meetings	
3.13	People’s Welsh language needs are considered and recorded. We saw an example of the Active Offer being implemented in practice and a parent being able to converse verbally in the Welsh language in line with their wishes. <b>However, when Welsh is noted as a preferred language, this should also be the language in which documentation is written.</b> Unless it is the person’s preference to have documentation in the English language and a record is made to that effect.	Practice Directive to be created to set the expectation and ensure understanding of processes behind this. Practice Directive will be issued to both Adults’ and Children’s Services.	Jane Davies	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

People - Voice and Control - Areas for Improvement					
3.14	<p>Disabled children and young people have to wait long periods of time for short overnight breaks in a residential provision. The local authority aims to provide alternate support in the meantime through direct payments for example. However, <b>the local authority must so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure it is able to provide looked after and other accommodated children with accommodation that is within the local authority's area and that meets the children's needs. This in line with Code of Practice 6 (Looked After and Accommodated Children).</b></p>	<p>Update and issue a revised Commissioning Placement Strategy that identifies placement needs, and local authority placement/commissioning intentions within the context of Welsh Government's policy and legislative framework for removing profit from Childrens social care.</p>	<p>Craig Macleod Jo Taylor</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</p>	
Page 208 15	<p>As a result of the fragility in the social care workforce, children and young people experience changes in social workers. Children are supported through a duty system rather than an allocated worker at times. Changes in social workers makes it challenging for children to develop trusting relationships. We heard from one young person how they are aware their social worker will soon change. Parents also have to repeat their stories and views to social workers. As a result of changes in practitioners, support can be delayed, with oversight of children and young people's situation also impacted. <b>The local authority must continue with its current efforts to ensure a consistent, sufficient, qualified, and competent workforce to meet its statutory duties, and should consider an exit strategy for ending the reliance on the commissioned managed agency team.</b></p>	<p>Progressing through the Workforce Resilience Project workstreams, looking at a) improving our success in recruitment and b) what can be done to retain our current workforce.</p>	<p>Craig Macleod Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey</p>	<p>Ongoing with monthly meetings</p>	
		<p>Where possible encourage a crossover period where cases are handed between teams.</p>	<p>Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey</p>	<p>Review by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024</p>	
		<p>Trial one-page profiles in Children's Services to ensure that the need for repetition is prevented.</p>	<p>Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024</p>	



Children's Services				
Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success
<b>Well-being - Strengths</b>				
5.3	<p>There is evidence of exceptional strengths-based practice utilised by individual practitioners. This is <b>positive practice</b>. <b>For this approach to become embedded, the local authority should consider a model of practice that highlights what needs to change in families, with greater focus on how family and wider community networks can be facilitated to keep children safe.</b> A model would promote a shared understanding across agencies of safeguarding practice and management of risk. It would also provide practitioners with consistent tools and templates in relation to recording and maintaining focus on risk. It is acknowledged that the local authority is on a journey to fully implement a model of practice. This has already commenced with an initial focus on neglect, with the local authority having purchased a neglect-graded profile tool through the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to support practice. This is a <b>positive</b> response by the local authority to a high number of children affected by neglect on the child protection register (CPR).</p>	<p><i>Implement the first phase of "Effective Child Protection" Model.. This is a 3 year programme to develop our approach to working with families whose children are on the child protection register.</i></p>	<p>Craig Macleod Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey</p>	<p>Phase 1: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</p>
		<p>The Graded Care profile 2 is an evidence based tool to assess and manage neglect. The tool has been purchased from NSPCC . The tool will support practitioners to identify and appropriately manage risks relating to neglect. A project will be developed in April 2024 to implement the tool with a training programme delivered through to the end of 2025.</p>	<p>Craig Macleod Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey</p>	<p>End of 2025</p>
<b>Well-being - Areas for Improvement</b>				
5.6	<p>There is indication the threshold for significant harm is not always applied consistently when considering removing children from the CPR. We heard this may be as a result of a misplaced conception that maintaining a child's name on the CPR is a means of ensuring continued support services for a child and their family. <b>The local authority should consider sharing guidance more widely with relevant partners and stakeholders to ensure consistent and shared understanding of thresholds and information sharing protocols.</b></p>	<p>Re-issue laminated sheets with categories and definitions. Training on definitions and registration/deregistration included as part of the conference and core group training programme over 12 months from May.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Team</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024</p>
		<p>Practice Directive will be created to improve information sharing through FCC and other agencies. Directive will ensure social workers work proactively with IAA and EHH to identify support available if deregistered and a clear step down plan is in place prior to discussions around deregistration.</p>	<p>Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024</p>

		Through Supervision meetings, managers will ensure that the thorough consideration has been given and documented to support conversations and decision-making processes during de-registration meetings.	Peter Robson Suzanne Johnston Jane Turvey	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
5.7	Risks are appropriately considered, with timely progression to the right service for children and families. There are, however, delays for some families subject to child protection procedures as enquiries are not always completed promptly. It is not always clear what the determination is post completion of a Section 47 enquiry. <b>Managers must ensure that, following the timely conclusion of a child protection enquiry, next steps are explicitly recorded with clarity and rationale in relation to the determinations under Section 3 Part 1 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.</b>	It is recognised that our processes and systems on our PARIS IT system need to be re-engineered. This will involve the S47 and Part 3 assessment documentation on Paris to be separated to bring greater clarity of process and timelines.	Brigid Gribbin Claire Clements Jacque Slee	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		To fully improve our workflow and performance management systems we will need to replace the current PARIS system. We will need to work with Procurement to ensure that we are commission a new system that supports practice and provides effective and timely performance management.	Jane Davies Jacque Slee Claire Clements	In progress / Long term	
5.8	As Section 47 enquiries are not always completed in the required timescales, this impacts on timely decision making as to whether a child's name should be included on the CPR. <b>The local authority should ensure that when it has been determined that a child is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing harm, abuse or neglect, a child protection conference is convened within 15 working days of the strategy discussion/meeting, or the last strategy discussion/meeting (if more than one has occurred), which initiated the Section 47 enquiry.</b>	Agree a process for the MASH, including the recording of decisions, that is compliant with the WSP. This action is also linked to action 5.7.	Brigid Gribbin	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
5.9	Some care and support protection plans viewed are service led, with a focus on compliance instead of outcomes. Care and support protection plans are not routinely updated after core group meetings. It is acknowledged that recent training commissioned by the local authority has focused on clarifying roles and responsibilities for social workers. <b>An outline care and support protection plan devised at first</b>	Establish a TAF group to investigate and share learnings.	Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston Peter Robson	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
		Seek advice and expertise on the implementation of the " <i>Effective Child Protection</i> ".	Craig Macleod Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston Peter Robson	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	

	<b>conference should be developed into a more detailed plan at the first core group meeting as is highlighted in the WSP. Subsequent core groups should specifically review progress of outcomes for the child's safety. Leaders should ensure practitioners have clear systems and standards for developing plans which are child-centred and outcome-focused.</b>	Include in the conference and core group training programme over 12 months from May.	Safeguarding and Workforce Development Teams	Beginning on 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
		Review and amend format of the Protection Plan documentation. Consider how this documentation displays how the daily life of the child will be changed through the identified plan.	FIT Manager Brigid Gribbin Safeguarding Managers	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
5.10	We saw examples of disclosures by police about an individual's criminal background, with a potential risk for a child, having been appropriately considered to promote children's safety. However, sharing of the information was not always completed in a timely manner with pressures of work cited in one example as the reason for the delay. <b>When the local authority is aware of such information, and it has been agreed they can share information with relevant individuals to promote a child's safety, this must be done in a timely manner.</b>	Establish specific timescales to define our expectation of "timely".	Brigid Gribbin	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		In recognition of delays from other agencies, agree timescales and process for escalation.	Brigid Gribbin	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

**Children's Services**

Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success
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**Prevention - Strengths**

7.4	The local authority has developed a toolkit in response to the Public Law Outline (PLO) refresh implemented in January 2023 by the judiciary across England and Wales. It contains a range of new documentation which will further promote continuity of strengths-based practice. It also provides clarity to parents about what the concerns are about their children, and what changes are required to reduce the concerns. Children who are ten years of age or over will also	Establish TAF group to audit quality of documentation in recording LAM minutes.	Peter Robson Jane Turvey Suzanne Johnston	By 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024	
		Standard letter sent out following PLO, consider whether this is captured on records.	Jane Turvey	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

	be allocated a PLO buddy, similar to a conference buddy, to ensure their voice is obtained as part of these pre-court proceedings specifically. This is <b>positive practice</b> as it further promotes the voice of children and their families. <b>Practice can be improved by ensuring that records sufficiently detail when and where a decision was made to commence PLO proceedings, and to reflect that decision making in this respect is timely.</b>	Ensure that this is consistently applied and referrals are made where children cross the age threshold for a Conference Buddy.	Jane Turvey	Review by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
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**Prevention - Areas for Improvement**

7.5 Page 212	Children who are neurodiverse or who are awaiting diagnosis of a potential neurodiverse condition, and their parents, do not always receive prompt and adequate support and communication. Delays in support impact on their well-being. It is acknowledged that the local authority is well-sighted on this and has recently developed their service to include having a dedicated role to respond and support parent/carers sooner, whilst their children are awaiting a neurodiverse assessment/diagnosis. <b>The local authority should continue to have oversight and monitor the effectiveness of this development and the impact of this for children and families.</b>	Successful application for NDIP funding has resulted in a new social worker in post from January 2024 to specifically support 16–25-year-olds who are Neurodiverse, in all aspects of their lives. This post has been highly successful and has received very positive feedback. Monitor the effectiveness of this post and the impact that it is having on young people and their families. Use the evidence of this to submit applications for funding for further posts to support other age groups.	Jo Taylor	Review in June 2024	
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**Children's Services**

Finding	Action	Owner	Timescale	Evidence of success
<b>Partnership - Strengths</b>				
9.2	Overall, at a strategic level, work with partners is based on a shared understanding and cooperation. Partners described leaders as being transparent and open to challenge. There is regular communication across sector leads, although persistent change in managers in partner agencies was cited as a challenge in working consistently. <b>Some third sector partners considered their work with children's services could be improved in relation to inclusivity and their participation in planning of services.</b>	Continue and build upon the work to develop relationships with our partners, ensuring communication is strengthened so that they are aware of our thresholds. This will be delivered through monthly meetings with health and education. We will also develop 6 monthly meetings with 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector to ensure they have the opportunity to participate in service planning.	Jane Turvey	Review 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

9.3	Information sharing between agencies through Section 47 enquiries, initial child protection conferences and core groups is evident. In further meetings such as review conferences, there can be diminishing contribution from partner agencies. Partner agencies expressed they wished to be more involved in initial strategy discussions/meetings. There is work already underway to establish a MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) within the local authority which will further promote involvement and multi-agency working.	Include in the conference and core group training programme over 12 months from May.	Safeguarding and Workforce Development Teams	Beginning on 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
9.5	Care leavers benefit from continued support once they leave care. This in the form of the 'When I am Ready' scheme, whereby young people remain with foster carers whilst they transition into adulthood. Young people told us how they valued this provision. However, they said they feel hurt that the documentation refers to them as tenants rather than family members of the foster carers they choose to continue to live with. They very much regard themselves as part of the foster carers' family and vice versa. <b>The local authority should consider how they can influence a change in terminology.</b>	Use of language is restricted due to the technical terms in the SSWBA (14) that refers to "When I am Ready" placements. Ensure that Personal Advisor Team provide our Leaving Care Young People with explanations and rationale behind it. This will form part a wider piece of work on 'Mind Your language' which identifies that terminology and language that our children and young people prefer/ want us to avoid.	Peter Robson	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
<b>Partnership - Areas for Improvement</b>					
Page 213	<b>Children's services must communicate information about duty to report outcomes in a timely manner to the person who made the initial report.</b> There are inconsistencies in current practice in relation to this.	Continue to work with Business Support Teams on the process and improve access points for partner agencies.	Jayne Belton	Review 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Safeguarding Business Support team to be included in child protection / core group training programme	Jayne Belton	Beginning on 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
		Improve professional's knowledge on where referrals should be sent to i.e., correct mailbox. Create Practice Directive to establish proportionate approach, to include:when it is appropriate to give feedback, who gives feedback and how it is given as well as what evidence is required once feedback is provided.	Jayne Belton Brigid Gribbin	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	

9.7	<b>Children’s services must ensure that appropriate agencies are invited to strategy discussions /meetings in line with the WSP, to include but not limited to, a practitioner making the report and practitioners from education and community-based health services if relevant.</b>	Continue to work to include agencies in discussions where possible and appropriate in line with WSP. The establishment of the Safeguarding Hub will support this development.	Brigid Gribbin	Review by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
9.8	The views and experiences of parent/carers of disabled children indicated that the availability of support to them could be strengthened and more flexible. They told us the support offered was not always suitable for their and their child’s needs. <b>The local authority must ensure the parent/carer is involved as a full partner in assessing to what extent they are able to meet their personal outcomes, or with the support of others who are willing to provide that support; or with the assistance of services in the community to which they have access.</b>	Support to upskill 3rd Sector carer’s support agencies to ensure that they have sufficient experience with carers of children with disabilities.	Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	
		Ensure that all workers are aware of the flexibility of the direct payment offer and the ability of the direct payments to offer a unique and bespoke package of support.	Jo Taylor	By 30 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	

<p>We saw examples of children who were leaving care having to present as homeless to receive housing support. Practitioners also shared that accommodation for young people is an ongoing challenge and an area for improvement. There are clear longer-term options to support young people in general with housing support, in line with the well-being objectives in the Council Plan for 2023-2028. An example is a strategic plan, informed by a multi-agency approach, to create a young person's homeless hub which will offer accommodation as well as support services. <b>However, the local authority must continue to prioritise its programme of ensuring appropriate housing options for young care leavers and relevant 16–17-year-olds.</b> This in both the longer and shorter term, and where possible, avoiding the need for care leavers to present as homeless.</p>	<p>Explore the development of multi-agency hub(s) to support young people with all elements of independence, to include housing.</p>	<p>Paul Calland (Housing Portfolio)</p>		
	<p>Continue to work to develop preventative strategies for “rare, brief and non-repeat” homelessness.</p>	<p>Martin Cooil (Housing Portfolio)</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</p>	
	<p>Development of new Parenting Strategy – building in resilience for 16/17-year-olds with preventative measures.</p>	<p>Peter Robson</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</p>	
	<p>Investigate broadening Local Solutions Supported Lodgings services.</p>	<p>Lisa Pearson (Housing Portfolio)</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</p>	
	<p>Investigate the potential to explore shared tenancies in local authority / housing association properties.</p>	<p>Jen Griffiths (Housing Portfolio)</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024</p>	
	<p>Make connection with Flintshire's Ending Homelessness board and actions that are progressing through this workstream.</p>	<p>Jane Davies Homelessness Board</p>	<p>Review by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024</p>	
	<p>Ensure that Housing Support and Homeless Service are alerted promptly as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> pathway plan to allow forward planning. This needs to be consistent across all individuals including those with low level/no needs). Run report from Paris to check for birthdays coming up in 12 months and ensure plans are in place.</p>	<p>Peter Robson  Personal Advisor Team</p>	<p>By 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024</p>	

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## Cabinet

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Age Friendly Communities
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the development of age-friendly communities in Flintshire and seeks commitment for ongoing support across portfolio areas.

The Welsh Government 'Strategy for an Ageing Society' sets out the actions needed to enable people in Wales to age well and to live within age-friendly communities. To support this strategy, Welsh Government funding is provided to all local authorities to support them to apply for and maintain membership of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

In May 2023, Flintshire County Council received confirmation of its successful application to join the WHO Age-friendly Network having demonstrated the breadth of engagement with older people and range of age-friendly services and initiatives in the county.

As members of the WHO Network, Flintshire has developed an age-friendly plan to outline the actions needed for communities in Flintshire to become more age-friendly. This plan is based on local and national policy and strategies, and on priorities and needs identified through community engagement. The plan is a working document and will evolve in line with changing priorities and new and emerging strategies.

Flintshire is meeting commitments to provide online information hubs and to share best practice examples across Wales and globally. This has included contributions to the Welsh Government's Age-friendly Wales newsletter. In addition, a presentation was made by citizens from Flintshire community groups, supported by the Social Services' team, at the Older People's Commissioner's Age-Friendly Wales Conference on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. This work was very well received and is described further in the detail section of this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet note the progress made to develop age friendly communities in Flintshire including the successful application for membership of the World Health Organisation Global Network.
2	That Cabinet commit to the continued support and collaboration of all portfolio service teams to help develop Flintshire as a great place to live for the ageing population.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>
1.01	<p><u>Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities membership</u></p> <p>In February 2023, Flintshire County Council applied to join the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The application demonstrated existing age-friendly projects and initiatives that are taking place across Flintshire and highlighted opportunities for future age-friendly development identified through planning processes, wellbeing assessments and ongoing engagement with older people and older people's groups.</p> <p>In May 2023, the Council was notified that Flintshire's membership application had been successful, the second local authority in Wales to join the Global Network. Flintshire is now part of a growing global movement of communities that are striving to better meet the needs of older residents.</p> <p>As members of the Global Network, Flintshire commits to sharing and promoting the values and principles central to the WHO's age-friendly approach and actively participating in the Network, including sharing experiences with other members.</p> <p>A public profile page for Flintshire has been created on 'Age-friendly World,' with an online portal for global network members to share information and experiences. This portal will increase the visibility of Flintshire's work and inspire change in other areas. All network members are asked to submit at least one "Age-friendly practice" per year. The Digital Flintshire Hub, which supports people to use the internet in a safe and effective way, was recently shared as a good practice example for increasing digital inclusion for those seeking support to access online services and activities. Planning is in progress for the sharing of best practice examples in the future.</p>
1.02	<p><u>National Age-friendly Networks</u></p> <p>As a member of the Global Network, Flintshire is eligible to join the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities. Supported by the Centre for Ageing Better, the UK Network aims to inspire change across the UK by sharing good practice, connecting communities to share information, knowledge,</p>

	<p>and experience, and providing support for identifying evidence-based solutions. Regular peer calls provide an opportunity for leads of UK Network member communities to connect with one another, problem-solve, and learn about effective age-friendly practice. UK Network membership also enabled community groups in Flintshire to apply for grant funding which supported an event to mark Ageism Awareness Day in March 2024.</p> <p>To support the growth of the age-friendly communities in Wales, Welsh Government has established a network of participating counties. Quarterly meetings are held with age-friendly leads in each county to provide opportunities for good practices to be shared, and to highlight common issues that might benefit from collaboration. This forum contributes to the production of an Age-Friendly Wales quarterly newsletter to showcase good practice across Wales. Flintshire provided an article for the July 2023 issue marking the county's membership of the WHO Network and highlighting examples of developments in progress. This article is provided in the appendices for information.</p>
1.03	<p><u>Age-friendly Flintshire Hub</u></p> <p>A requirement of Age-friendly Network membership is the development of web-based content to provide information and support to communities in relation to age-friendly activities and services. The Age-friendly Flintshire Hub provides background information and will be developed to raise awareness of age-friendly services and good practice that is being developed in communities across Flintshire.</p>
1.04	<p><u>Age-friendly Wales Conference</u></p> <p>On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales held a conference to celebrate the action underway to make Wales an age-friendly nation and explore ways of working together to ensure communities support everyone to age well.</p> <p>Flintshire was one of four local authorities invited to share examples of good practice through citizen presentations. Representatives from Age &amp; dementia-friendly Holywell and Age-Friendly Leeswood and Pontblyddyn delivered short presentations on the projects and initiatives taking place in their communities.</p> <p>Positive feedback about Flintshire's presentation was received from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. Letter attached in appendices for information. The Chairperson of Cymru Older People's Alliance also commended the Flintshire presentation, saying "It was great to hear the Flintshire presentation at the Age Friendly Communities Conference in Cardiff today. The examples showed how older people have been involved from the outset and at a grass roots community level. Well done to the team."</p>
1.05	<p><u>Community Engagement</u></p> <p>Community engagement is a key driver for the implementation of Flintshire's age-friendly development plans. The Social Services</p>

Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team lead this engagement, with valuable support from colleagues across all Council portfolio teams. A summary of the key engagement and development activities in 2023, is provided here for information.

- School-based lunch clubs in collaboration with Newydd catering to provide healthy affordable food, social interaction, and opportunities for intergenerational activities.
- Dementia awareness school projects incorporating the arts to enable primary school children to raise awareness and understanding of dementia in local communities.
- Community hubs to increase awareness of information and support services that can improve wellbeing for older people.
- Weekly information sharing to provide a 'what's on' view and highlight community activities for older people.
- Collaborative community work to increase digital inclusion through digital tablet courses and equipment loans.
- A partnership approach with officers from Access & the Natural Environment and Streetscene & Transportation made access improvements and developed local community walking routes to support increased physical activity for older people.
- Community based strength and balance sessions to provide a physical and mental wellbeing approach to encourage older people to re-engage with their community. This included partnership working with Aura 60+ Active Leisure, who provide weekly exercise sessions in leisure centres across the county for people of all ages and abilities. This partnership development enabled the strength and balance class to be delivered in a community setting in Hope.
- Support to the Flintshire 50+ Action Group to identify priorities for action and to help plan and promote the annual International Day for Older People celebration event held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This popular event was attended by more than a hundred people who socialised, had access to information from a range of health, social care, public service and third sector providers and celebrated the positive work in the county.
- Ageism Action Day Event in Holywell on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 provided opportunities for older adults from the local community to engage with pupils from Ysgol Maes y Felin to share their skills and experiences and talk about positive aspects of ageing.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> There are no direct revenue implications highlighted by this report. A Welsh Government grant wholly funds the post of Ageing Well Engagement Officer and activities to support community engagement.</p> <p>Welsh Government has confirmed ongoing funding into 2024/25 to support local authorities to appoint an age-friendly lead and undertake projects and activities that help to develop and maintain age friendly communities as part of the Global Network membership commitment.</p> <p><b>Capital:</b> There are no capital resource implications.</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> An Ageing Well Engagement Officer post has been recruited for a fixed term period. This post will be reviewed if Welsh Government funding is reduced or ceased beyond 2024/25.</p> <p>Support from all Council portfolio teams is essential to develop age friendly communities and maintain successful membership of the network. This includes the provision of information regarding age-friendly good practices on the World Health Organisation’s website. This will not require additional resources as the scope and objectives align closely to the Council’s current policies and commitments to older residents. Social Services will lead the project and seek information and support from other teams as required.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>The development of age friendly communities and membership of the WHO Age-friendly Network has a positive impact on the lives of older people and other residents and community groups. Developing age friendly, safe, and accessible communities positively influences the wellbeing of residents, and communities benefit through sharing good practice locally, across Wales and the global network.</p> <p>The development of age-friendly communities is not a finite project but is an ongoing process, and the needs and aims of people over fifty are varied. The implementation of the ‘Age-friendly Flintshire Plan’ will evolve and adapt to provide appropriate solutions to reflect the diversity of the community and to changing priorities and new and emerging policies.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<p>The Social Services Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team undertake continuous engagement with older people to identify priorities and actions for inclusion in the Age-friendly Flintshire Plan.</p> <p>The team works closely with internal and external partners on related programmes that influence the age-friendliness of communities. This includes contributions to the Place Making planning process to shape the</p>

	<p>future of town centres in Flintshire; working with Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) to develop more Connected Communities to reduce the risk of loneliness and social isolation; developing Dementia Friendly services and amenities in partnership with North-East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS).</p> <p>The team co-ordinated a response to the Local Authority recommendations highlighted in the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales’s ‘Access Denied’ report on Digital exclusion published February 2024. This response was supported by policy and governance officers and highlights the impact that advances in technology and digital information have on people who are digitally excluded or have limited digital skills. The report and Council response are attached in appendices for information.</p>
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	<p>Age Friendly Wales Newsletter Article – July 2023.</p> <p>Older People’s Commissioner Letter of Thanks.</p> <p>Older People’s Commissioner Access Denied report and Local Authority response.</p>

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Link to Welsh Government ‘Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an Ageing Society’:  <a href="https://www.gov.wales/age-friendly-wales-our-strategy-ageing-society">https://www.gov.wales/age-friendly-wales-our-strategy-ageing-society</a></p> <p>Link to the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities profile page for Flintshire:  <a href="https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/network/flintshire/">https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/network/flintshire/</a></p> <p>Link to the Digital Flintshire Hub good practice example on the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Age-friendly practices (Age-Friendly world website):  <a href="https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/digital-flintshire-hub/">https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/digital-flintshire-hub/</a></p> <p>Link to the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities:  <a href="https://ageing-better.org.uk/uk-network-age-friendly-communities">https://ageing-better.org.uk/uk-network-age-friendly-communities</a></p> <p>Link to the Age-Friendly Flintshire Hub webpages:  <a href="https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Age-Friendly-Flintshire.aspx">https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Age-Friendly-Flintshire.aspx</a></p> <p>Link to Age-friendly Flintshire Plan summary:  <a href="https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Plan-for-developing-age-friendly-communities-in-Flintshire.pdf">https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Plan-for-developing-age-friendly-communities-in-Flintshire.pdf</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Michael Jones, Wellbeing and Partnership Lead  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702546  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:michael.jones@flintshire.gov.uk">michael.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Age-friendly Community</b> - An age-friendly community is defined by the World Health Organisation as “a community where everyone, regardless of age can stay healthy and active and participate in the community, and where everyone is treated with respect.”</p> <p><b>Aura 60+ Active Leisure</b> - The 60+ Active Leisure scheme, provided in leisure centres across the county, supports people in Flintshire to live longer, better, and healthier lives by improving physical activity levels, confidence, strength, and balance.</p> <p><b>Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA)</b> - A small charity run by older people for older people so that local Older People’s Forums and groups can have their voices heard at the national level to Welsh Government and other Public Bodies.</p> <p><b>Flintshire 50+ Action Group</b> - A diverse group of older people from across Flintshire who provide a voice for citizens aged fifty and over. The group seeks to ensure that the views of older people are engaged in decisions and policies affecting them. The group also provide regular communications to people across the county through regular meetings, events, and newsletters.</p> <p><b>Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC)</b> - FLVC is the umbrella and support organisation for over twelve hundred voluntary and community groups in Flintshire.</p> <p><b>Global Network of Age Friendly Communities</b> - The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The mission of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly.</p> <p><b>NEWCIS</b> - NEWCIS is one of the largest providers of carer services in Wales – delivering information, one to one support, training and counselling to carers who provide unpaid support to family or friends living in North East Wales.</p> <p><b>NEWYDD Catering</b> - Newydd Catering provides locally sourced sustainable catering services to schools and care homes in North Wales.</p> <p><b>Older People’s Commissioner for Wales</b> - The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and</p>

practice to improve their lives. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to review the work of public bodies and to hold them to account when necessary.

**Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team** - The Social Services project team for the development and implementation of age-friendly plans in Flintshire. The team is comprised of an Older People's strategy Co-ordinator and Ageing Well Engagement Officer, reporting to the Wellbeing and Partnership Lead within Adults Social Services.

**World Health Organisation (WHO)** - The WHO is the United Nations agency that connects nations, partners, and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. So, everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and wellbeing.



July 2023



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Age Friendly Wales Newsletter

Welcome to our Age-Friendly Wales Newsletter. For this edition we would like to spotlight some of the activity that is enhancing people's well-being. This is highlighted as one of the 4 aims in [Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society](#) and is an area of great importance, especially following the Covid pandemic.

We hope that you enjoy reading about some of the activity bringing communities together, promoting exercise and healthy ageing and helping reduce loneliness and isolation.

If you need any additional information, or would like to include a feature in a future newsletter, please contact the Older People's Rights team at [OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales](mailto:OlderPeopleandCarers@gov.wales)

## **SUPER AGERS PROGRAMME AND OLYMPAGE EVENTS**

Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to using a range of activity programmes to bring older adults and their communities together with a range of regular weekly opportunities. The Super Agers programme is supported at a range of venues across Cwm Taf Morgannwg and has been running for the past 4 years.



The programme shapes activities for older adults giving them the opportunity to engage with people of all ages and take part in various activities. The Super Agers programme has found that older adults particularly enjoy the social components of the activities available, as well as the help and information they can gain whilst keeping active and the peer support networks they can build close to home.



The OlympAge Games is an annual inclusive and fun filled event that supports people of all abilities to take part in games and activities. The event is an exciting feature in the Bridgend calendar which is helping develop age-friendly communities and recognises the health and well-being benefits of encouraging people to exercise. Events are organised by the Bridgend County Borough Council Prevention and Well-being Team with partners including Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, Bridgend Older Peoples Forum, Shout, and many more including Bridgend College and local schools. Teams from local community groups, care settings and day centres across Bridgend participate in OlympAge and the participants compete in a range of games such as new-age bowling and curling, table tennis, basketball and target-throw.

Over the 4 years that OlympAge, teams have come forward from a variety of community, third sector and statutory groups including groups and individuals supported by the Community Coordinators and Community Navigators.

In the lead up to events, leaders visit settings across Bridgend such as community centres, village halls and leisure centres to engage with participants, develop the teams and highlight the importance of keeping mobile. Partners also develop their own offers to increase access to the opportunity which has boosted participant numbers and given people the chance to socialise and practice in sessions at venues near them.

Over 50 Bridgend College health and social care students and young leaders from secondary schools are on hand at events to support people to take part in activities. This gives our younger community practical experience with older community members and a fun opportunity for them to help make the day a success.

The most recent OlympAge Games event took place during intergenerational week in April and was a roaring success with a great deal of positive feedback.



The OlympAge events are part of a broader community-based programme of physical activity and well-being activities aimed at improving physical and mental well-being as well as combatting loneliness and isolation across our communities.

Bridgend has also taken forward similar approaches using cultural and creative activities with partners Halo Leisure and Awen Cultural Trust.

If you wish to find out more please contact Jane Thomas in the Prevention and Well-being Team at [Jane.Thomas@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Thomas@bridgend.gov.uk)

## VIRTUAL REALITY IN CARE HOMES

The **“Inside – Outside”** project is led by Caerphilly Over 50 in collaboration with Caerphilly Council's Social Services Department. The use of virtual reality (VR) headsets in care homes is achieving positive outcomes for residents, including those with dementia.

### **Conceiving the “Inside – Outside” Project:**

The onset of the Covid pandemic heightened our awareness of the limited opportunities care home residents have to see the outside world.

Virtual reality **360°** videos, viewed through a headset, are so realistic that the viewer is 'transported' to another location. We thought that filming local beauty spots and attractions would be ideal to take into care homes. Residents with dementia might find it particularly beneficial to recall places that they remembered. We made a successful application to the National Lottery in mid-2020 to fund equipment and filming.

As soon as Covid restrictions permitted, we started the filming process. Although restrictions were lifted for the general population, we were not able to enter care homes and give demonstrations. This made it possible for us to develop a portfolio of 20 videos ready to view [[YouTube](#)]. These included walks through Roath and Margam Parks, Caerphilly Castle, and over the hills in Cwm Darran. We also added a performance from an Elvis tribute act, as well as Caerphilly Male Voice Choir at rehearsals.

## Care Home Demonstrations

Our first demonstration of VR headsets was in February 2023 in Min Y Mynydd Care Home, Rhumney where all the residents had been diagnosed with dementia. It was an amazing success demonstrating to a group of 8 residents and several carers. The carers soon took over positioning the headsets on the residents and interacting with them. At the end, they were all clamouring for us to return! Of course, we did.



In the spirit of Age-Friendly Communities co-production, we approached the manager of Caerphilly Council's care homes who had already received positive feedback from Min Y Mynydd but was still amazed at the immersive effect of using the headset. We have worked closely since

then. In particular, the Senior Care Officer has been instrumental in taking the headsets on her regular visits to the council care homes.

You can read the comments from these demonstrations in our website article:

### [Dementia Action Week](#)

Care Home residents have thoroughly enjoyed watching the **360°** videos (“*absolutely marvellous*”, “*fantastic*” and “*wonderful experience*”). Not only does watching the videos benefit the residents, it greatly enhances their interaction with their carers. One resident who had completely lost the ability to communicate became quite animated, pointing to things she recognised.



### [Resident Interaction video](#)

## The Future

The Senior Officers have agreed to embed this activity in their care home. We will spend the remainder of our grant to facilitate this by providing a further 3 headsets and a few more bespoke videos.

Our videos are not interactive but we trialled an interactive video to see how it was received. They thought walking on the seabed was marvellous!

Welsh Government has put us in touch with a technical group who are investigating the use of interactive VR and we have agreed to meet soon. We are not aware of any group using anything similar to our bespoke videos and are considering its extended application.

This concept has real potential for wider introduction beyond Caerphilly. If you wish to learn more about this project please contact Caerphilly Over 50 at [caerphillyoverfifty@gmail.com](mailto:caerphillyoverfifty@gmail.com) or visit the COPA website: <https://www.copacharity.com/2023/05/27/virtual-reality-in-care-homes/>



## SUPPORTING CARE HOME RESIDENT'S WELL-BEING

The Welsh Government is pleased to work with Age Cymru to support the well-being and mental health of older adults living in care homes. Age Cymru is leading on Welsh Government-funded projects to engage with care home residents, promote volunteering in care homes and scope the mental health support available to older people living in care homes.

We wanted to have a better insight into the lives and experiences of care home residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The *Tell Me More* project worked with older people living in care homes using a creative combination of meaningful conversation techniques and artists to produce portraits of the residents. The short, animated film, voiced by the residents and using the portraiture, shares their views and hopes, and is very powerful testimony to the challenges they faced. You can watch the *Tell Me More* film and read the report here:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/care-homes/tell-me-more/>

Age Cymru has built on the learning and success of the *Tell Me More* project over the last year by training care home staff and volunteers in the *Tell Me More* approach, to encourage meaningful conversations with the people they care for and find out what matters to them. This inspired care homes to create activities tailored to residents' interests and helped with the return to normality after the pandemic.



Volunteers make a positive difference in many walks of life and have a very valuable role to play in care homes. Their contribution can enrich the lives and experiences of people living and working in care homes. Age Cymru is working to increase and embed volunteering in care homes across Wales, linking with local organisations to recruit volunteers, and supporting and preparing the volunteers and care home providers for the placements. It will continue to raise the profile of volunteering in care homes and promote a sustainable volunteering model. In addition to direct support Age Cymru has published a [Care Home Volunteering Toolkit](#) to support care homes to recruit, train and manage their own volunteers.

We are interested to learn more about the mental health services and support available to older care home residents and older people moving into care homes. Age Cymru undertook a pilot project focussing on the experiences of people living in care homes in both urban and rural areas - Cardiff and Pembrokeshire - in accessing mental health support. The project also considered the specific support needs of veterans living in care homes given their background and life experience. Read the [report](#) here. Age Cymru will continue gathering and disseminating good practice in supporting people when moving into a care home. It will also work with Social Care Wales to consider how to include mental health support as part of care worker qualifications.



For further information on these projects please contact:

[CareHomeTeam@gov.wales](mailto:CareHomeTeam@gov.wales)

## AGE-FRIENDLY WALES UPDATE

### Age-friendly Flintshire

In May, Flintshire was formally welcomed as a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. This is a recognition of the great work taking place to make Flintshire age-friendly and the long-term commitment to work with older people and others to make Flintshire a great place to grow older for everyone.

Flintshire has a low number of large towns with many smaller towns and villages, and a mix of industrial, commercial and rural areas. This presents an interesting challenge for the development of age-friendly communities. Initial development focused on engaging with local groups and organisations to understand priorities to enable people to live well as they aged. Local steering groups were established to identify opportunities to benefit communities across the county and provide some initial learning to inform ongoing age-friendly development.

Some of the age-friendly priorities identified include:

- Health and well-being services particularly in rural communities
- Safety of and respect for older, more vulnerable people in our communities
- Support to help people get online
- Social activities, groups and services for older people
- Information about groups, activities, services
- Transport in rural/hard to reach communities
- Training, volunteering, employment opportunities

Age-friendly development has focused on tackling these priorities.

Highlights include:

**Increasing awareness and understanding about people living with dementia**

Staff and pupils in primary schools learn about dementia and are encouraged to make pledges to become a dementia friend (Alzheimer's society Dementia Friends initiative).



A number of pupils have also taken part in creative arts projects, and performed to their families, and older people from the local community. Feedback confirmed the project has increased confidence and understanding of dementia.

### **Helping people to get online and increase digital skills**

The Covid pandemic highlighted the benefits of being online. Those who were digitally included were able to maintain contact with family and friends, join virtual activities and shop online. Working with partner organisations, Aura Libraries, Coleg Cambria, and Sheltered Housing teams, digital tablet loans and community training sessions have helped those who want to get online. For those less confident, support is provided through Flintshire Connects offices and community hubs to access online services.

### **Increasing confidence for older people to reconnect with their communities**

As highlighted in the Older People's Commissioner for Wales report "[Leave no-one behind – action for an age-friendly recovery](#)" support was needed to help community groups and venues to re-open following the pandemic. Many groups rely on older volunteers to organise activities and following prolonged periods of shielding, confidence and mobility had reduced significantly. Aura Leisure helped to address this by running gentle exercise classes in the rural community of Hope and Caergwrle. Covid support grants also enabled groups to purchase

essential equipment and supplies to restart. Flintshire Local Voluntary Council worked with Social Services to recruit volunteers to restart activities and build sustainability.

### **Raising awareness about what's on in the community**

Feedback confirms that although there are often many activities and groups taking place in communities, there can be a lack of information about what's on, when and where. Groups are being supported to develop community "What's On" leaflets shared in community venues, libraries, leisure centres, notice boards and published online. Information is also collated and shared by a dedicated Social Services Ageing Well Officer, and through Flintshire's Well-being network, Older People's network and by social prescribers.

Development of the [Age-Friendly Flintshire website](#) will also provide a focal point for sharing age-friendly good practice across Flintshire.

The success of this exciting project will be ensured through continued engagement with long-established older people's networks and close links with community groups, such as the 50+ Action Group. The Ageing Well team has developed an Age-friendly Flintshire action plan to provide a focused and collaborative approach to making Flintshire a great place to live for people of any age.

To find out more please contact Flintshire's Older People Engagement team at [opengagement@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:opengagement@flintshire.gov.uk)

## **Anglesey joins the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities**

Anglesey has recently celebrated becoming the latest county in Wales to join the World Health Organisation's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Becoming a member of the network marks a county-wide commitment to breaking down barriers to ageing well and secures Anglesey's status as an age-friendly island.



Much work has been done in recent months to support the work of creating an Age-Friendly Anglesey, which has included:

- The reintroduction of **Older People's Forums** after the pandemic and taking on community feedback to make the move from larger, central forums to smaller more local forums. Since March, eleven Older People's Forums have been held out in the community all across Anglesey and have been very well received.
- Hosting various **50+ Open Days** within the county's Leisure Centres which enable older people to access information from various services and charities face to face, have a go at different leisure activities for free, and enjoy some lunch and the chance to socialise.
- Producing and distributing over 2,500 copies of our **Anglesey Community Transport Directory**, which has information on all Community Transport schemes based on the island.

#### [Anglesey Community Transport Directory \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/anglesey-community-transport-directory)

- Producing a **Community Buildings Directory** to support more services to take their provision for older people out to the community
- Arranging numerous **Scam Awareness** trainings for older people in the community

Future plans include the continuation of Older People's Forums and the upcoming launch of a new Age Friendly Anglesey newsletter to help keep Anglesey's residents updated on all developments and the support available to them to help them age well.

Anglesey's Age-Friendly Champion, Councillor Gwilym Jones noted:

“On behalf of the Isle of Anglesey County Council and the island as a whole, I'd like to thank the Welsh Government and the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' team for their support during our journey to becoming members of the network. We look forward to building on this important relationship, and to develop exciting plans for the residents of Anglesey.”

If you'd like to learn more about Age-Friendly Anglesey, please contact the Age Friendly Communities Development Officer, Sioned Young on [sionedyoung@ynysmon.llyw.cymru](mailto:sionedyoung@ynysmon.llyw.cymru) or 01248 751 832.

# EISTEDDFOD

## National Eisteddfod: Question Time

**Title: Age-Friendly Wales - Culture, Sport and the Arts**

**Location: Welsh Government Stand**

**When: 8 August 2023, 15:00 - 16:00**



We know the importance of mental health and physical health if we are to live well and reach our full potential - Culture, sports and the arts have a huge role to play in achieving this goal , If we are serious about achieving our vision of an Age-Friendly Wales where everyone looks forward to getting older, we need to ensure that the opportunities to get involved, to visit and to volunteer meet the expectations and aspirations of older people across Wales.

On the panel will be:

- Brian Davies, Chief Executive, Sport Wales
- Lleucu Siencyn, Director of Arts Development, Arts Council of Wales
- Nia Williams, Director of Learning and Public Programmes, National Museum
- Aled Evans, Manager, Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn

- Rhian Gibson, Director of Communications, Engagement and Partnerships, National Library of Wales



You will have the opportunity to hear about the vision of the guest speakers but also the opportunity to ask your questions. The Deputy Minister for Social Services will also be present and keen to discuss your ideas.

We shall look forward to seeing you.

## Thank you for reading our newsletter!

### ABOUT

This newsletter is produced by the Older People's Rights team in the Welsh Government and showcases good practice from a range of partners across Wales.

Find out more on the web:

[Our Strategy for an Ageing Society](#)

Follow us on Twitter:

[@WGHealthandCare](#)



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# Cylchlythyr Cymru Oed-Gyfeillgar

Croeso i'n Cylchlythyr Cymru Oed-gyfeillgar. Yn y rhifyn hwn, hoffem dynnu sylw at rai o'r gweithgareddau sy'n gwella lles pobl. Amlygir hyn fel un o'r 4 nod yn [Cymru o Blaid Pobl Hŷn: Ein Strategaeth ar gyfer Cymdeithas sy'n Heneiddio](#) ac mae'n faes o bwysigrwydd mawr, yn enwedig yn dilyn pandemig Covid.

Gobeithiwn y byddwch yn mwynhau darllen am rai o'r gweithgareddau sy'n dod â chymunedau ynghyd, sy'n hybu ymarfer corff a heneiddio iach ac sy'n helpu i leihau unigrwydd ac unigedd.

Os oes angen unrhyw wybodaeth ychwanegol arnoch, neu os hoffech gynnwys erthygl nodwedd mewn cylchlythyr yn y dyfodol, cysylltwch â'r tîm Hawliau Pobl Hŷn yn [OlderPeopleandCarers@llyw.cymru](mailto:OlderPeopleandCarers@llyw.cymru)

## RHAGLEN SUPER AGERS A DIGWYDDIADAU OLYMPAGE

Mae Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr wedi ymrwymo i ddefnyddio amrywiaeth o raglenni gweithgaredd i ddod ag oedolion hŷn a'u cymunedau ynghyd gydag amrywiaeth o gyfleoedd wythnosol rheolaidd. Cefnogir rhaglen Super Agers mewn lleoliadau amrywiol ar hyd a lled Cwm Taf Morgannwg ac mae wedi bod ar waith ers pedair blynedd. Mae'r rhaglen yn trefnu gweithgareddau ar gyfer oedolion hŷn

gan roi'r cyfle iddynt ymgysylltu â phobl o bob oed a chymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau amrywiol.



Mae rhaglen Super Agers wedi gweld bod oedolion hŷn yn mwynhau elfennau cymdeithasol y gweithgareddau sydd ar gael yn arbennig, yn ogystal â'r cymorth a'r wybodaeth y gallant eu cael wrth gadw'n heini a'r rhwydweithiau cymorth cymheiriaid y gallant eu hadeiladu'n agos at adref.





Mae Gemau OlympAge yn ddigwyddiad blynyddol cynhwysol llawn hwyl sy'n cefnogi pobl o bob gallu i gymryd rhan mewn gemau a gweithgareddau. Mae'r digwyddiad yn nodwedd gyffrous yng nghalendr Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr sy'n helpu i ddatblygu cymunedau oed-gyfeillgar ac yn cydnabod manteision iechyd a lles annog pobl i wneud ymarfer corff. Trefnir digwyddiadau gan Dîm Atal a Lles Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr gyda phartneriaid gan gynnwys Halo Leisure, Ymddiriedolaeth Ddiwylliannol Awen, Fforwm Pobl Hŷn Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr, Shout, a llawer mwy, gan gynnwys Coleg Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr ac ysgolion lleol. Mae timau o grwpiau cymunedol lleol, lleoliadau gofal a chanolfannau dydd ledled Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr yn cymryd rhan yn OlympAge ac mae'r cyfranogwyr yn cystadlu mewn amrywiaeth o gemau fel bowlio oes newydd a chwrolo, tennis bwrdd, pêl-fasged a thaflu targed.

Yn ystod y pedair blynedd ers sefydlu OlympAge, mae timau wedi dod o amrywiaeth o grwpiau cymunedol, grwpiau trydydd sector a grwpiau statudol gan gynnwys grwpiau ac unigolion a gefnogir gan y Cydlynwyr Cymunedol a'r Llyw-wyr Cymunedol.

Yn y cyfnod cyn y digwyddiadau, mae arweinwyr yn ymweld â lleoliadau ledled Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr, fel canolfannau cymunedol, neuaddau pentref a chanolfannau hamdden i ymgysylltu â chyfranogwyr, datblygu'r timau a thynnu sylw at bwysigrwydd dal ati i symud. Mae partneriaid yn datblygu eu cynigion eu hunain hefyd i gynyddu mynediad i'r cyfle sydd wedi rhoi hwb i nifer y cyfranogwyr a rhoi cyfle i bobl gymdeithasu ac ymarfer mewn sesiynau mewn lleoliadau yn eu hymyl.

Mae 50 a mwy o fyfyrwyr iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol Coleg Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr ac arweinwyr ifanc o ysgolion uwchradd wrth law mewn digwyddiadau i gynorthwyo pobl i gymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau. Mae hyn yn rhoi profiad ymarferol i'n cymuned iau gydag aelodau hŷn o'r gymuned a chyfle llawn hwyl iddynt helpu i wneud y diwrnod yn llwyddiant.

Cynhaliwyd y digwyddiad OlympAge diweddaraf yn ystod wythnos pontio'r cenedlaethau ym mis Ebrill ac roedd yn llwyddiant ysgubol gyda llawer iawn o adborth cadarnhaol.



Mae'r digwyddiadau OlympAge yn rhan o raglen ehangach o weithgarwch corfforol a gweithgareddau llesiant yn y gymuned gyda'r nod o wella lles corfforol a meddyliol yn ogystal â brwydro yn erbyn unigrwydd ac unigedd ar hyd a lled ein cymunedau.

Mae Pen-y-bont wedi datblygu dulliau tebyg gan ddefnyddio gweithgareddau diwylliannol a chreadigol gyda'i phartneriaid Halo Leisure ac Ymddiriedolaeth Ddiwylliannol Awen.

Os hoffech wybod mwy, cysylltwch â Jane Thomas yn y Tîm Atal a Lles yn [Jane.Thomas@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Thomas@bridgend.gov.uk)

## REALITI RHITHWIR MEWN CARTREFI GOFAL

Arweinir y prosiect "**Tu Fewn – Tu Allan**" gan Dros 50 Caerffili mewn cydweithrediad ag Adran Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cyngor Caerffili. Mae'r defnydd o bensetiau realiti rhithwir (VR) mewn cartrefi gofal yn sicrhau canlyniadau cadarnhaol i breswylwyr, gan gynnwys y rhai â dementia.

**Creu'r prosiect "Tu Fewn – Tu Allan:**

Fe wnaeth dyfodiad pandemig Covid ddwysáu ein hymwybyddiaeth o'r cyfleoedd cyfyngedig sydd gan drigolion cartrefi gofal i weld y byd y tu allan. Mae fideos realiti rhithwir **360°**, a welir drwy benseset, mor realistig fel bod y gwylwr yn cael ei 'gludo' i leoliad arall. Roeddem o'r farn y byddai ffilmio mannau hardd ac atyniadau lleol yn ddelfrydol i'w defnyddio mewn cartrefi gofal. Gallai preswylwyr â dementia ei chael yn arbennig o fuddiol dwyn i gof mannau roeddent yn eu cofio. Fe wnaethom gais llwyddiannus i'r Loteri Genedlaethol ganol 2020 i ariannu offer a gwaith ffilmio.

Cyn gynted ag yr oedd cyfyngiadau Covid yn caniatáu, aethom ati i ddechrau'r broses ffilmio. Er i'r cyfyngiadau gael eu codi ar gyfer y boblogaeth gyffredinol, nid oedd modd mynd i gartrefi gofal a rhoi arddangosiadau. Gwnaeth hyn hi'n bosibl i ni ddatblygu portffolio o 20 fideo yn barod i'w gwyllo [\[YouTube\]](#). Roedd y rhain yn cynnwys teithiau cerdded drwy Barc y Rhath a Pharc Margam, Castell Caerffili, a thros y brynau yng Nghwm Darran. Fe wnaethom ychwanegu perfformiad gan act deyrnged Elvis hefyd, yn ogystal â Chôr Meibion Caerffili'n ymarfer.

## Arddangosiadau Cartref Gofal

Roedd ein harddangosiad cyntaf o bensesetiau VR ym mis Chwefror 2023 yng Nghartref Gofal Min y Mynydd, Rhymni lle'r oedd yr holl breswylwyr wedi cael diagnosis o ddementia. Roedd yr arddangosiad i grŵp o 8 o breswylwyr a sawl gofalwr yn llwyddiant anhygoel. Buan iawn y dechreuodd y gofalwyr gymryd yr awenau a gosod y pensesetiau VR ar y preswylwyr a rhyngweithio â nhw. Ar y diwedd, roedden nhw i gyd yn erfyn arnon ni i ddychwelyd! Ac wrth gwrs, fe wnaethon ni hynny.

Yn ysbryd cyd-gynhyrchu Cymunedau o Blaid Pobl Hŷn, fe wnaethom gysylltu â rheolwr cartrefi gofal Cyngor Caerffili a oedd eisoes wedi cael adborth cadarnhaol gan Min y Mynydd ond a oedd yn dal i ryfeddu at effaith ymgolli defnyddio'r pensesetiau. Rydym wedi cydweithio'n agos ers hynny. Yn benodol, mae'r Uwch Swyddog Gofal wedi bod yn allweddol gan fynd â'r pensesetiau ar ei hymweliadau rheolaidd â chartrefi gofal y cyngor.

Gallwch ddarllen y sylwadau o'r arddangosiadau hyn yn ein herthygl ar y wefan:

### Wythnos Gweithredu ar Dementia

Mae preswylwyr Cartrefi Gofal wedi mwynhau gwyllo'r fideos 360° yn fawr iawn ("*hollol wych*", "*ffantastig*", "*profiad gwych*"). Nid yn unig y mae gwyllo'r fideos o fudd i'r preswylwyr, ond mae'n gwella eu hymwneud â'u gofalwyr yn fawr. Dechreuodd un preswlydd ymateb, a oedd wedi colli'r gallu i gyfathrebu'n llwyr, gan dynnu sylw at bethau yr oedd hi'n eu hadnabod.



### Fideo Rhyngweithio Preswylwyr

## Y Dyfodol

Mae'r Uwch Swyddogion wedi cytuno i ymgorffori'r gweithgaredd hwn yn eu cartref gofal. Byddwn yn treulio gweddill ein grant i hwyluso hyn drwy ddarparu 3 phenset arall ac ychydig mwy o fideos pwrpasol.

Nid yw ein fideos yn rhyngweithiol ond fe wnaethom dreialu fideo rhyngweithiol i weld sut goeso y byddai'n ei gael. Roedden nhw'n meddwl bod cerdded ar wely'r môr yn wych!

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ein cysylltu â grŵp technegol sy'n ymchwilio i'r defnydd o VR rhyngweithiol ac rydym wedi cytuno i gyfarfod yn fuan. Nid ydym yn ymwybodol bod unrhyw grŵp yn defnyddio unrhyw beth tebyg i'n fideos pwrpasol ac rydym yn ystyried ymestyn y defnydd ohonynt.

Mae gan y cysyniad hwn botensial gwirioneddol i'w gyflwyno'n ehangach y tu hwnt i Gaerffili. Os hoffech ddysgu mwy am y prosiect, cysylltwch â Caerffili Dros 50 yn [caerphillyoverfifty@gmail.com](mailto:caerphillyoverfifty@gmail.com) neu ewch i wefan Cynghrair Pobl Hŷn Cymru (COPA):

<https://www.copacharity.com/2023/05/27/virtual-reality-in-care-homes/>



## CEFNOGI LLES PRESWYLWYR CARTREFI GOFAL

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n falch o gydweithio ag Age Cymru i gefnogi lles ac iechyd meddwl oedolion hŷn sy'n byw mewn cartrefi gofal. Mae Age Cymru'n arwain ar brosiectau a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru i ymgysylltu â phreswylwyr cartrefi gofal, hyrwyddo gwirfoddoli mewn cartrefi gofal ac asesu'r cymorth iechyd meddwl sydd ar gael i bobl hŷn sy'n byw mewn cartrefi gofal.

Roeddem am gael gwell dealltwriaeth o fywydau a phrofiadau preswylwyr cartrefi gofal yn ystod pandemig Covid-19. Gweithiodd y prosiect Dweud Mwy Wrthyf/Tell Me More gyda phobl hŷn sy'n byw mewn cartrefi gofal gan ddefnyddio cyfuniad creadigol o dechnegau sgwrsio ystyrlon ac artistiaid i gynhyrchu portreadau o'r preswylwyr. Mae'r ffilm fer wedi'i hanimeiddio, a leisiwyd gan y trigolion ac sy'n defnyddio'r portreadau, yn rhannu eu barn a'u gobeithion, ac mae'n dystiolaeth bwerus iawn o'r heriau a wynebwyd ganddynt. Gallwch wyllo'r ffilm Dweud Mwy Wrthyf/Tell Me More a darllen yr adroddiad yma:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/care-homes/tell-me-more/>

Mae Age Cymru wedi adeiladu ar y dysgu ac ar lwyddiant y prosiect Dweud Mwy Wrthyf/Tell Me More dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf drwy hyfforddi staff a gwirfoddolwyr cartrefi gofal yn y dull Dweud Mwy Wrth/Tell Me More, er mwyn annog sgwrsiau ystyrlon â'r bobl maen nhw'n gofalu amdanynt a darganfod beth sy'n bwysig iddynt. Fe wnaeth hyn ysbrydoli cartrefi gofal i greu gweithgareddau wedi'u teilwra i ddiddordebau preswylwyr a helpu i ddychwelyd i fywyd mwy normal ar ôl y pandemig.



Mae gwirfoddolwyr yn gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol mewn sawl agwedd ar fywyd ac mae ganddynt rôl werthfawr mewn cartrefi gofal. Gall eu cyfraniad gyfoethogi bywydau a phrofiadau pobl sy'n byw ac yn gweithio mewn cartrefi gofal. Mae Age Cymru'n gweithio i gynyddu ac ymwreiddio gwirfoddoli mewn cartrefi gofal ledled Cymru, gan gysylltu â sefydliadau lleol i recriwtio gwirfoddolwyr, a chefnogi a pharatoi'r gwirfoddolwyr a'r darparwyr cartrefi gofal ar gyfer y lleoliadau. Bydd yn parhau i godi proffil gwirfoddoli mewn cartrefi gofal a hyrwyddo model gwirfoddoli cynaliadwy. Yn ogystal â chefnogaeth uniongyrchol, mae Age Cymru wedi cyhoeddi [Pecyn Cymorth Gwirfoddolwyr Cartrefi Gofal](#) i gynorthwyo cartrefi gofal i recriwtio, hyfforddi a rheoli eu gwirfoddolwyr eu hunain.

Rydym yn awyddus i ddysgu mwy am y gwasanaethau iechyd meddwl a'r cymorth sydd ar gael i breswylwyr hŷn cartrefi gofal a phobl hŷn sy'n symud i gartrefi gofal. Cynhaliodd Age Cymru brosiect peilot yn canolbwyntio ar brofiadau pobl sy'n byw mewn cartrefi gofal mewn ardaloedd trefol a gwledig - Caerdydd a Sir Benfro - wrth gael mynediad at gymorth iechyd meddwl. Roedd y prosiect yn ystyried anghenion cymorth penodol cyn-filwyr sy'n byw mewn cartrefi gofal hefyd o ystyried eu cefndir a'u profiad bywyd. Darllenwch yr [adroddiad](#) yma. Bydd Age Cymru'n parhau i gasglu a lledaenu arferion da wrth gefnogi pobl pan fyddant yn symud i gartref gofal. Bydd yn cydweithio â Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru hefyd er mwyn ystyried sut i gynnwys cymorth iechyd meddwl fel rhan o gymwysterau gweithwyr gofal.

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth am y prosiectau hyn, cysylltwch â [CareHomeTeam@llyw.cymru](mailto:CareHomeTeam@llyw.cymru)

## Y NEWYDDION DIWEDDARAF AM GYMRU OED-GYFEILLGAR

### Oed-Gyfeillgar Sir y Fflint

Ym mis Mai, croesawyd Sir y Fflint yn ffurfiol fel aelod o Rwydwaith Bydeang Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd ar gyfer Dinasoedd a Chymunedau Oed-Gyfeillgar. Mae hyn yn gydnabyddiaeth o'r gwaith gwych sy'n digwydd i wneud Sir y Fflint yn lle oed-gyfeillgar a'r ymrwymiad hirdymor i weithio gyda phobl hŷn ac eraill i wneud Sir y Fflint yn sir wych i bawb dyfu'n hŷn ynddi.

Mae gan Sir y Fflint nifer fach o drefi mawr, a llawer o drefi a phentrefi llai, a chymysgedd o ardaloedd diwydiannol, masnachol a gwledig. Mae hyn yn her ddiddorol o ran datblygu cymunedau oed-gyfeillgar. Roedd datblygiadau cychwynnol yn canolbwyntio ar ymgysylltu â grwpiau a sefydliadau lleol er mwyn deall blaenoriaethau i alluogi pobl i fyw yn dda wrth iddynt heneiddio. Sefydlwyd grwpiau llywio lleol i nodi cyfleoedd i fod o fudd i gymunedau ledled y sir a darparu tipyn o ddysgu cychwynnol er mwyn llywio datblygiadau parhaus oed-gyfeillgar.

Mae rhai o'r blaenoriaethau oed-gyfeillgar a nodwyd yn cynnwys:

- Gwasanaethau iechyd a lles yn enwedig mewn cymunedau gwledig
- Diogelwch pobl hŷn, pobl sy'n fwy agored i niwed yn ein cymunedau a pharch tuag atynt
- Cymorth i helpu pobl i fynd ar-lein
- Gweithgareddau, grwpiau a gwasanaethau cymdeithasol ar gyfer pobl hŷn
- Gwybodaeth am grwpiau, gweithgareddau, gwasanaethau
- Cludiant mewn cymunedau gwledig/anodd eu cyrraedd
- Hyfforddiant, gwirfoddoli, cyfleoedd cyflogaeth

Mae datblygiadau oed-gyfeillgar wedi canolbwyntio ar fynd i'r afael â'r blaenoriaethau hyn. Mae uchafbwyntiau'n cynnwys y canlynol:

## **Cynyddu ymwybyddiaeth a dealltwriaeth o bobl sy'n byw gyda dementia**

Mae staff a disgyblion mewn ysgolion cynradd yn dysgu am ddementia ac yn cael eu hannog i wneud addewidion i ddod yn ffrind dementia (menter Cyfeillion Dementia Cymdeithas Alzheimer).



Mae nifer o ddisgyblion wedi cymryd rhan mewn prosiectau celfyddydau creadigol hefyd, ac wedi perfformio i'w teuluoedd, a phobl hŷn o'r gymuned leol. Cadarnhaodd adborth fod y prosiect wedi cynyddu hyder mewn dementia a dealltwriaeth ohono.

## **Helpu pobl i fynd ar-lein a chynyddu sgiliau digidol**

Amlygodd pandemig Covid y manteision o fod ar-lein. Roedd y rhai a oedd wedi'u cynnwys yn ddigidol yn gallu cadw mewn cysylltiad â theulu a ffrindiau, ymuno â gweithgareddau rhithwir a siopa ar-lein. Drwy gydweithio â sefydliadau partner, Llyfrgelloedd Aura, Coleg Cambria, a thimau Tai Gwarchod, mae benthyg llechi digidol a sesiynau hyfforddi cymunedol wedi helpu'r rhai sydd am fynd ar-lein. I'r rhai sy'n llai hyderus, darperir cymorth drwy swyddfeydd Sir y Fflint yn Cysylltu a hybiau cymunedol i gael mynediad at wasanaethau ar-lein.

## **Cynyddu hyder pobl hŷn i ailgysylltu â'u cymunedau**

Fel yr amlygwyd yn adroddiad Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru "[Gadael neb ar ôl - camau gweithredu ar gyfer adferiad o blaid pobl hŷn](#)" roedd angen cymorth i helpu grwpiau a lleoliadau cymunedol i ailagor yn dilyn y pandemig. Mae llawer o grwpiau'n dibynnu ar wirfoddolwyr hŷn i drefnu gweithgareddau ac yn dilyn cyfnodau hir o warchod eu hunain, roedd hyder a symudedd wedi gostwng yn sylweddol. Fe wnaeth



Hamdden Aura helpu i fynd i'r afael â hyn drwy gynnal dosbarthiadau ymarfer corff hawdd yng nghymuned wledig yr Hôb a Chaergwrle. Roedd grantiau cymorth Covid wedi galluogi grwpiau i brynu offer a chyflenwadau hanfodol i ailgychwyn hefyd. Gweithiodd Cyngor Gwirfoddol Lleol Sir y Fflint gyda'r Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol i recriwtio gwirfoddolwyr i ailddechrau gweithgareddau ac adeiladu cynaliadwyedd.

### **Codi ymwybyddiaeth o'r hyn sy'n digwydd yn y gymuned**

Mae'r adborth yn cadarnhau, er bod llawer o weithgareddau a grwpiau'n digwydd yn aml mewn cymunedau, gall fod diffyg gwybodaeth am yr hyn sy'n digwydd, pryd ac ym mhle. Mae grwpiau'n cael eu cynorthwyo i ddatblygu "Digwyddiadur" sef taflenni cymunedol a rennir mewn lleoliadau cymunedol, llyfrgelloedd, canolfannau hamdden, ar hysbysfyrdau ac a gyhoeddir ar-lein. Mae gwybodaeth yn cael ei chasglu a'i rhannu gan Swyddog Heneiddio'n Dda pwrpasol y Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol hefyd, a thrwy rwydwaith Llesiant Sir y Fflint, rhwydwaith Pobl Hŷn a rhagnodwyr cymdeithasol.

Bydd datblygu [gwefan Sir y Fflint sy'n Gyfeillgar i Oed](#) yn darparu canolbwynt ar gyfer rhannu arferion da oed-gyfeillgar ar hyd a lled Sir y Fflint hefyd.

Bydd llwyddiant y prosiect cyffrous hwn yn cael ei sicrhau drwy ymgysylltu'n barhaus â rhwydweithiau pobl hŷn sydd wedi hen ennill eu plwyf a thrwy gysylltiadau agos â grwpiau cymunedol, fel y Grŵp Gweithredu 50+. Mae'r tîm Heneiddio'n Dda wedi datblygu cynllun gweithredu oed-gyfeillgar Sir y Fflint er mwyn darparu dull gweithredu cydweithredol llawn ffocws i wneud Sir y Fflint yn lle gwych i fyw ynddi i bobl o bob oed.

I gael gwybod mwy, cysylltwch â thîm Ymgysylltu â Phobl Hŷn Sir y Fflint yn [opengagement@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:opengagement@flintshire.gov.uk)

## **Ynys Môn yn ymuno a Rhwydwaith Bydeang Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd o Gymunedau a Dinasoedd Oed-Gyfeillgar**

Mae Ynys Môn wedi dathlu dod y sir ddiweddaraf yng Nghymru i ymuno a Rhwydwaith Byd-eang Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd o Gymunedau a Dinasoedd Oed-Gyfeillgar.

Bydd dod yn aelod o'r rhwydwaith yn nodi ymroddiad ynys-gyfan i chwalu'r rhwystrau rhag heneiddio'n dda a sicrhau statws Ynys Môn fel ynys oed-gyfeillgar.



Mae llawer o waith wedi'i wneud dros y misoedd diweddar i gefnogi'r gwaith o greu Ynys Môn Oed-Gyfeillgar, sydd wedi cynnwys:

- Ailgyflwyno **Fforymau Pobl Hŷn** wedi'i cyfnod clo a chymryd ymlaen adborth gan y gymuned i symud o fforymau mwy a chanolog i fforymau llai, fwy lleol. Ers mis Mawrth mae unarddeg Fforwm Pobl Hŷn wedi'i gynnal allan yn y gymuned ledled Ynys Môn ac wedi cael ymateb cadarnhaol dros ben
- Cynnal cyfres o **Ddiwrnodau Agored 50+** o fewn Canolfannau Hamdden y sir sy'n galluogi pobl hyn i gael mynediad at wybodaeth yn wyneb i wyneb gan amryw o wasanaethau ac elusennau, rhoi'r cynnig ar wahanol weithgareddau hamdden am ddim, a mwynhau cinio a'r cyfle i gymdeithasu
- Cynhyrchu a dosbarthu dros 2,500 o gopiâu o'm **Cyfeirlyfr Cludiant Cymunedol Ynys Môn**, sydd gyda gwybodaeth ar holl gynlluniau cludiant cymunedol sydd wedi'i leoli ar yr ynys

#### [Cyfeirlyfr Cludiant Cymunedol Môn \(llyw.cymru\)](http://llyw.cymru)

- Cynhyrchu **Cyfeirlyfr Adeiladau Cymunedol** i gefnogi mwy o wasanaethau i fynd a'u darpariaeth i bobl hŷn allan i'r cymuned

- Trefnu nifer o sesiynau hyfforddiant **Ymwybyddiaeth Sgambiau** i bobl hŷn yn y gymuned

Mae cynlluniau i'r dyfodol yn cynnwys parhad o'r Fforymau Pobl Hŷn a lansiad Newyddlen Ynys Môn Oed-Gyfeillgar a bydd yn helpu cadw preswylwyr Ynys Môn yn wybodus am yr holl ddatblygiadau a'r gefnogaeth ar gael iddynt i heneiddio'n dda.

Nodir Cynghorydd Gwilym Jones, Pencampwr Oed-Gyfeillgar Ynys Môn:

"Ar ran Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn a'r Ynys yn ei gyfanrwydd, hoffwn ddiolch i Lywodraeth Cymru a Thîm Comisiynydd Pobl Hyn Cymru am y gefnogaeth yn ystod ein taith i fod yn aelodau o'r Rhwydwaith. Rydym yn edrych ymlaen yn fawr i adeiladu ar y berthynas bwysig hon, ac i ddatblygu cynlluniau cyffrous ar gyfer trigolion yr Ynys."

Os hoffech ddysgu mwy am waith Ynys Môn Oed-Gyfeillgar, cysylltwch â Swyddog Datblygu Cymunedau Oed-Gyfeillgar, Sioned Young ar [SionedYoung@ynysmon.llyw.cymru](mailto:SionedYoung@ynysmon.llyw.cymru) neu 01248751 832.

## EISTEDDFOD

### Eisteddfod Genedlaethol: Sesiwn hawl i holi

**Teitl: Cymru Oed-Gyfeillgar - Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a'r Celfyddydau**

**Lleoliad: Stondin Llywodraeth Cymru**

**Pryd: 8 Awst 2023, 15:00 - 16:00**



Gwyddom am bwysigrwydd iechyd meddwl ac iechyd corfforol os ydyn ni am fyw yn iach ac i gyflawni ein llawn botensial. Mae gan y meysydd diwylliant, chwaraeon, celfyddydau rôl enfawr i'w chwarae er mwyn cyflawni hynny. Os ydym ni o ddifri ynglŷn â chyflawni ein gweledigaeth o Gymru Oed-Gyfeillgar lle mae pawb yn edrych ymlaen at fynd yn hŷn.

Yna rhaid sicrhau bod y cyfleoedd i gymryd rhan, i ymweld ag i wirfoddoli yn cwrdd â disgwyliadau a dyheadau pobl hŷn ledled Cymru.

Ar y panel bydd:

- Brian Davies, Prif Weithredwr Chwaraeon Cymru
- Lleucu Siencyn, Cyfarwyddwr Datblygu'r Celfyddydau, Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
- Nia Williams, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Rhaglenni Cyhoeddus, Amgueddfa Genedlaethol
- Aled Evans, Rheolwr, Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn
- Rhian Gibson, Cyfarwyddwr Cyfathrebu, Ymgysylltu a Phartneriaethau, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru



Cewch gyfle i glywed am weledigaeth y siaradwyr ond hefyd y cyfle i holi eich cwestiynau. Bydd y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol hefyd yn bresennol ac yn awyddus i drafod eich syniadau.

Edrychwn ymlaen at y sgwrs.

## Diolch am ddarllen ein cylchlythyr!

### AMDANOM NI

Mae'r cylchlythyr hwn yn cael ei gynhyrchu gan dîm Hawliau Pobl Hŷn Llywodraeth Cymru ac mae'n arddangos arferion da gan amrywiaeth o bartneriaid ledled Cymru.

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Rhagor o wybodaeth ar y we:

Dilynwch ni ar Twitter:

[@LIClechydaGofal](https://twitter.com/LIClechydaGofal)

Ein strategaeth ar gyfer  
cymdeithas sy'n heneiddio



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**03442 640 670**

Rydym yn croesawu  
galwadau yn Gymraeg

Adeiladau Cambrian  
Sqwâr Mount Stuart  
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff CF10 5FL

[By Email only]

13 November 2023

Dear Helen, Sue and Graham

**Making Wales an Age-friendly Nation Conference – 08 November 2023**

Thank you so much for participating in the Age Friendly Conference and for your excellent presentation on the positive work underway in Flintshire. You really brought age friendly communities to life demonstrating the practical changes and impact as well as the importance of working in partnership. I know that everyone at the conference enjoyed and appreciated your contributions and insights.

I hope you enjoyed the conference and the opportunity to connect with others working to make Wales an age friendly nation.

With thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Heléna Herklots CBE  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn  
Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh  
and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

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Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru  
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

# **Access Denied:** **Older people's experiences of digital exclusion in Wales**

# The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people throughout Wales.

The Commissioner is taking action to protect older people's rights, end ageism and age discrimination, stop the abuse of older people and enable everyone to age well.

**The Commissioner is working for a Wales where older people are valued, rights are upheld and no-one is left behind.**

## How to contact the Commissioner:

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales  
Cambrian Buildings  
Mount Stuart Square  
Cardiff  
CF10 5FL

Phone: 03442 640 670  
Email: [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)  
Twitter: [@talkolderpeople](https://twitter.com/talkolderpeople)

Website: [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)

## Accessible formats

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg // This document is available in Welsh**

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Legislation, Policy and Practice</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Older people's views and experiences: Access to information and services</b>	<b>16</b>
Financial services	17
Health services	19
Access to online support and entitlements	20
Parking	21
<b>Barriers that lead to and reinforce digital exclusion</b>	<b>22</b>
Digital Skills	23
Cost	24
Choosing not to be online	25
Concerns about security	25
Poor design and accessibility	26
Language	27
<b>Impact on older people's day-to-day lives</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Improvements suggested by older people</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Summary of responses from local authorities and health boards</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Other issues and future challenges</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Action from the Commissioner</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix A: Local authorities and health boards who contributed to this report</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>41</b>

# Foreword

Until relatively recently, it would have been hard to imagine just how far the digital world would extend into almost all aspects of our lives, now covering everything from making appointments, to finding information, to parking the car.

For people with digital skills this can bring a range of personal benefits, as well as wider benefits such as cost savings that can support the delivery of services. This applies to many older people, and stereotypes that older people are not interested in or are not capable of using technology are simply not true.

However, a significant number of older people in Wales – including a third of people aged 75+ – find themselves digitally excluded and increasingly face barriers when trying to access the information and services they need, something that exacerbates inequalities, including health inequalities, and puts people's health and well-being at risk.

Older people are by no means the only group affected by digital exclusion – for example, people living with disabilities, people on low incomes, and people with long-term health also find themselves at particular risk – but given that age remains the biggest risk factor, it is crucial that older people's voices and experiences are used to understand the issues people are facing and, more importantly, the action needed to ensure people who are digitally excluded are not left behind.

That's why I invited older people throughout Wales to contact me and my team to share examples of the ways that the shift towards digital services is affecting people's lives, and the impact this is having.

Over 150 older people responded to share their experiences, and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who got in touch for being so open and for providing such a powerful snapshot of what day-to-day life can be like for older people who are digitally excluded. A big thank you, too, to the older people who shared their experiences of digital exclusion with me and my team at engagement visits and events or contacted my Advice and Assistance Service to share information and highlight issues.

My findings highlight a stark digital divide that is not only exclusionary, but also often leaves older people feeling worthless, inadequate and that they are not valued by society. In addition, older people often struggle to find the right kinds of support to enable them to get and stay online through learning and maintaining digital skills.

Concerningly, this seems to have resulted in some older people accepting that digital exclusion is simply a part of growing older, resigned to having to live with the consequences of this due to the seemingly insurmountable barriers to getting and staying online.



This has to change, and while the work being delivered by local authorities and health boards in response to the formal Guidance I issued in 2021 is welcome, it is clear that far more needs to be done to tackle the issues and barriers shared by older people.

Without the action I am calling for, more older people will become excluded, not only unable to access the information and services they need, but also, more concerningly, finding themselves without a voice, without an opportunity to have a say on the future.

But by working together to deliver the right action and support, we can break down the barriers that lead to and reinforce digital exclusion, and help to create a healthy and inclusive Wales that enables us to age well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Heléna Herklots', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Heléna Herklots CBE**

**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

# Executive Summary

## Background

The increasing use of digital technology, and the pace of change we have seen in recent years means that the ways in which we access services and information, and the ways we communicate, have changed significantly. This brings with it the potential for positive improvements and efficiencies across a range of services as technology continues to develop.

However, the changes we are seeing, which accelerated a great deal as a result of the pandemic, has left many older people who are not online struggling to access the information and services they may need.

Recognising a stark digital divide that undermines people's rights and will potentially grow wider as the shift towards digital continues, having an even greater impact on many older people's health, well-being and day-to-day lives, the Commissioner issued formal Guidance to local authorities and health boards.

Published in November 2021, the Guidance sets out the kinds of action needed to ensure that older people who are not online can access the information and services they need via non-digital means, and that older people who wish to get online are encouraged and supported to do so.

The Guidance was strongly welcomed by many older people and older people's groups, and responses from local authorities and health boards highlighted a variety of work and initiatives underway or planned to support older people.

However, engagement with older people throughout Wales and via the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Service suggested that many individuals still find themselves facing significant issues when trying to access digital services or non-digital alternatives, something the Commissioner wanted to explore further given the potential impact of this on people's lives.

The Commissioner therefore invited older people to get in touch to share their experiences of digital exclusion and the impact this has on their day-to-day lives, as well as any examples of good practice making a positive difference.

From July to November 2023, a total of 159 responses were received, highlighting the experiences of older people throughout Wales. Information was also captured through engagement sessions with older people and via the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Service.

The Commissioner also requested further information from local authorities and health boards about any further actions or measures they have put in place since 2021, as well as inviting them to share examples of good practice or highlight gaps or barriers to inclusion they have encountered.

## Findings and Conclusions

The experiences shared indicate that older people who are not online or have limited digital skills often find it difficult, or in some cases impossible, to access crucial services – including healthcare services and financial services – and often find non-digital alternatives to be of poor quality and offer an inferior service.

This risks undermining people's rights and exacerbating existing inequalities, as those who are likely to need services the most, who are also more likely to be digitally excluded, may find themselves essentially prevented from accessing them.

Older people's responses highlighted that the 'digital world' often creates stress and anxiety when undertaking everyday tasks they previously found straightforward, and said it can be difficult to access the right kinds of support to overcome the barriers that lead to and reinforce digital exclusion. Older people with other protected characteristics – such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic older people or older people with disabilities – often also face additional barriers in terms of language and accessibility.

Concerns were also shared by older people about the difficulties they have in maintaining digital skills due to the speed at which technology changes, something that often leaves people feeling reliant on others and undermines their independence.

The rapid shift towards digital and the digital divide this has created has left many older people in Wales feeling inadequate, that they are not valued by society and that they are being left behind, affecting the ways people feel about themselves and about growing older. Many older people appeared to have 'given up' in terms of getting online or doing certain things, and had resigned themselves to facing growing exclusion as they got older.

Updates provided by local authorities and health boards indicate that a range of work is ongoing to provide non-digital services and support older people to get online, but it is clear from the experiences shared by older people that much more needs to be done to ensure that those who are not online or those with limited digital skills are not excluded and that their rights are upheld.

This must include practical action – such as promoting telephone services or making websites more accessible – as well as action at a strategic level to ensure a consistent approach to tackling digital exclusion throughout Wales.

The Welsh Government and other public bodies have a crucial role to play in delivering this, both through meeting their duties under legislation and ensuring the issue of digital exclusion is central to decision-making and service design. The private sector also has a role to play through meeting duties under the Equality Act 2010.

A failure to act will not only lead to more older people being further marginalised as more areas of life 'go online', but will also make it much harder, or even impossible, for citizens who do not use the internet to participate, have a voice and have a say on the future.

# Recommendations

The Commissioner's findings, based on the experiences shared by older people living throughout Wales, have been used to develop a series of recommendations for the Welsh Government, UK Government and public bodies focused on ensuring that:

- Public bodies are meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- Policies and strategies are delivering the action promised and that this is reflected in older people's experiences.
- Digital exclusion is central to discussions relating to the design and delivery of services.
- The voices of older people who are not online or who have limited digital skills are heard and responded to.
- Further practical action is taken to ensure the availability of non-digital information and services in community spaces, and to support older people to get and stay online if they wish to and use the internet securely and confidently.

The Commissioner is also calling for action within the private sector focused on ensuring that:

- Customers who are not online receive equivalent levels of service to those who are.
- Approaches to digitalisation fully meet regulatory guidance on protecting vulnerable customers.
- Additional support is provided to customers who are digitally excluded, or find themselves in vulnerable situations, including support with costs.

Playing her part, the Commissioner will also take a range of action to influence public bodies and support older people:

- Using the evidence within this report to make the case for change and secure commitments to take forward the action required.
- Scrutinising policy and strategy developments to ensure older people who are not online do not find themselves excluded.
- Promoting older people's rights in relation to accessing information and services under the Human Rights Act and Equality Act.
- Continuing to raise awareness of digital exclusion and its impact on people's day-to-day lives across the Welsh Government, public bodies and wider society.
- Providing support to older people experiencing digital exclusion to challenge poor practice, including via the Advice and Assistance Service.

The Commissioner will also publish an update six months after the publication of this report, which will consider progress against her recommendations and highlight the action she has delivered.





# Introduction

The increasing use of digital technology means that the ways in which we access services and information, and the ways we communicate, have changed significantly in recent years. The pace of this change accelerated significantly due to the impact of the pandemic, and issues relating to digital exclusion are frequently raised with the Commissioner by older people.

Digitalisation has created barriers for older people and other groups who are not online when trying to access services and information, as well as other kinds of amenities. Being online no longer just makes life easier, it is now often essential for everyday activities. This makes the issue of digital exclusion even more serious, particularly as the right to access information is a key element of freedom of expression and is protected across several human rights instruments.

While there is no ‘universally accepted definition of digital exclusion’, it broadly refers to members of the population who are unable to use the internet in ways that are needed to participate fully in modern society.<sup>1</sup> This is reflected in the definition used by the Welsh Government in its Digital Strategy for Wales, which also considers the reasons why people may find themselves digitally excluded:

**“There are some people, however, who do not, or cannot, use digital tools or online services. This can be for a number of reasons - they might have made a choice not to, they may lack motivation and / or confidence, they might not have the recognised basic digital skills, or they might not have access to (or be able to afford) devices or connectivity. This means that they are digitally excluded.”**

These kinds of definitions may limit the understanding of digital exclusion, however, as they can make this seem like a binary issue – i.e. that someone is either online or not online – rather than reflecting the fact that there are different levels of digital exclusion.

For example, people may choose to use the internet for certain activities, such as keeping in touch with friends or family via social media, but not others, such as banking or shopping. Similarly, it is important to remember that access is not the same as inclusion: people may be online but may still find themselves digitally excluded in some way, as highlighted by many of the quotes from older people in section / chapter X below.

Research shows that older people are most at risk of digital exclusion, while other factors – such as not working, being amongst the most financially vulnerable and living with a condition that limits or impairs the use of communications – also make it more likely an individual will be digitally excluded.<sup>2</sup>

This is reflected in the latest available data for Wales, which show that:

- 31% of over 75s (95,069 people) do not have access to the internet at home
- 33% of over 75s (101,200) do not use the internet (including Smart TV and handheld devices), compared to 13% of 65-74s and 0% of 25-44s.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, data shows that older people are far less likely to have accomplished the 5 Basic Digital Skills (handling information and content, communicating, transacting, problem solving and being safe and legal online) in the past three months compared to other age groups, 41% of over 75s and 61% of 65-74 year olds had these skills, compared to 80% of 45-64 year olds, 88% of 25-44 year olds and 91% of 16-24 year olds.<sup>4</sup>

While older people who have digital skills are using the internet more than ever<sup>5</sup>, the figures above demonstrate a stark digital divide that will potentially grow wider and have an even greater impact on many older people's health, well-being and day-to-day lives as the shift away from non-digital information and services continues.

Recognising this, the Commissioner used her legal powers to issue formal guidance to local authorities and health boards in Wales in November 2021, setting out the kinds of action they should be taking to ensure that people who can't (or don't wish to) get online have ways to access the information and services they need via non-digital means.<sup>6</sup> The guidance also set out the ways that support could be delivered to help older people to get online and use the internet safely and with confidence.

All local authorities and health boards responded to the guidance, highlighting the measures they currently had in place or planned to provide access to information by non-digital means, and to support older people to get online.<sup>7</sup>

Alongside publishing her guidance, the Commissioner also produced and distributed an information booklet for older people, to help people to better understand their rights to access information and services via non-digital means and provide contact details for organisations that can offer help and support if people feel their rights are not being upheld. To date, over 10,000 paper copies have been distributed via partners, older people's groups, and organisations throughout Wales.

Building on this work, this report examines the ways in which older people's day-to-day lives and experiences are being affected by digital exclusion and emerging digital barriers, to identify where further action may be needed to ensure that older people's rights to access information and services are upheld.

The report is based on responses shared by over 150 older people (in some cases with support from family or friends) to a call for evidence and examples of good practice from the Commissioner, as well as conversations during engagement session with older people's groups and information captured via the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Service.

The powerful evidence they provided not only highlights the many, and rapidly changing, ways that digital exclusion impacts upon their lives, but also shows that people often find themselves feeling powerless, worthless and left behind.

The report also includes a summary of updates provided by local authorities and health boards requested about action and progress since 2021, which the Commissioner has also used to form her conclusions and determine her calls for action.

# Legislation, Policy and Practice

As highlighted in the introduction, the right to access information is a key element of the broader right to freedom of expression and is protected across several human rights instruments, including the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Human Rights Act 1998.<sup>8</sup>

Alongside this, the Equality Act 2010 states that providers of goods and services (e.g. shops, GPs, social services, transport services), as well as employers, must not discriminate – or offer inferior services or treatment – on the basis of a protected characteristic, such as age.<sup>9</sup>

The Act also includes a duty to consider the needs of people with protected characteristics, as part of wider general duties to ‘advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not’ and also to ‘remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics’.

This means that the Act should offer protection to individuals both proactively, as public bodies and businesses fulfil their legal duties, and ‘reactively’ as a means to challenge instances of age discrimination. However, as case law relating to the Equality Act is still relatively limited, there are difficulties in determining the extent to which this is reflected in the reality of people’s lived experiences.

Other legislation, such as the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018, creates duties at a more operational level with the aim of ensuring consistent standards across digital public services in terms of accessibility, content and design.

In Wales, further responsibilities are created under the Socio-Economic Duty within the Equality Act, which was enacted by the Welsh Government in March 2021.

Furthermore, Wales also has its own specific Digital Strategy, which was published in March 2021.<sup>10</sup> The Strategy sets out ‘a vision and ambition for a coordinated digital approach in Wales’ and states a commitment to continuing to deliver alternative ways to access public services, which will be ‘as good as those offered online’, something restated in the Welsh Government’s Strategy for an Ageing Society.<sup>11</sup>

However, there is still little detail on the timescales for delivering upon this commitment: within the delivery plan that accompanies the Welsh Government’s Digital Strategy, this action is listed under ‘later’, with no indication of timescales.

If this kind of action is delayed, there is a risk that online-only options, many of which were introduced during pandemic (such as the removal of paper copies of information leaflets from community spaces) will become normalised and that even more non-digital options could be lost.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales has recognised the potential risks presented by this kind of shift towards digital services, calling on the Welsh Government to ‘increase digital inclusion for those aged over 65 and ensure that services such as health and social care are accessible for those without access to the internet or digital literacy skills’.<sup>12</sup>

Some action has taken place, however, which aims to deliver improvements. For example, Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being exists to reduce digital exclusion in Wales, aiming to build a Wales where everyone has the skills, access and motivation to be a confident user of digital technology. Similarly, local authorities report a range of activity in relation to supporting older people to be online.<sup>13</sup>

The Centre for Digital Public Services has also developed the Digital Service Standards for Wales, which set out what's expected from new or redesigned digital services funded by Welsh public sector organisations. The Standards emphasise the importance of understanding users and their needs (Standard 3 in particular) as public services are for everyone. Likewise, there is a focus on examining the 'user journey' from start to finish, understanding the different ways people use services, whether online, over the phone or in person, based on first-hand research with users to understand their experiences.

In addition, the Welsh Government has commissioned the University of Liverpool to undertake research on developing a Minimum Digital Living Standard (MDLS), a citizen-centred definition of what counts as digital inclusion or exclusion and can be used to assess (with input from members of the public) the minimum that certain types of households need in order to take part in everyday activities, covering factors including access to devices and internet connections, as well as people's skills.

This initially focused on the needs of households with children through a series of focus groups, but expanding this to include other groups – such as older people and people living in care homes – could provide important insights into the diversity of people's needs and where particular challenges may exist, (e.g. the difficulties older people often face in developing and/or maintaining digital skills).

Developing an MDLS is also part of the Welsh Government's efforts to measure digital inclusion, as the status of this is listed as one of the Welsh Government's 50 current National Indicators as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. According to the 'National Indicator technical descriptions and data links', a technical measurement for this indicator is still under development, alongside the development of the MDLS.<sup>14</sup>

While this kind of work is to be welcomed, it is important that policy- and decision-makers also fully understand the needs of people, including older people, who are not online and who will not be online in the future, so that services and information remain accessible. Digital exclusion is not an issue that can be resolved by simply trying to get everyone to use the internet and solely concentrating efforts on activities around this.

# Methodology

The formal Guidance the Commissioner issued in November 2021 was strongly welcomed by many older people and older people's groups, and the responses from local authorities and health boards highlighted a variety of work and initiatives underway or planned to ensure people could access information and services via non-digital means.

However, engagement with older people throughout Wales and via the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Service suggested that many older people still found themselves facing significant issues when trying to access digital services or non-digital alternatives, something the Commissioner wanted to explore further given the potential impact of this on people's lives.

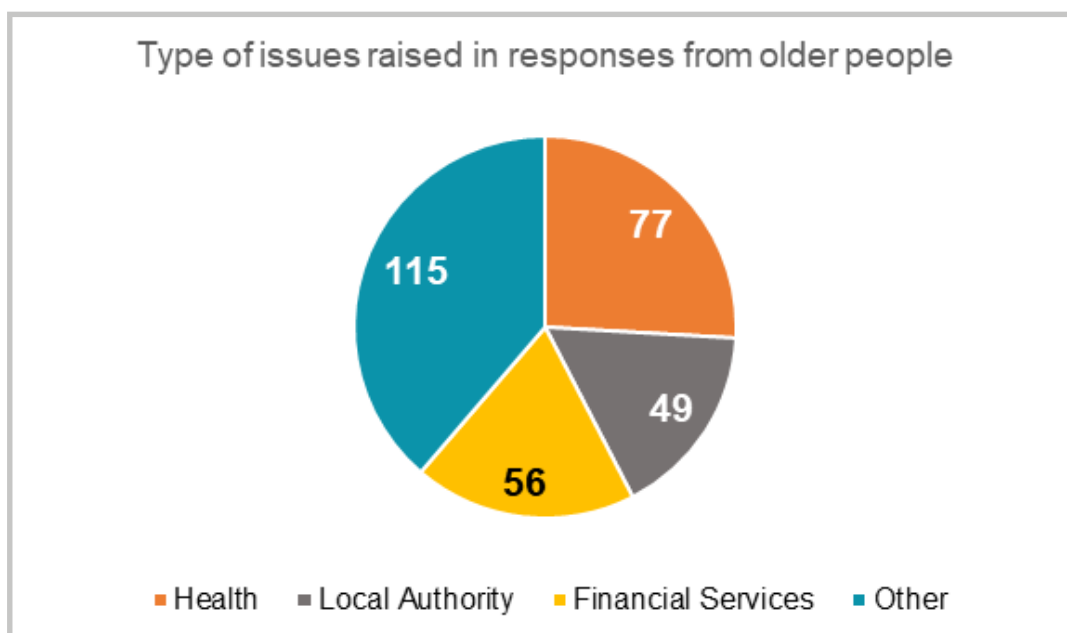
The Commissioner therefore invited older people to get in touch to share their experiences of digital exclusion and the impact this has on their day-to-day lives, as well as any examples of good practice making a positive difference.

Older people could share their experiences by telephoning the Commissioner's office, or by completing a paper or online form, and adverts were placed in newspapers throughout Wales to encourage people to respond. The Commissioner also worked with national and local partners and organisations to reach out to older people throughout Wales, as well as using social media channels to target family and friends.

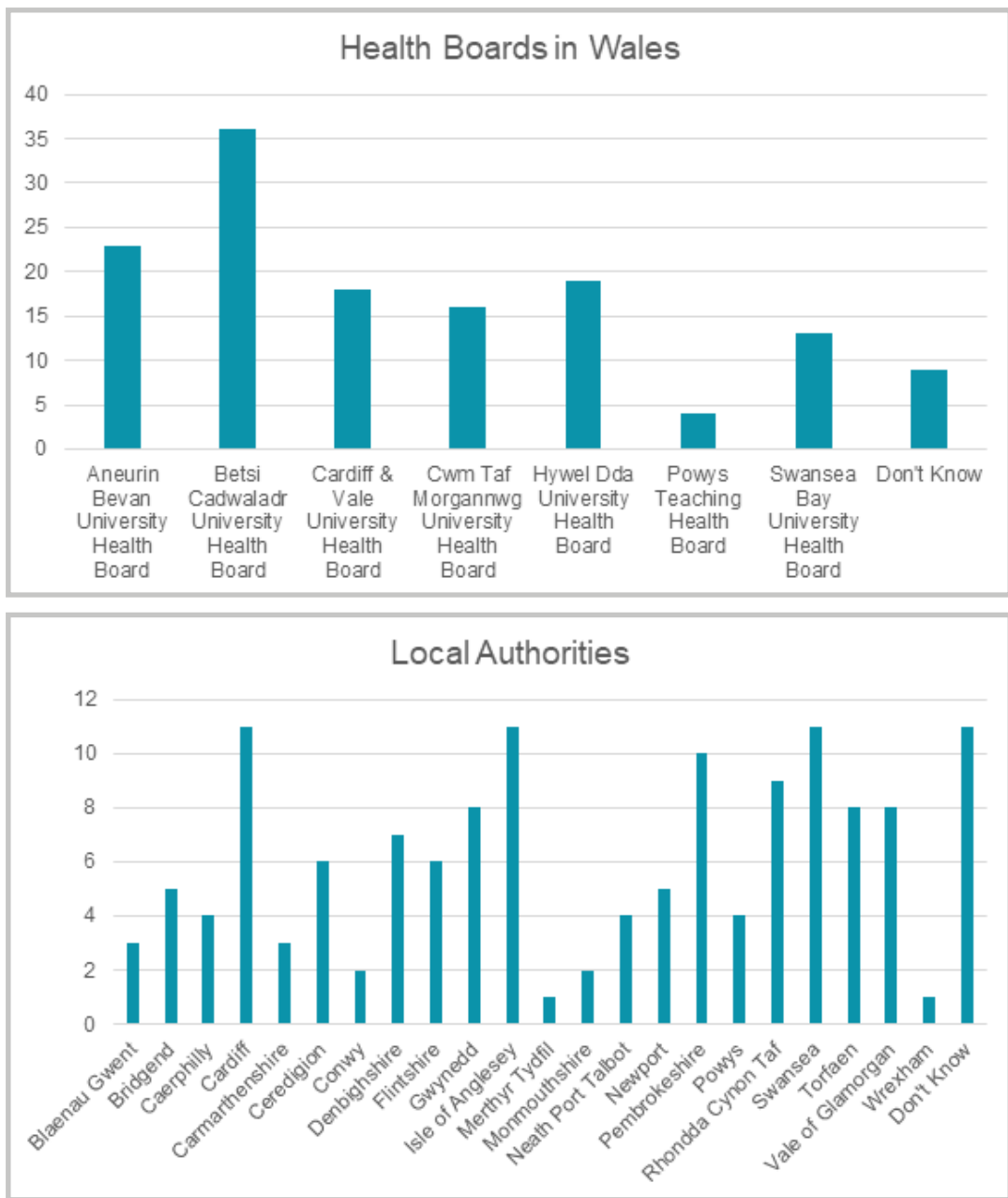
A simple framework was used to capture people's voices experiences, based around three questions:

- What were your experiences?
- What impact did this have and how did this make you feel?
- What needs to happen to prevent others experiencing this kind of thing in the future?

A wide range of examples of digital exclusion and related barriers were shared, most commonly relating to health and local authority services, but also covering other issues, such as access to financial services, as highlighted in the figure below.



From July to November 2023, a total of 159 responses were received, highlighting the experiences of older people living throughout Wales. The vast majority of responses were written / sent by older people themselves, although in a small number of cases someone else provided a response on behalf of an older person.



Alongside encouraging older people to share their experiences, the Commissioner also requested further information from local authorities and health boards about any further actions or measures they have put in place since 2021, as well as inviting them to share examples of good practice or highlight gaps or barriers to inclusion they have encountered. A summary of these updates is included below.

# Older people's views and experiences:

## Access to information and services

This section is based on quotes from older people who responded to the Commissioner's invitation to share their experiences of digital exclusion and the impact this has on their lives.

The responses received covered a wide variety of topics, including access to services (such as financial services, health services and services provided by local authorities), cost barriers, digital skills, assumptions that everyone is online and difficulties in terms of the design and accessibility of websites and user interfaces.

The breadth of experiences shared demonstrates that digital exclusion affects older people's lives in many different ways, creating barriers – or in some cases making it impossible – for people to access the information and services they need and do the things that matter to them. This often leads to disengagement and withdrawal and puts people's health and well-being at risk.



# Financial services

The shift to online banking, which has resulted in the closure of bank branches in communities throughout Wales, was a significant issue for many of the older people who responded, reflecting the wider trend of other local services closing, being amalgamated or moving further away, which makes it much harder to undertake routine activities.

Many older people told us they do not feel comfortable banking online, or do not have the devices required to do so, and rely instead on telephone banking to avoid having to make long, difficult journeys – often more than 10 miles – to visit their nearest branch, something that is often mentally and physically draining.

**‘I am terrified of doing online banking.’**

**‘Dyslexic, and terrified of doing online banking. Lloyds Bank has closed in Pwllheli, and everything has to be done over the phone.’**

Despite the importance of these services for many customers, the experiences shared were often negative, with older people reporting issues that often make it time-consuming and more difficult to carry out the transactions they need to.

**‘We resort to phoning and waiting and listening through the ‘go on-line’ messages. When a human being answers we run the gauntlet of security questions in order to verify my identity. They ask her for her card number, she gets flustered and upset because she cannot read the numbers - and so on. It takes forever, she feels exhausted and humiliated. She still gets asked for an email address - despite the fact that they are supposed to know of her circumstances.’**

Some older people shared that they were unable to hear the messages over the phone, and needed the help of family and friends in order to bank successfully, while others highlighted long delays when using offline services, including one individual who had to wait three weeks to set up a bank card.

Another older person said they were unable to bank online, but also felt nervous using an ATM, yet had been told by bank staff that they were unable to withdraw cash from the branch itself.

These kinds of issues – where being offline meant people were simply unable to do the things they needed to – also affected people more widely.

**‘I have found out that \*large retail store\* refuse your application for a credit card, even if you have held one without issue for decades. When challenged that they were severing links with good customers, they agreed and said they would live with it! No alternative method of ID verification was offered, despite the fact that companies like PayPal can provide the same service via a landline. Some banks do provide an alternative – a card reader – but this involves having an online Bank Account, something which many, especially of the older generation, prefer not to have.’**

**‘Pension company was only dealing with people online. This lady had to wait a year for a lump sum from her pension and she had to pay a financial advisor to get this money for her.’**

**‘\*Utility company\* insists on sending our bill by email. We are not on the internet and we keep telling them. We did have a computer but it broke and we never replaced.’**

The older person who shared this example said that having their request for an alternative bill format repeatedly ignored created stress and anxiety, and it is difficult to see why such a request could not be accommodated.

Issues and challenges accessing financial and similar services were not confined to people who were not online: even those with digital skills faced difficulties due to changes in technology or poor design.

**‘Recently my bank has introduced facial recognition as an extra layer of security, in addition to fingerprint security. Try as I might, and I have tried countless times I cannot get the facial recognition to acknowledge that it is me. As a result I am excluded from making payments via bank transfer, often necessitating a trip to a an ATM to withdraw cash to pay the bill. This is very inconvenient and involves a special trip of six miles or so. I acknowledge the bank’s concern for security, but I believe that I am especially conscious of security without this inconvenience.’**

**‘I am 76 years of age and I am happy with the use of my iPad for many uses like banking etc, and find it useful, but the increasing necessity for smart phones does create a barrier for some which can be stressful.’**

# Health services

Access to health services, particularly GP services, plays an important role in supporting many older people to remain healthy and independent. Yet many older people told us that the use of digital services had created significant barriers for those who are digitally excluded, often leaving people feeling angry, frustrated and that they were receiving an inferior, potentially discriminatory service.

**‘No appointments - when told to phone at 8.45 all appointments gone. Have to phone GP - they phone back. Can’t walk into the Surgery. Not able to use the computer.’**

**‘Need to phone asap after 8am you find you are approx. 30 in queue, this is because people can book online on the previous evening, also all appointments are filled by 9.15am.’**

Concerningly, responses from some older people suggested that some surgeries are offering no alternative but to use an online system.

**‘Called at my doctor’s surgery to make an appointment and was informed appointments could not be made except “online”. I explained I didn’t and could not use a computer and asked what to do, and the receptionist repeated appointment to be done ONLINE. I asked her what could I do and was told again ONLINE ONLY. I left very upset.’**

**‘It is impossible to get a GP appointment as they have all gone first thing in the morning, and as it has to be done online. If you are ill the last thing you want to do is get up at 7.30am to log on to a computer to book an appointment, however if you do not then you do not get an appointment. I have witnessed MANY older people asking the receptionist at [the surgery] how to get an appointment and they are very sternly and rudely told to go online or get someone to help them go online, as there is no other way! This is causing a great deal of anger towards the practice.’**

Some older people also shared that they felt that not being online was resulting in them having to wait longer for treatment, either due to difficulties booking appointments, as highlighted above, or because appointments being offered were not suitable.

**‘Hospital appointment wants me to fill in a questionnaire online but because I didn’t have a computer I’ve gone lower down on their list.’**

It should be noted that there is no NHS policy to deprioritise people who are not online or who are not digitally confident. However, older people’s experiences and the concerns they shared suggest that there may be a perception that this is the case.

In some cases, older people were offered virtual appointments in order to be seen more quickly, which left them feeling upset as they felt this type of appointment was not felt to be appropriate, or impossible to attend for someone without access to a computer. This had led some individuals to arrange private appointments at their own (often significant) expense, an option that is simply not feasible for most people.

# Access to online support and entitlements

Access to financial entitlements and other forms of support, such as Blue Badges, can be important as we get older to enable us to remain independent and do the things that matter to us, crucial to support us to age well.

However, the shift to digital within our public services appears to have not sufficiently accounted for the fact that the individuals most likely to need to access support or financial entitlements, in many cases older people, are also more likely to be digitally excluded, making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to find the information they need or make applications online.

One response, sent by a library worker on behalf of older people, said that they and their colleagues had dealt with hundreds of cases of older people needing assistance with digital services such as applying for a Blue Badge, Concessionary Bus Pass and financial entitlements. They said that people are often 'desperate' and come to them feeling angry and frustrated due to failed attempts to speak to someone on the phone. They shared a recent example of an older man who was trying to renew his Blue Badge.

**'He'd tried ringing our local council (Bridgend) and after numerous attempts to get through, someone eventually answered the phone. They told him to take a photo and one form of ID to a library. This he did. However, we needed much more information than this to proceed with his application. I tried to ring the council and waited 30 mins on the line for someone to answer. Nobody did. This was 2.30 on a Friday afternoon. We had to send the man away with a list of all the information he'd need to give us to enable us to apply on his behalf. Suffice to say, he was understandably disappointed. I could give so many more examples of this type of treatment.'**

This kind of experience was reflected in other responses, which suggested that the realities of providing information or making applications via non-digital means had not been considered by those designing systems, and that it often felt impossible to find help over the phone.

**'M is registered disabled. She has a blue badge which has now expired. I rang the council to sort out a renewal, listened to the 'go on-line' messages, spoke to a human being who asked me to upload the entire set of documents we sent out when she originally applied for the badge. There was an option to post copies (presumably we all have photocopiers?) or physically take them to the office - 5 miles away.'**

**'Wouldn't know who to talk to get information nowadays. Can't find telephone numbers, excluded. Feels stuck because getting information on transport is harder, and access to councillors is more difficult. Feels she cannot get help anymore, and incredibly expensive to get accessible aid.'**

**'My wife and I are both 85. We have no extended family. The use of computers has made us feel illiterate. What annoys me is a lot of companies no longer put a phone number down. This should be mandatory and the Commissioner should fight for this. We are anxious of becoming ill.'**

# Parking

One area that illustrates the increasing role digital technology plays in every aspect of our lives is car parking, where digital payments and the use of parking apps are becoming increasingly common.

Many older people who got in touch with the Commissioner highlighted barriers created by issues relating to parking and the fact that a growing number of car parks / spaces no longer accept cash payments. This meant people often found it more difficult to do the things they needed to, or were put off getting out and about altogether.

**‘It makes life much more complicated than it needs to be... we have to use car parks further away than we would like, which don’t use smartphone apps only.’**

**‘We don’t go anywhere in the car where we can’t pay for parking by cash.’**

**‘Where I have failed to obtain a parking ticket to place on the car windscreen, I have to abandon my day out.’**

Examples of older people with digital skills experiencing similar difficulties were also shared, often relating to problems accessing or using parking apps themselves, or concerns about security or making online payments.

**‘[I was] unable to download an “app” required to pay for parking at Holyhead.’**

**‘Parking is a nightmare where I live, the online payment system is terrible on many days it takes 5/6 attempts to make the programme work and pay for parking.’**

**Trying to pay for parking in Haverfordwest, card declined because of \*Parking Company\*, they are known to Barclays as a bad company and used by the council, it was the only way to pay.’**

Concerns about how the continuing shift towards digital payments for parking could affect people and make their lives more difficult in the future were also shared by a small number of older people.

**‘Parking in King St Car Park noticed drivers using smart phones and apps, which I don’t have. Luckily it still took coins. If that facility is taken away, many like us will stop going to Mold with bad consequences for local businesses.’**

Similarly, another older person we spoke to had been told that a mobile app was needed to pay for parking in Ceredigion and was particularly worried about what this would mean for her as she is visually impaired and has no smartphone.

# Barriers that lead to and reinforce digital exclusion

Older people shared a range of reasons why they were not online. In some cases, this was a choice, but, more commonly, people found themselves digitally excluded due to limited digital skills, cost barriers, concerns about security and the changing nature of technology.

The responses below also reveal that these barriers often leave older people feeling left behind or as though they have failed in some way, that they have little control over their lives, and that their needs and rights do not matter.

# Digital skills

As highlighted above, older people are far less likely to have accomplished the 5 Basic Digital Skills (handling information and content, communicating, transacting, problem solving and being safe and legal online) in the past three months compared with other age groups and may also find it difficult to maintain these skills, particularly after leaving the workplace. This can make it difficult to keep up to date with new technological developments or get help with common problems.

A significant number of older people (around 7% of people aged 75+) are also 'lapsed users', individuals who have not used the internet during the past three months, despite having done so previously. Given the pace of change within the digital world, these individuals may find their digital skills quickly becoming out of date.

These kinds of issues and barriers were highlighted by several older people, who said they felt as though they were increasingly excluded from a range of services and activities due to the rapidly changing nature of technology, and that they often found it difficult to adapt to new technology.

**'Systems are progressively changing adapting to technology to benefit their organisation. This transference is not to the advantage of the older generation some of whom are not tech savvy and find it difficult to navigate their day with these systems in place. Especially difficult for me is the use of smart phones which I choose not to own and which are necessary for many functions.'**

**'I am in my 70's and do feel I am increasingly excluded from things because I do not have a Smartphone. How does one choose what type of Smartphone? Understanding the memory capacity of the phone in relation to Apps. Security matters when using it. Where to get training in using it. We don't all have knowledgeable younger family members/friends.'**

Several older people shared this view, saying that more opportunities to learn digital skills, with the right types of support, would be very beneficial.

**'I have a mobile and internet but don't know how the internet works. There should be someone available to teach us.'**

**'I am confused with information given - need face to face.'**

The way we access services and activities has changed so quickly and significantly that it can be hard for some older people to adapt to new ways of doing things and keeping track of new forms of information, such as remembering several online passwords. This can create stress and anxiety, which can act as a further barrier to people getting or staying online, and created other difficulties.

**'Just remember the password. Needing a mobile phone that is tricky to get things right.'**

**'This lady wanted us to know that because she had forgotten her PIN she was unable to get her money out of [high street building society]. Neither her or her husband are using the internet.'**

# Cost

Around 1 in 5 older people in Wales lives in poverty, and many more have been particularly badly affected by the cost-of-living crisis. This has forced many older people to look at their spending habits and consider ways in which they could save money.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that cost was one of the most common reasons given as to why people are not online, both in terms of the cost of purchasing technology itself, and ongoing costs such as broadband or mobile data. This was a particular issue for people with limited pension income, who were often unable afford these kinds of contracts.

**‘May not be able to afford the required, and mostly expensive digital equipment.’**

**‘Told to ‘go online’ and ‘get the app’. BUT I did not have a smartphone. Now I have, I put £10 on it but data in background took ALL the money. I would also add that the tech is expensive and on a pension I simply find ‘contracts’ beyond my means.’**

**‘In this day and age where people are trying to cut costs, why should it be a necessity to pay for mobile data, in case you need to pay for parking. Linking a payment card to a phone horrified many old and young. People are frightened of being scammed and losing all their money.’**

Older people’s responses also highlighted that cost barriers could also actually result in higher costs, whether due to more expensive pay-as-you-go mobile costs, or due to having no option but to use large amounts of credit waiting on the phone for help and support if they are unable to access online services.

**‘Pay-as-you-go is also expensive if the credit is being used up in the background before I have even connected to Wi-Fi or used the phone or texts. Furthermore, I don’t actually have any family or friends to contact so what is point of bundles of so many texts/calls?’**

**‘I’m on pay as you go, so my credit does not last long and I have to ring (the GP) before 8.00 a.m. I am 81 years old. When I am in a queue my credit is used up.’**

**‘Since not online: Spending hours getting through to Utility Companies - sometimes being cut-off. Being passed from pillar to post.’**

Research also shows that alongside these kinds of costs, older people who are digitally excluded are missing out on significant savings by being unable to purchase products and services online. It was reported that home insurance could cost up to 46% more when purchased offline, while a ‘SIM only’ phone contract could cost £192 more.<sup>15</sup>



# Choosing not to be online

For some older people, not being online is a choice – which was reflected in some of the responses shared with the Commissioner.

People told us they were happy using a landline or receiving bills via the post, for example, and simply had no desire to be online, with the costs and complications they felt this could bring. This often led to people feeling like they were being treated unfairly, and that their lives were being made more difficult.

**‘I refuse to have a smartphone. I get my son to sort out the gas and electricity bills. Everything is online and this is restrictive.’**

**‘At last, someone is recognizing the discrimination against older people without smart ‘phones. I am 87 and I don’t want one. There are so many things now that cannot be accessed without one.’**

**‘Don’t use the computer. OK with medical appointments, but his hobby is football and he can’t go on-line to see the fixtures.’**

**‘No computer or smart phone. Banks wants me to go paperless. Hospital appointment wants me to fill in a questionnaire online... No longer have yellow pages to find numbers - you must get online for finding a chiroprapist etc.’**

These examples illustrate the extensive reach the digital world now has throughout many aspects of our lives – from health appointments to paying bills to engaging in our hobbies – and how the choice to not be online, or use certain technology, can create significant barriers and make what were once ‘simple’ things much harder.

# Concerns about security

Online security is an issue that affects the whole of society, and media stories about the potential risks of using the internet are common. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that concerns about online security are common amongst older people, and often act as a barrier to accessing digital information and services.

Some older people shared that online security is causing them a great deal of anxiety, who spoke about mistrusting the internet and the ‘virtual world’. Older people said they had concerns that scams and phishing had increased, and that they felt safer not using the internet.

**‘It is safer and less worrying not to use virtual at all and many have no idea of how internet security is applied or how you confirm that a website is to be trusted and that is something that is often missing in the training and design of services.’**

**‘I always want to avoid the internet. If around, have to ask family members to do things for me. Feel useless I can’t always remember all the instructions. Scams - scared of the knowledge available to anyone.’**

Alongside these kinds of concerns, which often deter people from being online, other aspects of online security, such as managing passwords or remembering pin codes, can also act as a barrier, preventing some older people, particularly individuals living with cognitive impairments, from successfully using the internet even if they want to.

## Poor design and accessibility

The design and accessibility of websites, apps and other digital services plays a crucial role in defining our experiences online and enabling us to easily access what we need, when we need it. However, poorly designed, inaccessible content often acts as a barrier, particularly for people living with sensory loss or other conditions who may rely on assistive technologies.

Older people shared that while they wanted to be online, they often found websites inaccessible and difficult to use.

**‘Lots of websites not accessible without screen readers so have to get daughter to help or call but when I call nobody is there is to answer lots of the time.’**

**‘Website design and functionality is poor, not intuitive and the typeface and use of images, tick boxes is poorly designed and user testing seems to have been ignored; Size of devices being used and too much included on screens.’**

**‘In my experience there needs to be different platform options for online forms, e.g. phone or laptop / iPad, as if it is intended to be completed online but you are trying to on your phone (as this is often the only device people have) then it is really difficult to see all the information on the small screen.’**

These issues and barriers were felt even more strongly by older people living with certain health conditions – including sight loss, hearing loss, arthritis, Parkinson’s disease and Alzheimer’s – which made using websites, making appointments or reading correspondence even more difficult.

**‘My mother, late 80’s, hard of hearing, not very mobile, husband with Alzheimer’s. So a very vulnerable person anyway, and never used internet (or computers in any sense), unable to grasp even mobile phone technology.’**

**‘Mum is 82 with Parkinson’s, doctors appointments over phone, can’t remember what was said, now can’t even use a mobile phone. She lives in Wales and all services are either phone or Internet related and even though my mum has a diploma in computer studies some years ago now those basic tasks are impossible.’**

**‘I have problems with my sight and severe rheumatoid arthritis in my hands and fingers. Using a mobile phone is almost impossible for me.’**

Older people also shared that certain websites ‘time out’ too quickly when they attempt to enter information, not only leaving people unable to access the services they need or want to, but also leaving people feeling that they are too slow, or lack the necessary digital skills.

**‘The link for my GP surgery is a nightmare. Doesn’t give you time to answer the questions or the screen just disappeared.’**

**‘House bound and disabled. Time out when ordering food online. Can’t book appointments.’**

These examples also highlight how an inability to access online services without help and support can leave older people feeling that they have lost independence and autonomy.

## Language

In addition to the potential difficulties of navigating life in an increasingly digital world, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic older people often face additional barriers due to language when trying to access information and services online, as highlighted in a small number of responses.

**‘I work as Service manager for Syrian and Afghan refugees who have settled in the North Wales area since 2016. In addition to the obvious barrier of the digital challenge – especially for those who come from less developed countries, there is also the language barrier. In addition a significant number of this population are also illiterate in their first language, making the digital exclusion even more significant. This results in a long term dependence on services such as the British Red Cross for everything from making GP appointments, booking and paying for anything at school using PayPal, or completing simple forms using a word document. I have observed even those who are well educated and literate in their first language struggle to complete a basic form because they are unfamiliar with keypad strikes such as ‘delete’.’**

**‘Booking appointments for older parents / relatives who cannot speak English / Welsh. This has been difficult for the individual (lack of independence / autonomy), as well as for me (sometimes not being allowed to help with follow up etc. because I am not the named person). Availability of translation also varies - sometimes people don’t turn up even when booked.’**

# Impact on older people's day-to-day lives

As highlighted above, the Commissioner was keen to examine the impact of digital upon older people's lives, not only in terms of access to services and barriers to getting online, but also in terms of how this makes people feel about themselves and about growing older.

For some older people, digital exclusion was clearly having a significant impact on their health and well-being, with some individuals sharing that the issues and barriers they face leave them feeling inadequate, that they are not valued by society and that they are being left behind.

**'Depression, loneliness, and humiliation, to name but three. We are being abandoned and no one gives a damn for those who cannot cope with the scope and speed of the changes. We hear a lot about choice, and in the market place, it seems to be the road to success for business, but convenience for the profiteers, means misery for a large part of our society.'**

**'Don't feel valued as an older person. Just don't understand technology. Frustrated and fed up.'**

**'Old! Older. Inadequate. Invisible. Frustrated.'**

**'Makes me feel frustrated and feel let down.'**

For others, not being online left them feeling excluded and unable to do the things that matter to them, something that can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, and related issues.<sup>16</sup>

**'I am in my 70's and do feel I am increasingly excluded from things because I do not have a Smartphone. For example I can no longer attend matches/events at the Stadium in Cardiff which insists on tickets on a Smartphone only.'**

**'Does not use a computer or e-mail address. Difficulty in buying tickets for an event (online). Unable to make investments - online. Also, missing out on good deals because of the inability to go online. Difficulty in buying a car without being online. Video consultations with Doctor is difficult. Difficulty with online shopping. Difficulty with parking app.'**

**'I find competitions in magazines that I would like to try but it's all on-line'**

For some older people, these kinds of barriers meant they had to rely on help and support to get online, something they were often reluctant to do as it left them feeling dependent and reliant on others.

**'I hate having to rely on other people.'**

**'For my husband, it impacts on his sense of wellbeing having to rely on me.'**

**'If around, have to ask family members to do things for me. Feel useless I can't always remember all the instructions.'**

# Improvements suggested by older people

As well as inviting older people to talk about the impact that digital exclusion has on their lives, the Commissioner also wanted to hear from older people about practical solutions that would help to tackle the issues they experienced.

Many of the suggestions shared by older people emphasised the importance of choice and not forcing people to do things online, highlighting that effective non-digital alternatives are still crucial.

**‘NHS/ Social Care – everyone should be asked as standard what their preference is in how they are contacted. This should be the only means of contact to save confusion. Telephone contacts – all companies should be made to have a telephone number with a person on the end to contact. My Parents could not use a chat function.’**

**‘Offer paper form when people phone and ask for them, or provide support to fill in forms. Such as: tablets, training or offer to come to property and support.’**

**‘There shouldn’t be an absolute reliance on smartphones. Cash or cards should be available to use at car parks.’**

Older people also made suggestions about how access to online information and services could be improved, through improving the simplicity and accessibility of websites and making digital skills training available to more older people.

**‘Better testing of websites to make them more accessible, also need better screen reader accessibility testing of websites.’**

**‘Have a much simpler website – it’s not even easy to find local library site!’**

Some people wanted lessons or training, to give them the digital skills needed to use technology.

**‘Desires lessons to go online, wants computing classes. Local library offered classes but is no longer available.’**

**‘Investment, training, empathy, staffing. You’ll all be old one day and even if you are digitally literate now aging process can take that away.’**

**‘Computer training. Giving people a choice.’**

# Summary of responses from local authorities and health boards

As part of the current work, local authorities and health boards were asked to provide an update on any further actions or measures that they have put in place since the Commissioner published her Guidance in 2021. Some of the main points are outlined below.<sup>17</sup>

## Accessing information and services by non-digital means

Local authorities and health boards reported continuing efforts to assist older people to access information and services via non-digital means in various ways, many of which are similar to those previously outlined in the Commissioner's earlier work on digital exclusion.

### Examples shared by local authorities include:

- Providing printed copies of information through libraries or by Community Single Point of Access (SPOA) based within Councils.
- Providing Age Friendly bulletins in some areas.
- Using Community Hubs to disseminate services and information.
- Holding groups, forums and information sessions in the community to raise awareness, including sessions on online fraud and scams.
- Delivering training for staff to improve support for older people when accessing information and services.

### Examples shared by health boards include:

- Producing newsletters, letters and information leaflets, some of which were in large print.
- Enabling patients to request GP appointments via telephone or face-to-face.
- Using volunteers within hospital sites to help signpost patients to services.
- Using paper copies of questionnaires to obtain feedback from patients.

One particularly interesting example shared by one health board is the development of a hybrid 'print and post' service, which aims to improve how correspondence is received by patients and will include safeguards to ensure that people who do not have the means to engage digitally are not excluded. The system will include preferences to enable opt-in / opt-out but also to cover the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Equality Act 2010. Where a digital letter has been sent to a patient and it has not been read, the new system will automatically then print and post the letter to ensure delivery.

## Enabling and supporting older people to get online

As above, much of the activity reported in updates from local authorities and health boards builds upon the information provided in September 2022 in response to the Commissioner's formal Guidance, and examples of ongoing activities include device loan and gifting schemes, support via libraries and community hubs, training for staff to provide support (e.g. with Blue Badge applications) and surveys to assess local needs and barriers.

### Other examples shared by local authorities include:

- Working with partners (including Community Connectors and Men's Sheds) to promote digital skills.
- Improving website design / accessibility.
- Linking older people living in care homes up with members of youth groups to provide intergenerational digital learning sessions.
- Distributing the 'Icon Booklet'<sup>18</sup> to hubs and libraries to provide information about some of the most commonly used apps available to smartphone users.

### Other examples share by health boards include:

- Creating designated roles and responsibilities to assist people to get online.
- Providing IT equipment to enable older people to attend virtual appointments.
- Using the Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) Digital Capability Framework<sup>19</sup> to empower staff to develop their digital skills, which will, in turn enable them to support patients.
- Developing packages of support focused on raising the digital literacy and digital health literacy skills of the population.
- Considering digital exclusion and the potential barriers older people may face as part of the development of the NHS Wales App.

# Other issues and future challenges

Older people raised a wide variety of digital exclusion issues in our call for information, but the scope of those discussed with the Commissioner has been even broader. For example, there are increasing concerns about public transport and the difficulty of accessing bus timetables in particular.

Similarly concerns have been shared about how the rise in the number of public consultations that are online-only risks losing the voice of older people who do not use the internet. This means people cannot have their say or input their ideas, leading to further marginalisation and ultimately poorer service design.

Another significant issue on the horizon, which will affect large numbers of older people, is the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), currently being rolled out across the UK. The technology that is currently being used to make landline phone calls is being upgraded over the next few years. This means that the use of landlines in their current analogue form is due to end in December 2025.

In the future, landline calls will be delivered over digital technology, called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Customers who want to keep a landline phone will need to move to a VoIP service.

Communication about this change has been inconsistent, leading to concerns that landlines will not be available at all in the future, and that certain devices – such as care alarms, health pendants or security systems will cease to function and need to be reconfigured or replaced. This was reflected by some of the older people who shared their experiences as part of this report.

In order to ensure that older people can continue to be able to access services and information without being online, uninterrupted access to the telephone network is essential. Telecoms providers need to ensure that this is the case.

As digital technology continues to develop, the potential for positive improvements and efficiencies to services remains high. However, it is vital that all such developments take account of the needs of people, including older people, who are not online from the outset. Access to good quality information and services must not be restricted to only those people with high levels of digital skills and devices such as smartphones.



# Conclusions

The experiences shared by older people demonstrate that digital exclusion negatively affects people's everyday lives in a wide range of ways, as illustrated so powerfully by the quotes above.

As the world has become increasingly digital, many older people have found themselves feeling excluded and left behind, and facing stress and anxiety when undertaking everyday tasks they previously found straightforward.

Poor quality offline alternatives mean that older people who are not online are finding it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to access the information and services they need, including health services, which is particularly concerning. This risks exacerbating existing inequalities, as those who are likely to need services the most, who are also more likely to be digitally excluded, may find themselves essentially prevented from accessing them.

Older people told us they felt there was not enough support available to overcome the barriers that lead to and reinforce digital exclusion, such as skills or cost barriers, and that maintaining digital skills can be particularly challenging due to the speed at which technology changes. This often leaves older people feeling reliant on others, which undermines their confidence and independence.

The action being taken in response to the Commissioner's Guidance by local authorities and health boards to make information and services available offline and support people to get online is welcome.

However, it is clear from the experiences shared that much more needs to be done to ensure that older people who are not online or those with limited digital skills are not excluded and that their rights are upheld.

This includes practical actions – such as promoting telephone services or making websites more accessible – as well as action at a strategic level to ensure a consistent approach throughout Wales (see Recommendations section below)

The Welsh Government and other public bodies have a crucial role to play in ensuring that increasing digitalisation does not lead to older people being socially excluded and not feeling part of society. This means organisations must meet their legal obligations as well as work together to ensure that the needs of people who are digitally excluded are central to decision-making and service design, so that everyone can play a full part in society, whether they have digital skills or not.

While responsibilities differ in the private sector, businesses do have duties under the Equality Act 2010 and need to make sure that they do not discriminate against older customers.

The consequences of not taking action to tackle digital exclusion are severe and wide ranging. It will lead to ever greater numbers of older people and other groups who do not use the internet

being further marginalised as digitalisation affects more and more areas of everyday life. This will not only have an impact in terms of access to information and services, but also make it much harder, or even impossible for citizens who do not use the internet to participate, have a voice and have a say on the future, something that will leave us poorer as a nation in so many ways.

In order to achieve a healthy and inclusive Wales, one where we can all age well, and one which meets the Welsh Government's vision of an age-friendly Wales, action is needed to tackle digital exclusion as a matter of urgency.

# Recommendations

The responsibility for ensuring that older people are able to access information and services without having to be online lies with a number of stakeholders.

Recommendations for action from individual agencies are set out further below.

## The Welsh Government

### Short term

- Write to all bodies that it funds reminding them of the Welsh Government's expectations in relation to digital inclusion and provision of information and services offline, as well as their obligations under the Equality Act, Human Rights Act and other relevant legislation.
- Use its own engagement with citizens across Wales as an opportunity to demonstrate good practice in relation to digital inclusion, for example by ensuring phone numbers are clearly displayed on webpages, consultations are available for response via non-digital methods, and providing hard copy information where relevant.
- Finalise the development of the measurement for the 'Status of digital inclusion' National Indicator of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and report against the measurement in the Wellbeing of Wales, 2024 report. The measurement should enable data to be broken down by 5-10 year age bands in order to assess progress on digital inclusion among different age groups.
- Use its influence when meeting with banks, utility companies and other similar organisations to promote the need for further action on digital exclusion and for these organisations to ensure that they are taking all possible steps to ensure customer choice in the way that information and services are provided, with offline services being provided to the same standard as online.
- Ensure that there is sufficient funding and investment in non-digital services such as phone lines and provision of hard copy information in order to ensure that everyone can access information and services.
- Provide the necessary funding to organisations to enable to the delivery of training and support to older people to combat digital exclusion.

### Medium term

- In order to promote consistency, develop and publish guidance on digital inclusion in relation to the provision of information and services which applies to all bodies that it funds. This should clarify expectations in relation to supporting people who are not online.
- Embed a right to digital inclusion, as well as a right to access information and services by non-digital means, into its development of a possible Human Rights (Wales) Act.

- Publish detailed plans on how it intends to deliver on the ‘Digital inclusion’ section of the Digital strategy for Wales: delivery plan which states that the Welsh Government will ‘work with all sectors to ensure alternative options for engaging are available for everyone and designed to the same standard as those expected of digital’.
- Use the opportunities presented by the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 to promote socially responsible procurement which should specifically ensure that procured services are available to people who are not online or do not have a smartphone.

## Public Bodies

### Local Authorities

- Ensure that services that they provide or for which they are responsible are available to an equivalent standard for people who are not online or do not have a smartphone.
- Display phone numbers for public enquiries clearly on the home page of websites and make sure that websites comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- Invest in effective ways to help older people who want to be online to get online, and that this support delivers what older people want and is available on a sustainable basis.
- Designate a Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for digital inclusion, ensure that feedback is regularly sought (including by the use of relevant committees and internal structures), and this issue is reported upon in annual reports and strategic equality plans.
- Use the Digital Service Standards for Wales (developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services) and involve older people, especially people not online, in the design of services, systems and relevant research from the beginning to co-produce better and more accessible services and policies.
- Restore access to hard copy leaflets and information across all sites, such as libraries or hubs, where this has not already returned post-pandemic.

### Health Boards

- Ensure that services that they provide or for which they are responsible are available to an equivalent standard for people who are not online or do not have a smartphone.
- Display phone numbers for public enquiries clearly on the home page of websites and make sure that websites comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- Ensure that a member of the Board at each Health Board leads on digital inclusion, that feedback is regularly sought (including by the use of relevant committees and internal structures), and that this issue is reported upon in annual reports and strategic equality plans.

- Use the Digital Service Standards for Wales (developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services) and involve older people, especially people not online, in the design of services, systems and relevant research from the beginning to co-produce better and more accessible services and policies.
- Restore access to hard copy leaflets and information across all sites where this has not already returned post-pandemic.

## **Audit Wales**

Continue their focus on the digital agenda including digital inclusion, for example by continuing to scrutinise, and report on, local authority digital strategies, and by holding events to raise awareness and share good practice on providing effective services.

## **Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)**

Strengthen the focus on digital exclusion whilst inspecting NHS services, and regulating independent healthcare providers, and report regularly on digital exclusion.

## **Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

Incorporate the issue of digital exclusion into future work, including inspections and national reviews, and provide regular reports.

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Consider digital exclusion as a specific area of inequality in its future work, including development of its next Strategic Plan.

## **UK Government**

- Publish an updated digital inclusion strategy and provide funding to ensure that this can be properly implemented. The updated strategy should take account of the increasing move to digitalisation in the decade since the last strategy was published and set out how services and information will be fully accessible to people who are not online.
- Work with regulatory bodies (including the Financial Conduct Authority, Ofwat, Ofgem and Ofcom) and provide strategic input to help ensure that services are accessible to customers who are not online and that the issue of digital exclusion is taken into account consistently in regulatory guidance on dealing with vulnerable customers.

## **Relevant regulatory bodies**

- Work together on examining the extent to which existing guidance for vulnerable customers fully addresses the issue of digital exclusion, with a focus on consistency across different sectors where possible.
- Ensure that providers are supporting customers who do not use the internet to receive equivalent levels of service to those who are online and complying with relevant guidance for vulnerable customers, and take appropriate action to address instances where this is not the case.

## Utilities and banking sector

- Utilities, including water companies, should consider what more they can do to ensure that older people are aware of their right to sign-up to a Priority Services Register (PSR) to receive extra help, highlighting that being included on the register provides assistance such as access to information in an accessible format. The process should also be made as streamlined and easy as possible.
- Utilities, including water companies, should also consider whether their approach to digitalisation and provision of services fully meets any regulatory guidance in relation to vulnerable customers, and take action to improve services in areas where this falls short.
- Firms subject to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) should consider whether their approach to digitalisation and provision of services fully meets the FCA Guidance FG21/1<sup>20</sup> Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, and take action to improve services in areas where this falls short.

## Broadband providers

- Offer social tariffs designed to support those on a low income, include receipt of Pension Credit in their eligibility criteria, and actively promote these to older people.

## Telecoms providers

- Ensure that older people have uninterrupted access to the telephone network during the switch to Voice over Internet Protocol and that communications about the switchover are timely, clear and easy to understand.

# Action by the Commissioner

Drawing on the information shared by older people, including as part of this report, the Commissioner will continue to highlight issues around digital exclusion, the serious impact this has on older people's ability to undertake everyday activities, and take appropriate action.

## Specifically, the Commissioner will:

- Write to key bodies (including the Welsh Government, UK Government, health boards, local authorities and regulators) with the power to implement change highlighting this report and its recommendations, asking what action they will take, and monitoring this.
- Continue to raise awareness of the issue of digital exclusion, and the increasing impact it has on the day to day lives of older people, with the Welsh and UK Governments, local authorities, health boards and other decision makers.
- Highlight older people's rights in relation to accessing public services and receiving information under the Human Rights Act and Equality Act, and provide information to older people – including via hard copy guides - on existing rights and how to uphold them.
- Provide support to older people experiencing digital exclusion to challenge poor practice, including via the Advice and Assistance Service.
- Scrutinise policy developments and strategy, highlighting areas of digital exclusion, the changes needed to ensure older people can continue to access information and services, and the need for proper Equality Impact Assessments to be undertaken where applicable.
- Issue an update on progress six months after the publication of this report.

# Appendix A - Local Authorities and Health Boards who contributed to this report

## Local Authorities

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Cardiff Council
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Gwynedd Council
- Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- Newport City Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Swansea Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Vale of Glamorgan Council

## Health Boards

- Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Powys Teaching Health Board
- Swansea Bay University Health Board
- Velindre University NHS Trust



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- 14 Welsh Government (2023) Towards a Welsh Minimum Digital Living Standard: final report

(summary). Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/towards-welsh-minimum-digital-living-standard-final-report-summary-html>.

15 Centre for Social Justice (2023) Left Out: How to tackle digital exclusion and reduce the poverty premium. Available at: <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CSJ-Left-Out.pdf>.

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## Recommendations - Local Authority

Ensure that services the council provides or are responsible for are available to an equivalent standard for people who are not online or do not have a smartphone.			
What is happening now	What we are committed to do	Strategy/Action Plan	Timescale
<p>5 Connects Centres across the County centrally located within the towns of Flint, Holywell, Connah's Quay, Buckley and Mold provide access to information and services for anyone who does not wish to or cannot access services online.</p> <p>Customer Contact Centre enables customers to access information or request a service in relation to a similar range of functions available in Connects Centres by telephone e.g. homeless, housing repairs, waste and recycling, highway repairs, public transport, home to school transport, parking and enforcement, elections (01352 702121).</p> <p>This can be found with all relevant numbers under 'contact us' at the bottom of the home page and then 'general enquiries'.</p> <p><a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Contact-Us.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Contact-Us.aspx</a></p> <p>Community Support Hub (Deeside, Holywell) are developed in partnership with BCUHB and provide a one-stop-shop for information, advice and practical support.</p>	<p>Further develop our community hub approach giving access to a range of programmes, services and agencies together in one place</p> <p>Ensure vulnerable people in our communities can access services in person or by telephone</p> <p>Commissioned service partners, including third sector services, are also required to provide accessible services including non-digital through phone numbers and physical locations, plus making services accessible in braille, audio, Welsh and other languages.</p>	<p>Flintshire Strategic Equality Plan (2024-2028)</p> <p>Council Plan (2022-23)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<b>Display phone numbers for public enquiries clearly on the home page of websites and make sure that websites comply with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.</b>			
<b>What is happening now</b>	<b>What we are committed to do</b>	<b>Strategy/Action Plan</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p><b>Contact us</b> tab on Flintshire County Council website home page provides contact numbers for general enquiries, council departments and concerns and complaints.</p> <p>The telephone number for customer contact is 01352 702121. It is not common practice for the number to be displayed directly on the home page – however, relevant numbers for each service can be found under contact us at the bottom of the home page.</p> <p><a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Contact-Us.aspx">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Contact-Us.aspx</a></p> <p>There is an ongoing commitment to continuously review our website and look at ways to make it accessible for everyone.</p>	<p>We are committed to the 5 principles of the Local Digital Declaration which includes ensuring websites and mobile apps are accessible for as many people as possible.</p>	<p>Digital Flintshire Strategy 2021-2026</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<b>Invest in effective ways to help older people who want to be online to get online, and that this support delivers what older people want and is available on a sustainable basis.</b>			
<b>What is happening now</b>	<b>What we are committed to do</b>	<b>Strategy/Action Plan</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>Support is provided to assist people to access online services and to get online and is offered through a variety of ways to suit the individual. This includes:</p>	<p>Supporting people to use digital technology through Digital Workforce Volunteers</p>	<p>Flintshire Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028</p>	<p>March 2026 Digital surgeries launching March '24</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to access online services and perform basic online tasks is offered at Connect Centres</li> <li>• Aura Libraries provide support to access online services and basic training either on site or in their own homes through a digital loan scheme.</li> <li>• Community-based digital skills courses are offered in a variety of community settings in partnership with Coleg Cambria. Where appropriate digital loans are arranged for participants through Aura libraries.</li> <li>• Digital Flintshire Hub is an online resource for people looking to improve their digital skills or for individuals looking to assist a friend/family member to get online.</li> <li>• National Databank partnership - Free SIM cards and data vouchers are available from Connects Centres for residents on low incomes to become digitally enabled. Free data has been provided by Virgin Media, O2, Vodafone and Three.</li> <li>• Digital Surgeries launching in March 2024 commencing in Holywell Connects initially.</li> </ul> <p>Engagement with older people and older people's groups identifies opportunities to increase digital inclusion.</p>	<p>Continue to provide free of charge public access to the internet at Flintshire Connects Centres and libraries in collaboration with Aura Wales</p> <p>Develop projects to improve connectivity at community facilities.</p> <p>Provide officer resource to support rural households in identifying solutions to connectivity issues.</p> <p>Work with partners to develop and promote a volunteer programme to support people to get online.</p> <p>Support and enable access to the internet and devices to ensure people are not excluded from a digital world.</p> <p>Continue to work with 3rd sector and other partners to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities.</p> <p>Work with the adult learning partnership (North East Wales) to identify opportunities to improve digital literacy within communities.</p> <p>Support digitally excluded older people who want to access online services to get online.</p>	<p>Digital Flintshire Strategy 2021-2026</p> <p>Age-friendly Flintshire</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Digital surgeries launching Mar '24</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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<b>Designate a Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for digital inclusion, ensure that feedback is regularly sought (including by the use of relevant committees and internal structures), and this issue is reported upon in annual reports and strategic equality plans.</b>			
<b>What is happening now</b>	<b>What we are committed to do</b>	<b>Strategy/Action Plan</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>Cllr Billy Mullin, Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services. Supported by Cllr Christine as Cabinet Member Social Services and Age-friendly Champion.</p> <p>Digital Strategy Board is in place to oversee and ensure effective delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy.</p>	<p>Reporting on digital inclusion within Strategic Equality Plan annual report and developing additional actions to improve outcomes.</p>	<p>Digital Flintshire Strategy 2021-2026</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28</p>	<p>Annually</p>

<b>Use the Digital Service Standards for Wales (developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services) and involve older people, especially people not online, in the design of services, systems and relevant research from the beginning to co-produce better and more accessible services and policies.</b>			
<b>What is happening now</b>	<b>What we are committed to do</b>	<b>Strategy/Action Plan</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>We are committed to the 5 principles of the Local Digital Declaration which includes ensuring services are designed around the needs of the people using them.</p>	<p>We are committed to the 5 principles of the Local Digital Declaration which includes ensuring services are designed around the needs of the people using them.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement strategy (under development) will consider how</p>	<p>Digital Flintshire Strategy 2021-2026</p>	



<p>Integrated impact assessments are carried out as part of the process for designing/developing policies and services.</p>	<p>users are involved in the design of services/systems.</p> <p>Increasing access to participation to services and decision making for all protected groups through developing robust impact assessments.</p>	<p>Flintshire Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028</p>	<p>March 2028</p>
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<p><b>Restore access to hard copy leaflets and information across all sites, such as libraries or hubs, where this has not already returned post-pandemic.</b></p>			
<p><b>What is happening now</b></p>	<p><b>What we are committed to do</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy/Action Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Timescale</b></p>
<p>5 Connects Centres across the County centrally located within the towns of Flint, Holywell, Connah's Quay, Buckley and Mold provide advice and information in person. Connects Centres are promoted as a channel of access to information and services for anyone who does not use digital. Information can be printed (e.g. leaflets, consultation documents, surveys) on request.</p> <p>SPoA is the main contact point for access to wellbeing information and advice and services to meet the care and support needs of adults in Flintshire. Members of the public can telephone the SPoA to seek information and advice about statutory and non-statutory support based on their health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Under the Social Services &amp; Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 Social Services is committed to providing easy access to information and advice to enable individuals to make decisions about the help they need to achieve well-being. Leaflets on social care services are available including alternate formats upon request e.g. Easy Read, Large Print, and Braille.</p>		

<p>needs. Appropriate information is posted out to the individual where required.</p> <p>Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) deliver a Social Prescribing service, based at the Flintshire SPoA, to provide information and coordinate referrals to third sector services.</p> <p>Ageing Well Engagement Officer (AWEO) engages with older people and older people's groups to understand priorities and provide opportunities for participating in age-friendly initiatives. The AWEO also shares information via older people's groups and community venues.</p>	<p>Continue to work with communities to raise awareness of activities and services.</p>	<p>Age-friendly Flintshire</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Deferred Charges Audit Report
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Internal Audit programme of work for 2022/23 an audit of deferred charges and the management of residential care liabilities in Social Services was undertaken.

A Deferred Payment is only available for individuals who are receiving care and support in a residential or nursing care home setting. It is an agreement between the individual in receipt of care and the Council which allows for a deferment or a delay in paying for care costs until a later date. The costs deferred are repaid at a future date.

During the Internal Audit of the existing Deferred Payment process eight actions were identified which as needing action, five of which were red and three amber.

Since the completion of the audit report the Financial Assessment and Charging Team have established a Task and Finish Group to address the agreed actions, this work is taking place alongside the implementation of a new finance software system which will support the additional monitoring and control measures identified in the audit report.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To provide Members with information on the actions undertaken since the completion of the Internal Audit report.
2	To provide Members with assurance that the remaining actions are being undertaken within the timescales laid out in the audit report and that progress is being monitored effectively.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
1.01	Each local authority is required to have in place a deferred payment scheme which supports eligible individuals to cover the cost of their residential or nursing care. The scheme allows individuals to use the value of their assets (normally their home) to defer these care costs until a later date.
1.02	The audit considered the adequacy of and adherence to policy and process and evaluated controls in place to ensure any monies owned to Flintshire incurred through provision of long-term residential care are recovered in line with current policy. Management also requested the audit review a sample of historic cases where challenges have been identified.
1.03	The audit identified that clear information is provided to individuals which sets out the eligibility criteria of the scheme and the conditions under which a deferred payment is provided – Appendix 1.
1.04	The audit also identified eight areas for action, five of which are a high priority and three are a medium priority.
<b>1.05</b>	<b>Actions Taken to Date</b>
1.06	A working group has been established consisting of the Financial Assessments Team Leader, a Financial Assessment Officer and a Planning and Development Officer. An Action Plan is in place and is working through the risks identified through the Internal Audit but has also identified additional areas of work to further improve processes. This group report progress to the Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning on a six-weekly basis. Progress reports are also prepared and presented to the Social Services Senior Management Team.
1.07	The Social Services client information system, PARIS, has been amended to create a specific section in the system which will allow for the detailed recording of deferred payment applications. Functionality has been built into the system to allow reporting functionality to support ongoing monitoring.
1.08	Once this new section in PARIS has been fully tested, all steps in the process, financial information and management information will be recorded in one central location and will ensure consistency in information recording. The reporting functionality will allow for clearer management oversight and greater control measures and will remove the need for separate spreadsheets which are currently being maintained.
1.09	A report of all deferred payment cases will be produced from PARIS every six weeks, this will be used as source data for the six weekly Debt Review Meetings which will continue to be held between senior managers in Social Services and senior officers from the Collection and Enforcement Team. At these meetings data from PARIS will be reconciled with Collection and Enforcement data and actions agreed.

1.10	Case File Audits are being introduced and these will take place every six weeks, initially based on the discussions held at the Debt Review Meetings. The Case File Audits will be scheduled to follow on from the Debt Review Meetings and will review adherence to practice as well as identify areas of best practice and learning.
1.11	The new section in PARIS also creates an additional functionality where cases can be immediately escalated to Senior Management. An example of escalation would be where the Council is unable to register a charge on a property. An escalation report will be produced every six weeks detailing all Deferred Payment activity and including early notification of potential areas of risk and appropriate decisions. This report alongside the information from the Debt Review Meeting and the Cast File Audits will be presented to the Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning for review, risk assessment and decision. Based on the three sources of information detailed above, each case will be awarded a RAG Status and appropriate actions identified. All cases identified as having a red RAG status will be reviewed six weekly, all cases identified as having an amber RAG status will be reviewed every 18 weeks and all cases identified as having a green RAG status will be reviewed every six months.
1.12	The working group will be reviewing all existing property and deferred payment cases on the 17 April 2024 and inputting the information into the new section in PARIS. Once this is complete the six weekly reporting and oversight activity will commence.
1.13	Monthly Legal Surgeries with Blake Morgan Solicitors are taking place and the Financial Assessments and Charging Team Leader is liaising between Debt Recovery and Flintshire Legal Services to resolve any issues identified with specific cases.
<b>1.14</b>	<b>Ongoing Actions</b>
1.15	Further Legal Surgeries have been arranged to review every legal charge and Deferred Payment Agreement. These Legal Surgeries will include colleagues from the Collection and Enforcement Team. We have also requested detailed guidance from Blake Morgan on the detail of various forms of legal charge and their appropriate use. This information will be shared with the Financial Assessment and Charging Team, the Collection and Enforcement Team and Legal Services.
1.16	Training will be provided to all relevant Financial Assessment Officers regarding Deferred Payment Agreement and the types of legal charges available, the differences between them and in what circumstances they apply.
1.17	Further improvements to the processes have been identified which will be undertaken during the next six months. These include reviewing and creating new template letters and reviewing associated processes linked to the new finance software system.
1.18	A review of historic cases will be undertaken and feed into a wider policy review.

1.19	The wider policy review will be undertaken once the initial monitoring and management oversight processes are in place. The review will take into account learning from the Legal Surgeries to ensure the effectiveness of all legal charges.
1.20	A quarterly report on progress will be presented to the Social Services Senior Management Team for review and challenge.
<b>1.21</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
1.22	A full report on progress will be provided to Informal Cabinet, Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and full Cabinet.
1.23	An update report be brought to this Governance and Audit Committee in six months to provide an update on progress against the Audit Recommendations as well as sharing progress on additional actions taken outside the original finding of the Audit.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Resources necessary to implement improvements have been identified from existing experienced staff in the service and are currently working on the action plan and improvements.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	The risk relates to the recovery of outstanding debt under the existing deferred payment agreement, the risk to the Council is currently moderate as the existing measures in place are ensuring debt recovery. However, the improvements and actions identified from the audit will give greater management oversight and create an actively managed risk register which gives a RAG rating to all deferred payment property debts. These actions once complete, will reduce the risk to low.

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

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Paying for Residential Care leaflet
5.02	Appendix 2 – Internal Audit Report
5.03	Appendix 3 – Action Plan

<b>6.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
6.01	Contact Officer: Jane Davies Telephone: 01352 702503 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jane.m.davies@flintshire.gov.uk">jane.m.davies@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>PARIS:</b> Is the Social Services Client Information System where the case notes and details of all individuals who access services through Social Services are recorded.</p> <p><b>RAG:</b> A Red, Amber and Green rating system taking into account likelihood and impact.</p>

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# Social Services

## Paying for Residential Care Information Leaflet



April 2023

## PAYING FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE – INFORMATION LEAFLET

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh**

<b>RELATES TO (POLICY)</b>	Charging Policy
<b>REFERENCE NUMBER</b>	LL02
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Adults Social Services
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Sally Swarbrick
<b>LAST REVIEW DATE</b>	April 2023
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>	April 2024

## CONTENTS

PAYING FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE .....	4
SAVINGS AND CAPITAL LIMITS.....	4
What happens if my savings and/or capital fall below £50,000.00? .....	5
Deprivation of Assets .....	5
HOW IS THE AMOUNT A PERSON HAS TO PAY WORKED OUT? .....	5
What if I don't want to or fail to give you information on my finances? .....	5
WHAT IF I OWN A PROPERTY? .....	7
The Deferred Payment Agreement.....	7
SHORT TERM, RESPITE AND TEMPORARY CARE .....	8
QUERIES AND CHALLENGING THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME .....	8
HOW CHARGES CAN BE PAID? .....	9
AM I CLAIMING THE CORRECT BENEFITS? .....	9
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO SOCIAL SERVICES? .....	9
DETAILS OF FLINTSHIRE FEES FOR APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024.....	9
USEFUL CONTACTS.....	11
COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS .....	12

## PAYING FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE

You may be able to receive financial support towards your care if you are assessed by a Social Worker as needing residential or nursing care. This factsheet provides information about how a decision is made by Flintshire County Council when we are asked to provide financial assistance towards the cost of fees charged by a care home. Flintshire County Council complies with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

**Depending on your finances you may be expected to meet all or part of the cost of the care from your own resources as soon as you go to stay in a home. In most instances you can choose which home you go into.**

**You must not give away any financial resources such as cash, property or deprive yourself of any assets for the purpose of reducing your ability to pay Flintshire County Council charges. If you do, Flintshire County Council may still regard those resources as belonging to you. If you have any doubt about your position you should seek legal advice.**

**You may have already read the 'Thinking about a care home' guide which is issued by the Welsh Government. Please ask your Social Worker if you would like a copy.**

If you receive funding from Flintshire County Council you will still be able to keep £39.50 (a Personal Allowance) of your assessed weekly income to pay for your personal expenses.

Charges from Flintshire County Council will not be applied if you are under 18, getting help under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983 or have been assessed as meeting the criteria for Continuing Health Care, which is assessed and funded by the Local Health Board.

Paying for residential/nursing care is quite a complicated subject and you will need to discuss options with your Social Worker or a Social Services Financial Assessment Officer.

**At all times it is vital that you seek independent advice.**

## SAVINGS AND CAPITAL LIMITS

If you have savings and/or capital more than £50,000.00 you will have to pay the full standard charge for the Care Home you choose. You will not receive financial assistance from Flintshire County Council. This may also be the case if you own more than one property. If your savings and assets are under £50,000.00 we will need to complete a financial assessment.

We will count 50% of the balance in any joint accounts you hold with your spouse/partner as being yours and 100% of balances in your sole name. We also include fixed-term savings plans, investment bonds\* and shares held in your name.

If you hold an account with someone other than your spouse/partner we will count 100% of the balance as being yours unless it can be evidenced otherwise.

\*Certain investment bonds that include life insurance cover may possibly be excluded from calculations.

### What happens if my savings and/or capital fall below £50,000.00?

If you are self-funding your current care fees and your savings reach the capital limit, you should in the first instance contact the Council in which the care home is located for assistance with funding. This means if the care home is located in Wrexham or Cheshire, you will need to contact the respective Council for assistance.

### Deprivation of Assets

The Local Authority may consider that individuals have deprived themselves of assets in order to reduce their charge. Deprivation of assets occurs when a person has deprived or decreased their overall assets resulting in the reduction or removal of any charge imposed for their care and support. This means that they must have made a conscious decision to do this in the knowledge that to do so would have such an effect on their charge.

The following actions would be considered as deprivation of assets:

- A lump-sum payment to someone else, for example a gift
- Substantial expenditure has been incurred suddenly and is out of character with previous spending
- The title deeds of a property have been transferred to another person
- Assets have been put into a trust that cannot be revoked
- Assets have been reduced by living extravagantly, for example buying an expensive sports car

We will not give financial assistance to anyone who we believe has deliberately disposed of capital/savings so that they fall below £50,000.00. They will be asked to pay the full cost for their services with no funding assistance from the Authority.

### HOW IS THE AMOUNT A PERSON HAS TO PAY WORKED OUT?

A Welfare Benefits Officer from Flintshire County Council will arrange to visit you to complete a Financial Assistance Claim Form to help the Financial Assessment Officer work out how much you can afford to pay towards your services. We will need this information as soon as possible otherwise you may have to pay the full weekly cost of the service you receive. You can request to have a family member, friend or someone you trust to be present to support you at this visit.

### What if I don't want to or fail to give you information on my finances?

If you choose not to tell us your financial circumstances or don't provide the information we need to complete the assessment, you will be expected to pay the full cost of your care home fees with no financial assistance from the Council.

If you do not have the correct information at the time of the Welfare Benefits Officer's visit, written details of what further information is required will be provided. You have a maximum



## WHAT IF I OWN A PROPERTY?

The value of your house, any other property or land will be taken into account when working out your contribution towards your care after the first twelve weeks. During the first twelve weeks the Council will complete a financial assessment based on your income and capital only, this is called the 'twelve week disregard' and when the value of your property and/or land is not included in the calculation. The aim of this is to give you time to decide what you are going to do with your former home. During this period you will still be expected to pay your assessed contribution to the care home. You will also have to maintain the property and meet any on-going costs that arise.

From the thirteenth week onwards you will be considering to be a self-funding resident as the value of your property will be taken into account. You will be asked to pay back the Council's contribution towards your care home fees from the sale of your property from the thirteenth week. You will also be entitled to claim Attendance Allowance, a benefit awarded to help pay towards the cost of your care, from this date. A Welfare Benefits Officer can assist you to complete this claim.

The Council will, by means of a legal charge, recover the amount paid on your behalf. This will be removed once the Council has received payment in full for fees accrued against your property.

If your spouse or partner continues to reside, on a permanent basis, in your home when you move into a care home, the value of this property **will not** be included in our calculations; however if you own a second home and/or land the value of this land/property will be counted and you may be deemed as self-funding.

If someone else other than your spouse or partner continues to reside in your home when you move into a care home, for example your child or friend, the value of this property may well (with certain exemptions) be included in our calculations. You should discuss this with a Financial Assessment Officer or a Welfare Benefits Officer.

### The Deferred Payment Agreement

The Council may consider entering into a Deferred Payment Agreement where you do not have to immediately sell your property to fund your residential care but can 'defer' the sale to a later date. You will enter into a legal agreement with the Council and a legal charge will be placed on your property. This charge will be removed once the Council has received payment in full for fees accrued.

There are administration charges to cover the cost of setting up and maintaining the agreement for as long as necessary. Other charges such as legal costs will also apply. The amount of money accruing against your property will have interest charged on it, please be aware that this interest will be compound.

**You are advised to seek legal and financial advice before entering into a Deferred Payment Agreement.**

If you would like further information regarding the Deferred Payment Agreement please discuss with the Welfare Benefits Officer or your Financial Assessment Officer.

If you have transferred the ownership of your home to someone else e.g. children or grandchildren the notional value of the property may still be counted as your savings/capital and funding may be refused.

## SHORT TERM, RESPITE AND TEMPORARY CARE

When a stay is arranged in a care home for Short Term Care such as emergencies or Respite Care, the Welsh Government Guidelines are that the charges be the same as if you are living at home. Short Term Residential or Nursing Care for up to a period of 8 weeks will be assessed under the policy for Community Care Services.

If a Short Term Care placement exceeds eight weeks, it should be treated as a Temporary Placement and will be assessed under the charging policy for Residential and Nursing Care. If a placement is known to be Temporary (whether it does or does not have an expected end date) it will be assessed under the charging policy for Residential and Nursing Care from the date of admission.

## QUERIES AND CHALLENGING THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

If you have any queries about or think that an error has been made in the assessment of your contribution towards the cost of residing in a care home, you should contact a Financial Assessment Officer. If this does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction you can ask for the Financial Assessment Team Leader to review your application. Our contact details are:

Financial Assessment and Charging Team  
Social Services  
County Hall  
Mold  
Flintshire, CH7 6NN                      01352 701318

You can request a review any time after we have written to you confirming your weekly assessed contribution. You must tell the Council why you want the decision to be looked at again. You can do this by either speaking or writing to your Financial Assessment Officer.

It is important you let your Financial Assessment Officer know of any changes to your income or circumstances as this could have an effect on your weekly assessed contribution.

All financial assessments are reassessed every April in line with the annual benefit uplift, this review is completed automatically and you do not need to contact us during this time. Once your reassessment has been completed we will write to you confirming your new weekly assessed contribution.



## HOW CHARGES CAN BE PAID?

Once you have been advised of your assessed weekly contribution you will need to arrange to pay your contribution directly to the care home. Most care homes offer a Standing Order service or will accept cheques. They tend to prefer to be paid on a monthly basis. Please note, if you are in a care home owned by Flintshire County Council you will receive an invoice from the Council for your contribution.

## AM I CLAIMING THE CORRECT BENEFITS?

When you decide to go into a Home, your Social Worker will ask a Welfare Benefits Officer to visit to complete forms with you and ensure that you (and your family) are in receipt of all the correct benefits. Any new benefits you will be entitled to due to your change in circumstances will be included in your assessment. A Welfare Benefits Officer will assist you with any new claims.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO SOCIAL SERVICES?

We respect your privacy, however, on occasions we are obliged to share information with third parties in order to verify the information, for the prevention or detection of crime and/or for the purpose of discharging any statutory or administrative function or as required by law.

## DETAILS OF FLINTSHIRE FEES FOR APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

The maximum weekly amount (including contributions that is paid to a privately owned care home contracted with Flintshire County Council is outlined below :

<b>Privately owned care home</b>	
Elderly / Very dependent elderly	£727.55
EMI residential	£821.58
Nursing care (over 60)	£852.94
EMI nursing	£915.61

Please note Social Services pay an additional £7.48 per week towards all nursing placements in Wales.

There may be some care homes whose weekly fees are greater than those agreed by the Local Authority. The difference between the rates will be charged by the care home as a 'top up fee'. For example, the Council's set weekly fee is £727.55 and you choose a care home which costs £750.00 per week. As your chosen care home costs more than the fee set by the Council a top up payment of £22.45 will need to be paid. This is in addition to your weekly assessed contribution and is often paid by a member of your family or can be paid by yourself if you have sufficient savings. Please discuss top ups with care homes and take this into account

when making your decisions. The third party should seek legal advice to fully understand the implications of agreeing to the top up.

Nursing and EMI Nursing care residents will also receive a Funded Nursing Care contribution from the Health Authority. This is currently £184.32 per week and is set by the Health Board. The NHS will pay this directly to the nursing home in addition to the care home fees. In some cases the Health Authority can agree to pay the full weekly cost of your care home, this is known as Continuing Health Care Funding. There is a process that must be followed when applying for this funding and until this has been agreed you will still have to continue to pay your weekly assessed contribution to the care home. Your Social Worker will apply for the above funding on your behalf if appropriate. For more information regarding Funded Nursing Care and Continuing Health Care Funding please discuss with your Social Worker.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

A wide range of voluntary organisations provide independent advice and assistance. Contacting them will give you information on your rights.

<b>Flintshire Citizens advice Bureau</b>	
08444 772020	<a href="http://www.flintshirecab.org.uk">www.flintshirecab.org.uk</a>
<b>Flintshire Care and Repair</b> Flintshire Care and Repair offer advice on housing repairs, adaptations and benefits for disabled and elderly people.	
01352 758700	<a href="http://www.flintshirecr.co.uk">www.flintshirecr.co.uk</a>
<b>Age Connects North East Wales</b>	
08450 549969	<a href="http://www.acnew.org.uk">www.acnew.org.uk</a>
<b>Mencap Cymru Helpline</b>	
0808 808 1111	<a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk/wales">www.mencap.org.uk/wales</a>
<b>MIND</b>	
01352 757637	<a href="http://www.flintshiremind.org.uk">www.flintshiremind.org.uk</a>
<b>North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)</b>	
01352 752525	<a href="http://www.carers.org/local/wales/flintshire">www.carers.org/local/wales/flintshire</a>
<b>Flintshire Disability Forum</b>	
01352 755546	
<b>Social Services</b> First Contact, Preswylfa, Henty Road, Mold, Flintshire, CH7 1PZ	
03000 858 858	<a href="mailto:SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk">SSDUTY@flintshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo">www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo</a>

## COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

We are aware that despite our best efforts there may be occasions when you need to make a complaint. Any complaint about the services can be made to your Social Worker, their Team Manager or you can contact:

The Complaints Officer  
Social Services  
County Hall  
Mold  
Flintshire, CH7 6NN

01352 702623

A leaflet 'Your right to compliment and complain' which explains how your comments can be made and how they will be dealt with is available from the same address or online at: [www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/careinfo)

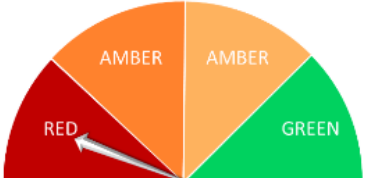
A wide range of information on the care and support system in Wales is available online at: [www.dewis.wales](http://www.dewis.wales)

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Cysylltwch a 03000 858 858 i gael fersiwn Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh. Please contact 03000 858 858 for a version.

**This leaflet is available in alternate formats including Braille and Large Print on request to 03000 858 858.**

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Assurance Opinion:	Number of Actions		Risks Reviewed as Identified in Scope
 <p><b>Limited Assurance – Urgent process revision required (one of more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls are absent or rarely applied</li> <li>• Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial/other losses</li> <li>• Key management information does not exist</li> <li>• System/process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls</b></p>	Priority	Number	<p><b>Risk 1:</b> Management information is not available, analysed, or timely to assist with recovery activities and mitigate the risk of FCC not being able to recover its costs.</p> <p><b>Risk 2:</b> Designated process to monitor and recover care costs has not been defined, is not adequate or being adhered to.</p> <p><b>Risk 3:</b> The charge placed against properties is not of sufficient priority and does not stand up against challenge.</p>
	High (Red)	5	
	Medium (Amber)	3	
	Low (Green)	0	
	Total	8	

Page 325

### Audit Background

Residential care spend is significant for all local authorities. At Flintshire County Council (Flintshire) the two weekly CIS payment run report on 28/5/23 identified

CIS payment run	RESIDENTIAL (Long Term)	NURSING (Long Term)	RESIDENTIAL (Short Term)	NURSING (Short Term)	Total
Payments	£630,267.91	£267,137.05	£68,396.16	£2457.62	£968,258.74

Some of these payments represent long-term loans to eligible service users to cover the costs of their care. The process by which these costs are deferred and recovered is a specific risk which requires mitigation. Flintshire's ability to recover against these loans is dependent on effective controls around accuracy of the population; timely and accurate understanding of debt landscape; securing Deferred Payment Agreements; effectiveness of legal charge; quality of monitoring and effectiveness of debt pursuance.

A deferred payment scheme is a legal arrangement with Flintshire. It lets a service user use the value of their home to help defer payments for long term residential care to a later date. A legal charge is secured against the property and is removed once the debt is paid. A service user must request a deferred payment agreement (DPA) it cannot be forced upon them. Flintshire can approve, approve with discretion, or refuse an application in line with certain criteria. If the service user applies and qualifies, Flintshire should arrange a DPA to be in place following the 12-week disregard period.

After the 12-week disregard period it should be clear how the service user intends to manage their LT residential care costs – either immediate payment for their contribution or has applied and been approved for a DPA for costs to be deferred until property is sold or on death.

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Where circumstances affect the ability of Flintshire to exercise any of these controls; commensurate escalation, decision making, and mitigating actions should be in place. Some of these decisions will be difficult and management need to balance the needs of the service user with the risk of financial loss.

The audit considered the adequacy of and adherence to policy and process and evaluated controls in place to ensure any monies owned to Flintshire incurred through provision of long-term residential care are recovered in line with current policy. Management also requested the audit review a sample of historic cases where challenges have been identified.

Accuracy of the financial assessment and accuracy of 'non-recoverable' long term residential costs did not form part of the scope of this audit. We were unable to test controls applied by the Deputyship team due to time constraints.

### Areas Managed Well

- The Deferred Payment Scheme leaflet and Paying for Residential Care Information Leaflet is given to each service user. These align with statutory expectations, and outline eligibility criteria and conditions of deferred payment.
- The 3 service users who have signed a deferred payment agreement had charges placed against the property.

Page 20

### Findings and Implications

#### **Management Dataset - Overall reliability / housekeeping (URN 3552)**

Accurate and timely management information helps ensure management's understanding and decision making is well informed. Management advise information around long term (LT) residential care service users is held in the three sources below.

The **Property Debt Spreadsheet** (PD) - kept by the Financial Assessment Team (FACT). Management advise it identifies all recoverable property cases (72 at time of testing).

Testing identified:

- There are no spreadsheet controls/protections in place to prevent entries / amounts being amended or deleted.
- Not all columns in the spreadsheet have been completed to show the progress of the case.
- Key fields of the process including property charges are not captured.

### Agreed Action

We have allocated a Planning and Development Officer to work with FACT to implement actions which will mitigate the risks identified and improve working practices. A meeting has been held and a workflow plan has been agreed.

A matrix of all the appropriate management information will be created by the end of January 2024, based on proposals made by the Internal Audit team.

The matrix will allow for accurate and timely management information to be held in one place and visible to the Team

### Who

Jane Davies

### When

31 May 2024

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are several tabs on the spreadsheet. Two service users were recorded on more than one tab of the spreadsheet.</li> <li>• Information relating to DPA is inaccurate.</li> <li>• It is unclear when the spreadsheet was last updated.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>PARIS system</b> - holds information relating to each service user. Dates and evidence of property charges placed against the respective properties are captured under the notes and the charge registration field. The 'Current Properties with Charges' PDF report can be generated from PARIS. Testing identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of records on the PD does not reconcile with the Current Properties with Charges PDF report provided at the same time.</li> <li>• 15 discrepancies between the dates of charges captured on the PARIS system to those sampled with Legal as part of the testing.</li> <li>• A reconciliation between the datasets does not take place.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Long Term Debt (LTD) report and LTD supporting spreadsheet</b> - holds data of outstanding debt. It is produced by the Debt Recovery team. Testing of the 17/1/23 document identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two service users appear on the LTD report but do not appear on the PD.</li> <li>• Six service users appear on the PD as deceased but do not appear on the LTD report.</li> <li>• Neither service was aware of these discrepancies.</li> <li>• A reconciliation between the datasets does not take place.</li> </ul> <p>There is a risk these datasets are incomplete / inaccurate, and the lack of reconciliation between these may impact on the quality and reliability of the information being used by the service.</p>	<p>Manager, Service Manager, and Senior Management Team.</p> <p>This will ensure full management understanding of deferred payments, the legal charges supporting them, the progress being made and identify any areas of concern quickly and all in one place.</p> <p>These changes will be woven into the implementation of the new FACT software system ContrOCC which will go live in April 24 and will support with provision of data and the monitoring of deferred payment processes.</p>		

23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p><b>2(R) <u>Long Term Residential care - recoverable costs – visibility (URN 3554)</u></b>                      LT residential care costs represent a significant spend for all local authorities. Knowing which costs are recoverable and being assured that risks to Flintshire’s ability to recover are sufficiently mitigated is important. Accuracy of this population is a key control as is anytime, accurate and efficient monitoring of levels of outstanding debt/liability.</p> <p>We requested a list of all service users and payments who were in LT residential care funded by Flintshire to distinguish between recoverable and non-recoverable costs from source. Management provided the three sets of information referred to in Finding 1. We highlight general housekeeping and specific control issues with each of these datasets across this report.</p> <p>We reviewed the two weekly CIS report as an indication of spend (25/5/23). CIS lists all payments to providers for long term / short term residential or nursing care. (Table 2). Testing identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery of LT residential care costs is not recorded as a risk on the risk register.</li> <li>• LT Residential payments for a 2-week period amounted to £630,267.91.</li> <li>• The same budget code is used for all LT residential spend. Management has no means to efficiently distinguish between payments which are non-recoverable, and those which FCC will seek to recover apart from the PD.</li> <li>• We were able to match 35 service users on the CIS payment run to clients on the PD.</li> <li>• This represents £39k of costs which are ‘recoverable’ (Table 2).</li> <li>• LT Residential care costs are visible on a provider level, but unless specific and resource heavy analysis is undertaken, not for each service user.</li> <li>• Payment made for each service user is not reflected as a monthly debt/liability, invoiced via Accounts Receivable (AR), against which payment is to be deferred.</li> </ul>	<p>The matrix of information to address Risk 1 will also provide information to address Risk 2.</p> <p>The matrix of information will identify the levels of outstanding debt and liability and RAG rate the risks attached to the recovery of those long-term debts which will be implemented in January 2024.</p> <p>The matrix will distinguish between non-recoverable and recoverable costs as part of this process.</p> <p>It will also record the action plan to reduce that risk rating.</p> <p>We will also address the wider risk by completing a policy review to evaluate the current operating model and approach including transfer of liability/ debt recovery and all associated implications. Revised policy to be presented to Cabinet for review and approval by November 2024.</p>	<p>Jane Davies</p>	<p>30 Nov 2024</p>



23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Page 329</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An invoice is only raised where circumstances change (property sold / service user deceased).</li> <li>Calculation of service user costs is completed by FACT relying on data held in CIS/PARIS/PD rather than the ledger (actual spend).</li> <li>Production of the statements and final invoice including accuracy of interest charged is based on management rather than financial data from source.</li> <li>Seven service users appear on PD but are coded to LT Nursing Care on CIS.</li> </ul> <p>It is noted that these workarounds may result from the lack of functionality within PARIS but also the way in which service user deferred charge is not recorded in the ledger. The current process (and system) means management cannot extract information from the ledger to evidence a real time and accurate level of outstanding debt/liability which it is seeking to recover at both corporate and service user level.</p> <p>There is a risk Flintshire is unable to effectively quantify the population and report levels of recoverable debt and this impacts on effectiveness of operational controls including regular reconciliation and budget monitoring.</p>			
<p>3(R) <b>Deferred Payment Agreement (URN 3551)</b></p> <p>Flintshire’s policy provides that <i>‘following the 12-week disregard period, should the service user have a property which has not met the property disregard criteria, the value of a property will be incorporated into the financial assessment calculation. This may result in the service user being required to contribute to the costs of the residential care. If they do not have the immediate funds to do so, they have the option of putting the property up for sale or enter into a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) with Flintshire’</i>. The policy also advises a DPA should be put in place in the event the service user chooses to delay the sale of the property until a later date.</p>	<p>Monthly FACT Specific Legal Surgeries have now been established with Blake Morgan Solicitors. The advice is being provided by a lawyer specialising in social care finance practice and is specific to the needs of FACT.</p> <p>Each Deferred Payment Agreement will be reviewed and through the Legal surgeries and where the effectiveness of the legal charge is in question, an</p>	Jane Davies	30 Nov 2024

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Management advise the PD, column 'G', states whether a DPA is in place, and column 'I' holds a date for DPA signed. Testing of the spreadsheet and supporting process identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Financial Assessment form does not make any reference to the DPA process.</li> <li>• Nine of the 72 individuals on the PD are recorded as having a DPA.</li> <li>• On request for these agreements, management confirmed only three DPAs were in place and not nine.</li> <li>• Only two of these service users have dates populated in column I to show when the DPAs were signed.</li> <li>• Management information to explain how the remaining (69) intend to cover the cost of their care and how Flintshire interests are being sufficiently protected is limited.</li> </ul> <p><u>No DPA – service user intending to sell property.</u> The established procedures stipulate that if no details are received on how the property is being marketed within 14 days of the letter being sent out by the FAO, the FACT manager will be contacted for guidance on what action to take next. The guidance states the insistence of the service user entering a DPA will be the norm rather than the exception. We are unable to evidence the use of a DPA with this population as a 'bridging loan' which will allow time to sell property to pay care fees but also protect Flintshire's interests.</p> <p><u>No DPA – service user insufficient capacity to sign</u> Legal advised a service user does not need to give permission for a charge to be raised e.g., where a service user's property has not been disregarded but they do not have capacity to enter into an agreement. Where a person lacks capacity either the person's family or Flintshire take steps to help secure a power of attorney / court of protection after which a DPA should be signed.</p>	<p>alternative charge will be sought. This has begun and it has proven helpful for the service.</p> <p>Any identified areas of risk of non-payment will be reported upon monthly and escalated as required.</p> <p>Training will be provided to all Financial Assessment Officers involved in the work to ensure correct agreements and charges are in place going forward.</p> <p>Review current policy and ensure alignment to required practices. Review of matrix will assist with lessons learned whilst identifying the required revisions to the current policy.</p>		

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Due to time constraints, we have not reviewed the Deputyship process.</p> <p><u>No DPA – Flintshire refuse DPA / service user ineligible / property can't be disregarded service user refuses to sell or sign</u></p> <p>It is for Flintshire to decide whether to agree or refuse an application for a DPA. Flintshire can never force a DPA on a service user (and can still raise a legal charge). Management advised none have been refused to date. It is unclear how many service users have applied for a DPA however, only 3 have been signed.</p> <p>The DPA is a legal agreement which provides enforceable assurance the service user accepts the terms of this long-term loan. It strengthens Flintshire's position when pursuing debt, ensures the property is not subsequently occupied by family or tenants and the asset is kept in a good state of repair to ensure the value is adequate to secure the debt. It also provides for additional fees to be charged including compound accrued interest / administration fees as well as other legal costs which may eventually apply. Where a DPA is not in place the service user is at financial advantage of securing an interest free long-term loan from Flintshire. We are unable to evidence, where services users have been offered a DPA but refused to apply, how the risk to recovery is being proactively managed.</p> <p>Continuing to pay for service users where Flintshire is unable to sufficiently recover via a DPA, or where effectiveness of legal charge raised may be an issue; represents higher risk (Table 1).</p> <p>We report on the effectiveness of type of charge it is possible to raise in these circumstances to protect Flintshire's interests and the policy on how Flintshire will respond where it is unable to sufficiently secure recovery needs to be defined.</p>			

23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>There is a risk of non-compliance with current procedure. Current process does not evidence assurance that the risk of non-recovery is sufficiently managed where a DPA is not in place. The procedure where Flintshire refuses a DPA is not clearly defined.</p>			
<p><b>4(R) <u>Week 13 Day 1 risk escalation &amp; decision-making process (URN3556)</u></b>                      Week 13 day 1 represents Flintshire’s liability for LT residential costs with the provider on behalf of the service user. Ideally a DPA and/or charge will already be in place to mitigate by this date. Understanding when these mitigations are not/not yet/never will be in place and taking effective decisions to manage/escalate the risk is important.</p> <p>It is understood Flintshire has a duty of care to support its citizens. Flintshire currently will continue to pay for these LT residential costs until the property is sold or service user death. Management advise conversations are had with the service user and/or their representative and updated in the service users’ Paris record. Meetings / conversations with specialists in legal and debt recovery are on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>Internet research identified other local authorities and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector guidance highlighting the risk that <i>“If your property is not sold during the 12-week property disregard period and you do not want, or are refused, a deferred payment agreement, it is likely the authority’s contract with the care home will end”</i>.</p> <p>Management has confirmed liability for LT residential care costs (from week 13 day 1) is not transferred to the service user under <i>any</i> circumstance during the time of their stay in a care home. It is seen as policy that the risk to Flintshire’s recovery is overridden by the need to support the service user and that payments will continue.</p>	<p>The monthly Legal Surgeries, the matrix management of information and the initial monthly reporting of Deferred Payments to senior management, will provide early sight of risk areas and monitoring of performance of risk management of existing debts – as detailed above,</p> <p>We will also address the wider risk by completing a policy review to evaluate the current operating model and approach, including decision making at week 13 day 1 and its implications. Revised policy to be presented to Cabinet for review and approval by November 2024.</p>	<p>Jane Davies</p>	<p>30 Nov 2024</p>

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Testing identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine cases on the property debt spreadsheet do not appear on the property charges PDF from Paris.</li> <li>• Six of these also do not have a DPA in place.</li> <li>• We identified payments for two of these service users on the most recent CIS payment run 28/5/23. According to the property debt spreadsheet ST00943A has been an asset since 5/10/21. There is no asset detail available for ST00315A.</li> <li>• Management information re case management / action plan to resolve is insufficient including specialist legal advice or reporting to senior management.</li> </ul> <p>The role of internal audit is not to suggest payments for care should cease. This finding raises the need for risk management - that the policy of continued payments where risk to recovery is highest should be discussed and approved, and the process for escalation of these high-risk cases should be defined and decision making at an appropriate level is evidenced. Decisions should be reported, and impacts reflected in line with corporate risk management practice.</p> <p>The risk of financial loss to Flintshire increases with these types of cases, especially if not consistently highlighted and managed commensurately including escalation, reporting, and securing specialist advice.</p>			
<p><b>5(R) <u>Debt pursuance, recovery and write off (URN3555)</u></b></p> <p>The team manager for Collections and Enforcement within the Debt Recovery Team has advised all pursuance and recovery across Flintshire is undertaken in line with the Corporate Debt and Fair Debt policies. At time of testing the LTD 17.01.23 reported debt outstanding as £1,301,566.28. LTD makes up approximately 55% of the total Social Services Debt and amounted to £1.4 million as of January 2023.</p>	<p>Internal Audit will provide a copy of this report to Debt Recover.</p> <p>Invite Debt Recovery to the Legal Surgeries in order that the recovery charge and process could be understood and recovery action agreed.</p>	<p>Jane Davies</p>	<p>30 Nov 2024</p>

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Management do not view payments for LT residential care as debt reflected in AR on a regular basis against which payment is to be deferred. Instead, an invoice is raised by the FACT team once circumstances change i.e., the property is sold, or the service user passes away.</p> <p>These cases are tagged as 'Long Term Debt Hold'. The team manager for Collections and Enforcement assumes that a suitable charge has been placed against the service user's property and income will be eventually received. However, because it is 'Long Term Debt Hold', the debt is not pursued in line with the standard corporate debt recovery policy (30/60/90 days).</p> <p>A quarterly Long-Term Debt (LTD) report is produced by Debt Recovery for senior management. Testing has identified the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific pursuance / recovery policy has not been defined for LT residential care costs.</li> <li>• A service level agreement is not in place between the two service areas to assist with the timely recovery of this debt in a way which is appropriate for these circumstances.</li> <li>• Seven service users on the LTD spreadsheet do not appear on the property debt spreadsheet. (LTD Value based on last invoice sent £139,178.78)</li> <li>• 36 service users on the property debt spreadsheet do not appear on the LTD. Six are deceased.</li> <li>• Four service users on the LTD report do not have a charge on the Current Properties with Charges PDF report.</li> <li>• 15 service users appear as deceased on the PD. Value on LTD £297,894.62 based on last invoices). These remain on the LTD report indicating recovery is still due. The oldest deceased date is 2008. The most recent invoice date is 14/10/2022.</li> <li>• Two service users are deceased but do not appear on LTD (SP02185A, SS12830A).</li> </ul>	<p>As part of this process any debts which may require write off will be identified and reported appropriately to finance colleagues and the Chief Officer.</p> <p>Define the appropriate debt recovery process as part of the policy review.</p>		

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>Page 335</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reconciliation does not take place between the datasets. We have not been able to resolve 4 service users (SS12830A/ST00403A/ST00995A/ST01083A &amp; T00998A).</li> <li>• LTD 17.01.23 reported debt outstanding as £1,301,566.28. Finance's Income received / outstanding debt extract reported debt outstanding as £1,107,404.57 (ledger code Property Income SER7119621). FACT does not review either of these reports. We have not been able to reconcile these two reports due to time constraints and the way the debt is structured in the ledger.</li> <li>• The current process means that without high levels of resource and analysis management are unable efficiently reconcile a service user's account from payments made to invoicing for full costs including interest and management fee, to pursuance and recovery.</li> <li>• At the time of reporting, we were unable to resolve whether the final invoice is raised in AR against each service user as a debtor, where debt pursuance action would usually be recorded. We can see invoices coded to Property Income (SER7119621) where any income is receipted.</li> <li>• Management cannot evidence recovery activity has taken place via the LTD/PARIS/PD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Write Off</b></p> <p>We were not able to identify any write off actions against these debts. Debt recovery have confirmed they would not write off this debt as it is expected to be eventually recovered through the sale of the property. However, testing identified accounts on the LTD without a charge against the property, some without a DPA and others with lesser types of charge in place. There are cases where the property has been sold or passed onto other family. Without these key mitigations it is unclear why Flintshire considers it remains in a position to recover against these debts.</p> <p>There is a risk that an appropriate pursuance and recovery process is not in place for these debts payment for which have been deferred – including stages of pursuance, escalation, write off reporting and authorisation. There</p>			

23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>is a risk as these debts are significant, any write off will have an impact on the FCC's bad debt provision.</p>			
<p><b>6(A) Effectiveness of legal charge (URN 3553)</b></p> <p>Flintshire will place a legal charge against a service user's property in order to recover the amount paid in LT residential care costs. This charge is removed once Flintshire has received payment in full for fees accrued against the property.</p> <p>Management advises there are instances where a charge cannot be raised for example tenants in common, applicant not having capacity and power of attorney not having been obtained etc. However legal have advised a service user does not need to give permission for a charge to be raised. At time of reporting, we were unable to reconcile this difference.</p> <p>Testing identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the 72 service users on the PD, nine did not have a charge against the property.</li> <li>• The Current Properties with Charges PDF report lists a total of 87 properties with a charge.</li> <li>• A service level agreement is not in place between the two service areas to assist with the specialist legal aspects of charges.</li> </ul> <p>There are a variety of charges which can be placed against a property depending on whether the property is registered or not. These will impact on the ability of Flintshire to recover costs. The types of charges are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land Reg Charge - registered property</li> <li>2. Land Reg Restriction - registered property in joint name so restriction in respect of person</li> <li>3. Class B Land Charge - unregistered property</li> <li>4. Note with Local Land Charges - Note with Local Land charges register</li> </ol>	<p>Through the Legal Surgeries, the appropriateness of each charge and recovery process is being reviewed.</p> <p>This will include the appropriateness of the charge and actions that need to be taken to ensure the pursuance and recovery of the debt in due course.</p> <p>As part of this process any debts which may require write off will be identified and reported appropriately to finance colleagues and the Chief Officer.</p> <p>Learnings will be incorporated into the policy review.</p>	Jane Davies	30 Nov 2024



23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>When considering a DPA application, Flintshire has to accept a Type 1 charge as sufficient security to protect its interest however it has discretion over whether to accept the other types of charges as sufficient and can refuse a DPA on this basis.</p> <p>Legal have advised the note with LLC (charge 4) would only notify Flintshire the property was being sold rather than ensure any recovery. Social Services would need to contact the service user representative to attempt to negotiate a payment. There is nil legal obligation on the representative to make such a payment if a DPA has not been signed. This risk materialised in the case of SS12830A and now attempting to recover from FD534056. The service user died in 2017, last invoice £28,047.86 dated 14/11/2019. These costs are yet to be recovered. (Table 3)</p> <p>Management advise they were not aware of the different charges placed on properties and the impact on Flintshire’s ability to recover. Management does not differentiate between the various types of charges on the Current Properties with Charges PDF report generated from PARIS nor on the PD.</p> <p>Current process does not evidence whether the charge placed on a property will be sufficiently effective for recovery or whether more specific mitigation actions / decisions are required. It is unclear how many cases have lesser charges on which Flintshire is relying on to recover.</p> <p>There is a risk that relying on an ineffective charge means Flintshire will never be able to recover the funds it is due. The process does not address the risk that a less effective charge increases the risk of non-recovery and financial loss.</p>			
<p><b>7(A) Annual / Bi-annual property statement (URN 3557)</b></p> <p>The Social Service and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 4 and 5 of the code of Practice, requires local authorities to provide those service users on a DPA with a six-monthly written update of the amount of care costs deferred, of the</p>	<p>A six-monthly written update of the amount of care costs deferred inclusive of interest and administrations costs will</p>	<p>Jane Davies</p>	<p>31 Dec 2023</p>

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<p>interest and administrative costs accrued to date, of the total amount due and an estimate of the equity remaining in the home not covered by the required amount deferred.</p> <p>Testing identified updates are not being sent every six months as required and the updates provided do not include any reference to the estimate of the equity remaining in the home not covered by the required amount deferred. This is also crucial aspect in Flintshire’s decision whether to revoke the DPA.</p> <p>Service users who have not secured a DPA but where there is a charge placed on the property should receive a property statement at year end advising of the total amount owing to FCC. This requirement is applicable to the majority of cases (96%) on the property debt spreadsheet. We were provided with an example of the statement but there is nil up to date management information to identify compliance with this requirement. Due to lack of time, we have not been able to test this further.</p> <p>There is a risk Flintshire is non-compliant with the requirements set out in the Social Service and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 4 and 5 or the Code of practice. We are unable to evidence accurate calculation of interest due as well as judgement on remaining equity being sufficient to enable full cost recovery.</p>	<p>be provided to the service users or their appropriate representative.</p> <p>Prior to the implementation of the new FACT software system ContrOCC, this will be undertaken manually. Post implementation in Q4 2023/24 this will be automated through ContrOCC.</p>		
<p>8(A) <b>MANAGEMENT REQUEST – Historic Case studies (URN 3550)</b></p> <p>Two cases were provided for sample testing as difficulties had been encountered with recovery of debt. We would note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS05743B deceased 10/09/2019, SS20412A deceased 28/02/2013.</li> <li>• S05743B on LTD £1478.03. We are unable to report the original debt owed on death as the figures in the PD spreadsheet do not reconcile.</li> <li>• SS20412A on LTD £359.43. We are unable to report the original debt owed on death as the figures in the PD spreadsheet do not reconcile.</li> </ul>	<p>The new control measures detailed above will mitigate against these types of risks reoccurring in the future.</p> <p>As a further assurance, case file audits will be introduced in the service to ensure compliance with the new procedures detailed above.</p>	Jane Davies	31 May 2024

Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither service user had a DPA in place. Flintshire therefore had limited protection to ensure the property was not subsequently occupied by family or tenants and the asset was kept in a good state of repair to ensure the value is adequate to secure the debt.</li> <li>A Land Registry restriction (Type 2 charge) and a Class B Land Charge (Type 3 charge) were placed against the properties.</li> <li>We are unable to evidence action to enforce these charges at time of death. However, as these are lesser types of charges, there is a risk these were insufficient to protect Flintshire’s interest and recover the debt.</li> <li>There was a lack of clarity of role and responsibility between FACT and debt recovery.</li> <li>Pursuance policy was not in place to provide guidance on the recovery activities to be completed and timescales for these.</li> <li>Case management and escalation process was not in place.</li> </ul> <p>These historic cases highlight several control issues which are also highlighted in this report. There is a risk the current control environment would not sufficiently mitigate against these types of risk reoccurring, leading to significant financial loss.</p>	<p>These audits will include debt recovery assurance, compliance with legal process and delivery of management information.</p>		

Appendix
<p>TABLE 1 – INTERNAL AUDIT RISK PROFILE                      TABLE 2 – PAYMENTS MADE VIA CIS 25/5/23                      TABLE 3 – RISK TO RECOVERY</p>

Distribution List	
Jane Davies	Accountable Officer Responsible for the Implementation of Agreed Actions
Neil Ayling	Chief Officer- Social Services
Jane Davies	Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning
Sally Swarbrick	Business Manager

**23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023**

<b>Distribution List</b>	
Claire Morris	Financial Assessments Team Leader
<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
Neal Cockerton	Chief Executive
Gareth Owens	Chief Officer - Governance
David Barnes	Revenues and Procurement Manager
Matthew Powell	Manager – Legal Services

Audit Priority:

Appendix A

Priority of Audit Finding	
Priority	Description
High (Red)	Action is imperative to ensure that the objectives of the area under review are met
Medium (Amber)	Requires action to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving the objectives of the area
Low (Green)	Action encouraged to enhance control or improve operational efficiency

Audit Opinion:

The audit opinion is the level of assurance that Internal Audit can give to management and all other stakeholders on the adequacy and effectiveness of controls within the area audited. It is assessed following the completion of the audit and is based on the findings from the audit. Progress on the implementation of agreed actions will be monitored. Findings from **Some** or **Limited** assurance audits will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Assurance	Explanation
Green - Substantial	<p><b>Strong controls in place (all or most of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key controls exist and are applied consistently and effectively</li> <li>Objectives achieved in a pragmatic and cost effective manner</li> <li>Compliance with relevant regulations and procedures</li> <li>Assets safeguarded</li> <li>Information reliable</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: key controls have been adequately designed and are operating effectively to deliver the key objectives of the system, process, function or service.</b></p>
Amber Green – Reasonable	<p><b>Key Controls in place but some fine tuning required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key controls exist but there are weaknesses and / or inconsistencies in application though no evidence of any significant impact</li> <li>Some refinement or addition of controls would enhance the control environment</li> <li>Key objectives could be better achieved with some relatively minor adjustments</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: key controls generally operating effectively.</b></p>
Amber Red – Some	<p><b>Significant improvement in control environment required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key controls exist but fail to address all risks identified and / or are not applied consistently and effectively</li> <li>Evidence of (or the potential for) financial / other loss</li> <li>Key management information exists but is unreliable</li> <li>System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at an unnecessary cost or use of resources.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: key controls are generally inadequate or ineffective.</b></p>
Red – Limited	<p><b>Urgent system revision required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key controls are absent or rarely applied</li> <li>Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial / other losses</li> <li>Key management information does not exist</li> <li>System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.</b></p>

Page 341

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

TABLE 1 – INTERNAL AUDIT RISK PROFILE

GROUP	SERVICE USER	LT RESIDENTIAL CARE COSTS	RISK	CONTROL
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;£50K</li> <li>Service user self-funder</li> <li>liable for their own LT Residential care costs</li> </ul>	NIL	NIL	NIL
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;£50K</li> <li>no property, or other assets</li> <li>property ineligible – value low or partner, a dependent child, a relative aged over 60, or someone who is sick or disabled still lives home.</li> </ul>	<b>NON-RECOVERABLE LT residential care costs</b>	Risk is that payment by Flintshire on service user behalf is inaccurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accuracy of payment</li> <li>regular monitoring, reconciliation, and reporting</li> <li>nil for debt recovery as none is expected</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;£50k</li> <li>other assets (apart from home) are low</li> <li>property eligible - value of home is over the threshold for paying part or all of care home costs</li> <li>own property / has beneficial interest realisable on sale</li> <li>may/may not have capacity to enter into agreement</li> </ul>	<b>RECOVERABLE LT residential care costs</b>	Risk is that payments by Flintshire on service user behalf is inaccurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visibility of service user care costs</li> <li>accuracy of payment</li> <li>regular monitoring, reconciliation, and reporting</li> </ul>
			Risk is that Flintshire payments cannot be recovered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>service user chooses to sell property immediately and pay</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service user chooses to delay sale of house</li> <li>applies for bridging DPA which is approved.</li> <li>Flintshire raises sufficient legal charge (Type 1)</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>service user chooses to defer payment until death</li> <li>applies and agrees to DPA which is approved.</li> <li>Flintshire raises sufficient legal charge (Type 1)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service user nil capacity to agree to DPA</li> <li>Family/representative to resolve PoW</li> <li>Flintshire understands available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service user nil capacity to agree to DPA</li> <li>Flintshire needs to assist service user to apply and agree to a DPA</li> <li>Flintshire understands available legal charge</li> <li><b>RISK MANAGEMENT &amp; MGMT DECISION RE</b></li> </ul>			

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>legal charge</li> <li><b>RISK MANAGEMENT &amp; MGMT DECISION RE CONTINUED PAYMENT</b></li> <li>Eventually Flintshire secures DPA with family / personal rep &amp; more effective legal charge raised</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONTINUED PAYMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eventually Flintshire secures PoA, DPA in place &amp; more effective legal charge raised</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flintshire rejects DPA application</li> <li>Flintshire understands available legal charge</li> <li>Nil in place or likely to be in place to recover</li> <li><b>RISK MANAGEMENT &amp; MGMT DECISION RE CONTINUED PAYMENT</b></li> </ul>	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service user / family / personal rep refuses sale and refuses to apply DPA</li> <li>Flintshire understands available legal charge</li> <li>Nil in place or likely to be in place to recover</li> <li><b>RISK MANAGEMENT &amp; MGMT DECISION RE CONTINUED PAYMENT</b></li> </ul>	
			<p>Risk is that once circumstances warrant (sale / death) debt pursuance and recovery is insufficient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accuracy of final invoice</li> <li>Clarity of pursuance activity which should take place</li> <li>Regular monitoring and reporting</li> <li><b>RISK MANAGEMENT DECISION &amp; ESCALATION</b></li> <li><b>HIGH RISK CASES AS RESULT OF MGMT DECISION TO CONTINU PAYMENT.</b></li> <li>Appropriate write off</li> </ul>		

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

TABLE 2 – PAYMENTS MADE VIA CIS 25/5/23

TABLE 2.1 – CIS TWO WEEKLY PAYMENT RUN 28/5/2023 - represents payments by ledger code						
Ledger Code	ADJM	ADJS	ADJSM	Cost for # of nights	T - short term care placement	Grand Total
RESIDENTIAL LT	£ 60.00	£ 14,887.24	-£ 590.53	£ 615,911.20		£ 630,267.91
NURSING LT	-£ 49.30	£ 11,461.47		£ 255,724.88		£ 267,137.05
RESIDENTIAL ST	-£ 986.15	£ 1,795.63			£ 67,586.68	£ 68,396.16
NURSING ST	x	£ 337.02			£ 2,120.60	£ 2,457.62
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>-£ 975.45</b>	<b>£ 28,481.36</b>	<b>-£ 590.53</b>	<b>£ 871,636.08</b>	<b>£ 69,707.28</b>	<b>£ 968,258.74</b>

TABLE 2.2 – CIS TWO WEEKLY PAYMENT RUN 28/5/2023 - represents RECOVERABLE long term residential care costs if these ARE on the Property Debt Spreadsheet = £39,134.38							
Property Debt Spreadsheet	OVERALL CODE	ADJM	ADJS	ADJSM	Cost for # of nights	T - short term care placement	Grand Total
not on PDS	RESIDENTIAL LT	£ 60.00	£10,227.71	-£ 590.53	£279,460.16		£289,157.34
not on PDS	NURSING LT	-£ 49.30	£11,461.47		£244,371.12		£255,783.29
not on PDS	RESIDENTIAL ST	-£ 986.15	£ 1,795.63			£ 67,586.68	£ 68,396.16
not on PDS	NURSING ST		£ 337.02			£ 2,120.60	£ 2,457.62
not on PD (PDSI client)	RESIDENTIAL LT		£ 4,659.53		£308,670.42		£313,329.95
yes	RESIDENTIAL LT				£ 27,780.62		£ 27,780.62
yes but nursing	NURSING LT				£ 11,353.76		£ 11,353.76
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>-£ 975.45</b>	<b>£28,481.36</b>	<b>-£ 590.53</b>	<b>£871,636.08</b>	<b>£ 69,707.28</b>	<b>£968,258.74</b>



**23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services -  
Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023**

TABLE 2.3 – RECOVERABLE CLIENT NUMBERS	
<b>RECOVERABLE = ON PDS</b>	<b>£ 39,134.38</b>
<b>NURSING LONG TERM</b>	<b>£ 11,353.76</b>
C00459A	£ 1,820.46
P00817A	£ 1,876.82
S14026A	£ 1,804.78
S28040A	£ 798.94
T00315A	£ 1,662.04
T00675A	£ 1,758.06
T01414A	£ 1,632.66
<b>RESIDENTIAL-L TERM</b>	<b>£ 27,780.62</b>
C00081A	£ 665.04
C00734A	£ 1,221.44
C00971A	£ 904.36
P00448A	£ 811.98
P02557A	£ 974.06
S04254A	£ 683.98
S08410B	£ 721.40
S09823A	£ 941.52
S13851A	£ 860.42
S27903A	£ 906.68
S28237A	£ 756.26
T00252A	£ 409.52
T00360A	£ 974.26
T00367A	£ 1,195.48
T00433A	£ 1,084.70
T00567A	£ 650.46
T00710A	£ 886.58
T00716A	£ 921.20
T00731A	£ 803.36
T00943A	£ 755.76
T00966A	£ 1,727.16
T00994A	£ 1,455.10
T00995A	£ 1,643.16
T01195A	£ 1,141.80
T01239A	£ 953.08
T01295A	£ 869.00
T01296A	£ 1,219.70
T01372A	£ 1,643.16

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Table 2.4 Ledger information from Finance			
CIS REPORT BUDGET CODES	detail 1	overall	DSCRPT JD
SER7315628	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	NURSING LT	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SER7515628	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	NURSING LT	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SER7715628	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	NURSING LT	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SFF6115628	FOST'G FLINT/H'WELL	NURSING LT	Is not currently used
SLC2315628	PDSI - RESIDENTIAL/	NURSING LT	PDSI is Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment, mostly used for costs for adults aged between 18 - 65 years old
SLC3215628	RESOURCE PANEL	NURSING LT	Is not currently used
SLC9235628	RESID'TL PLACEMENTS	NURSING LT	This is a budget code for people with Learning Disabilities (mostly aged between 18 - 65 years old)
SMR2215625	DEESIDE RESIDENT	NURSING LT	This is a budget code for Mental Health (mostly aged between 18 - 65 years old)
SER7515629	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	NURSING ST	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
<b>SCE1145625</b>	<b>(FCC)PHYS DIS EQUIP</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>This is a budget code from the North East Wales Community Equipment Store (NEWCES)</b>
<b>SER7215625</b>	<b>FREE NURSING INCOME</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>Is not currently used</b>
<b>SER7315625</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL &amp; NURSI</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care</b>
<b>SER7515625</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL &amp; NURSI</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care</b>
<b>SER7715625</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL &amp; NURSI</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care</b>
<b>SER7715625*</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL &amp; NURSI</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL LT</b>	<b>This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care</b>
SLC2215625	PDSI - DOMICILLIARY	RESIDENTIAL LT	PDSI is Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment, mostly used for costs for adults aged between 18 - 65 years old
SLC2315625	PDSI - RESIDENTIAL/	RESIDENTIAL LT	PDSI is Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment, mostly used for costs for adults aged between 18 - 65 years old
SLC9235625	RESID'TL PLACEMENTS	RESIDENTIAL LT	This is a budget code for people with Learning Disabilities (mostly aged between 18 - 65 years old)
SLC9315625	LIFE SHARES	RESIDENTIAL LT	This is a budget code for people with Learning Disabilities (mostly aged between 18 - 65 years old)
SMR2215628	DEESIDE RESIDENT	RESIDENTIAL LT	This is a budget code for Mental Health (mostly aged between 18 - 65 years old)
SCE1145626	(FCC)PHYS DIS EQUIP	RESIDENTIAL ST	This is a budget code from the North East Wales Community Equipment Store (NEWCES)
SER7215626	FREE NURSING INCOME	RESIDENTIAL ST	Is not currently used
SER7315626	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	RESIDENTIAL ST	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SER7315626*	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	RESIDENTIAL ST	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SER7515626	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	RESIDENTIAL ST	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SER7715626	RESIDENTIAL & NURSI	RESIDENTIAL ST	This is a budget code for Older Peoples commissioned residential care
SGC2115626*	GENERAL EXPENDITURE	RESIDENTIAL ST	Is not currently used
SLC2315626	PDSI - RESIDENTIAL/	RESIDENTIAL ST	PDSI is Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment, mostly used for costs for adults aged between 18 - 65 years old

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

TABLE 3 – RISK TO RECOVERY

TABLE 3: Risk to effective recovery - LTD SPREADSHEET @17.01.2023 £837,884.68. RECONCILED WITH LEGAL CHARGES TESTED BY SERVICE USER									
Customer ID	DECEASED	LTD INVOICE DATE	LTD @17.01.23	DPA	Land Reg Charge	Land Reg Restriction	Class B Land Charge	note with LCC	no info
SS14274A	06/08/2008	31/03/2007	£15,254.06	no					1
SS20412A	28/02/2013	30/06/2022	£359.43	no			1		
SS22438A	28/05/2013	17/09/2013	£34,914.20	no					1
SA23047B	25/07/2015	15/03/2017	£34,568.21	no					1
FD534056 & SS12830A	04/04/2017	14/11/2019	£28,047.86	no				1	
SS09665A	25/07/2018	04/02/2018	£3,458.05	not really			1		
SP02185A	29/03/2019	NOT ON LTD	£ -	no					1
SS05743B	10/09/2019	31/03/2022	£1,478.03	no		1			
SP01554A	17/03/2020	28/05/2021	£936.05	no			1		
SP01179A	19/01/2021	10/03/2021	£21,100.00	no					1
SP02679A	18/06/2021	30/07/2021	£16,230.68	no			1		
SC00329A	07/01/2022	03/02/2022	£46,163.89	CONFIRMED	1				
ST00472A	17/04/2022	18/05/2022	£1,402.04	no			1		
SS18639A	24/07/2022	05/08/2022	£4,913.32	no		1			
SP01903A	09/10/2022	14/10/2022	£76,727.29	CONFIRMED	1				
ST00810A	11/12/2022	18/05/2022	£20,302.50	no	1				
		18/05/2022	£20,086.87	no	1				
SA19699B	NO	06/11/2018	£4,478.06	not really					1
SC00081A	NO	17/03/2022	£13,865.14	no			1		
SD25317A	NO	31/03/2022	£9,577.22	no		1			
SP00448A	NO	31/03/2022	£13,914.49	no	1				
SP01418A	NO	31/03/2016	£8,729.32	no			1		
SP01434A	NO	21/04/2021	£5,821.39	not really					1
		23/06/2022	£28,138.16	not really					1

## 23/24 – Deferred Charges and Management of Residential Care Liabilities – Social Services - Report Ref 14-2022/23 Nov 2023

Page 348

SP01474A	NO	31/03/2022	£26,134.48	not really			1		
SP01519A	NO	30/06/2022	£19,353.07	no			1		
SS00974A	NO	30/03/2022	£36,412.95	not really	1				
SS08410B	NO	21/04/2022	£13,693.96	no	1				
SS08762A	NO	09/03/2015	£9,496.06	not really					1
SS13851A	NO	31/03/2022	£18,358.14	no		1			
SS21032A	NO	22/09/2021	£17,753.40	not really					1
SS27903A	NO	31/03/2022	£18,879.05	no			1		
SS28040A	NO	31/03/2022	£47,518.74	no					1
SS28237A	NO	24/03/2021	£22,603.88	no			1		
ST00252A	NO	31/03/2022	£12,910.39	no			1		
ST00360A	NO	31/03/2022	£14,589.02	no					1
ST00367A	NO	31/03/2022	£23,326.14	not really					1
ST00403A	NO	30/06/2022	£44,545.07	no					1
ST00433A	NO	17/03/2022	£20,816.92	no	1				
ST00487A	NO	17/08/2022	£5,620.50	not really					1
ST00567A	NO	31/03/2022	£13,173.42	CONFIRMED	1				
ST00675A	NO	17/03/2022	£15,760.50	no			1		
ST00710A	NO	18/05/2022	£19,135.02	no					1
ST00731A	NO	31/03/2022	£13,636.52	no	1				
ST00995A	NO	NOT ON LTD	£ -	no					1
ST01083A	NO	14/07/2022	£4,225.78	no					1
		23/03/2022	£9,475.41	no					1
T00998A	NO	NOT ON LTD	£ -	no					1
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>£837,884.68</b>						

## Deferred Payments and Property Cases Workplan

Task	Source	Deadline
Action Plan of risks in audit report	Brief meeting	31/05/2024
Matrix of info from all systems Property s/s, PARIS, CIS - RAG rated	Audit report	31/05/2024
List all actions in the process from start to debt recovery Inc letters to send, when and what to say	Brief meeting	30/11/2024
Create process for debt recovery	Brief meeting	30/11/2024
Create process and leaflet to give to families	Brief meeting	30/11/2024
Create procedure for deferred Payments process	Additional	30/11/2024
Create procedures for ends (property sale, death or CHC)	Additional	30/11/2024
Create procedure for year end process	Additional	30/11/2024
Create procedure for non co-operative families	Additional	30/11/2024
Create letter – a charge has been registered	Additional	30/11/2024
Create letter – property needs registering with the land registry	Additional	30/11/2024
Create letter - a valuation has been requested	Additional	30/11/2024
Create letter – a valuation has been completed (Deferred Payment Only)	Additional	31/05/2024
Create letter – CHC funded, client contribution to be paid towards property debt accrued	Additional	31/05/2024
Check Deferred Payment Application form is correct Re compound interest and date payment due	Additional	31/05/2024
Deferred Payment contract from legal - is this correct?	Additional	31/05/2024
Create checklist for WBOs – to built into Financial Assessment Claim Form	Additional	31/05/2024
Update WBO process / procedure	Additional	30/11/2024
Update property procedure	Additional	30/11/2024
Create flowcharts for processes and actions	Brief meeting	30/11/2024
Review all property cases	Brief meeting	31/05/2024
Manual Six monthly statements until ContrOCC in place	Audit report	31/12/2023
Introduction of case file audits	Audit report	31/05/2023
Monthly FACT Legal surgeries to review all DP agreements	Audit report	30/11/2024
Review each charge through the legal surgeries, and actions needed to ensure debt recovery	Audit report	30/11/2024

Monthly reports of cases with risk and / or non payment	Audit report	30/11/2024
Training for FAOs around correct agreements and charges - from Blake Morgan	Audit report	30/11/2024
Debt recovery to be invited to legal surgeries	Audit report	30/11/2024
Identify bad debts for write off	Audit report	30/11/2024
Complete a policy review	Audit report	30/11/2024
Incorporate learnings into the policy review	Audit report	30/11/2024
Define the appropriate debt recovery process as part of the policy review	Audit report	30/11/2024
Complete IIA	Audit report	30/11/2024

**Completion Due**

**Date**

**30/11/2024**

Owner	Status	Comments
Gemma	Complete	See second tab
Working Group		Spec sent to PARIS - waiting for matrix to be built
Gemma	Complete	Actions identified and listed in spec for Matrix
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed
Danielle		26/2/24 Danielle to draft template
Danielle		26/2/24 Danielle to draft template
Danielle	Complete	Detail included in initial letter
Danielle		26/2/24 Danielle to draft template
Danielle		26/2/24 Danielle to draft template
Gemma		Draft v2 sent to working group 26/02/24
Ian		
Working Group		To be completed once Matrix is place and process is agreed
		To be completed once Matrix is place and process is agreed
Working Group		Booked date 03/04/24 to review cases and input on new PARIS form
Claire / FAOs	Complete	Confirmation manual process is in place
		To be introduced once Matrix is in place

PARIS matrix will provide reports

Claire

Complete

Claire meeting with Carwyn & Hannah (Debt Management) and taking the information to Blake Morgan Legal Surgeries. Claire then feeding back to debt recovery in bi-monthly meetings

To be completed once Matrix is in place and process is agreed





## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Audit Wales Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 an independent review into Building Regulations and fire safety was undertaken by Dame Judith Hackett with the findings published in 2018. The review exposed long-standing and serious issues with the building safety regime and recommended a new framework to replace the complex system that had grown over decades. In addressing the findings and recommendations of the Hackett Review, the Building Safety Act was introduced in 2022 and represents the biggest changes of building safety regulations in Wales (and England) since 1984.

The 2022 Act aims to improve the safety of high rise and other in scope buildings by establishing new regulations for the design, construction, maintenance and occupation of such buildings. It also sets a requirement for all practicing Building Control Inspectors to demonstrate competency at one of three levels (Domestic, General and Specialist) and to become registered by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

In August 2023, Audit Wales published a report on Building Control in Wales entitled 'Cracks in the Foundations' to understand how well the Welsh Government, local authorities and their partners are strengthening and improving Building Control and building safety services following the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022. The Audit Wales report looked at all Building Control Authorities in Wales and how each is prepared to take on the enhanced responsibilities and requirements of the 2022 Act. It focused on the resilience of existing services and the robustness of building safety assurance systems.

The findings from the report give a critical oversight and raise concerns that not enough priority is being given to Building Control services. It suggests that there is an absence of robust planning and clear decision making and inadequate resources raising fears that the new responsibilities and requirements of the 2022 Act will not be delivered as intended in Wales.

Eight recommendations were made by Audit Wales, four directed at Welsh Government and four directed at Local Authorities.

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the Audit Wales review, their recommendations and the response to those recommendations and actions required.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet notes the outcome of the Audit Wales report and supports the actions to be taken to address the four recommendations made for Local Authorities.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE AUDIT WALES REPORT AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE</b>
1.01	<p>Building Regulations are a set of legal requirements for the design and construction of new buildings, extensions and material alterations to, and certain changes of use of, existing buildings. They help to ensure that new buildings, conversions, renovations and extensions (domestic or commercial) are safe, accessible and energy efficient.</p> <p>The Building Regulations are defined by Welsh Government and cover specific topics including structural integrity, fire protection, accessibility, electrical installations, standards for drains, ventilation and protection against contamination amongst other matters. These are set out in Approved Documents.</p> <p>There are two routes by which developers and building owners can seek approval for their works. They can choose to pay for either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a local authority inspector from the local council and run through Local Authority Building Control (LABC); or</li> <li>• an approved inspector from a government-approved private building control company</li> </ul> <p>They both work in the same way, checking plans prior to work commencing, physically inspecting works during the development, advising any changes as necessary and any re-inspections as required before signing the works off.</p> <p>However, only the local authority has powers of enforcement and prosecution where breaches of the Regulations have occurred.</p>

1.02	<p>The building regulations regime has remained unchanged for many years until the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 in which 72 people died. An independent review into Building Regulations and fire safety was commissioned by the UK Government (known as the Hackett Inquiry) and the review's report was published in May 2018.</p> <p>The report recommended a new framework to replace the complex system that had grown over decades and both the Welsh and UK Governments prioritised work on addressing the review findings which culminated in the Building Safety Act 2022. The Act aims to improve the safety of buildings in England and Wales by establishing a new set of regulations for the design, construction, maintenance and occupation of buildings. It also sets a requirement for all practicing Building Control inspectors to demonstrate competency at one of three levels (domestic, general, specialist) and to become registered by 6 April 2024.</p>
1.03	<p>In August 2023, Audit Wales published a report on Building Control in Wales entitled "Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales." Their approach was to understand how well the Welsh Government, local authorities and their partners are strengthening and improving building control and building safety following the Building Safety Act 2022 coming into force. They looked at the robustness of needs information, plans and policies, the resilience of existing services and plans to strengthen these and considered the robustness of assurance systems.</p> <p>The overall conclusion reached by Audit Wales was that responsible bodies – particularly local authorities and fire and rescue – are unable to effectively discharge their responsibilities and ensure buildings in Wales are safe.</p> <p>Other key findings from their review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Welsh and UK Governments are diverging in key policy areas and some doubt remains on how the 2022 Act will be implemented in Wales, mainly because decisions in key areas are yet to be decided and agreed. This is creating uncertainty and plans that set out how new and revised responsibilities are to be delivered are yet to be developed.</li> <li>• As a profession, Building Control and building safety face significant staffing challenges, with an ageing workforce, poor succession planning, a wider lack of investment in services and training and development that highlight that these services are neither resilient nor fit for the future.</li> <li>• Concerns were raised around the financial management of building control, concluding that some authorities' current practices are not operating in line with regulations and guidance. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic helped some local authorities to modernise their services (such as moving to more online cloud-based IT and remote working) their resilience remains weak with opportunities to strengthen services by exploring collaboration and regionalisation not being prioritised.</li> <li>• An absence of a national framework for monitoring and evaluating Building Control and building safety means that local authorities and</li> </ul>

	<p>their partners are not working to agreed appropriate outcome measures, targets or benchmarks.</p>
1.04	<p>Eight recommendations were made by Audit Wales. Four were directed at Welsh Government (R1 to R4) and four were directed at Local Authorities (R5 to R8).</p> <p>The recommendations made for Welsh Government include providing greater clarity on the implementation and expectations of the Building Safety Act 2022 to ensure local authorities are able to deliver their new responsibilities and duties; ensure it has sufficient resources to deliver the legislative and policy changes for Building Safety; review the mixed market approach to building control and conclude whether it continues to be appropriate and effective in keeping buildings in Wales safe; and increase its oversight and management of the building control sector to ensure there is a robust assurance system in place for building control and safety.</p> <p>The four recommendations made for Local Authorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R5 Develop local action plans that articulate a clear vision for Building Control to be able to plan effectively to implement the requirements of the 2022 Act.</li> <li>R6 Urgently review their financial management of Building Control and ensure they are fully complying with Regulations.</li> <li>R7 Work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience through a cost benefit analysis of partnering with neighbouring authorities, establishing joint ventures and/or adopting a regional model where beneficial.</li> <li>R8 Review risk management to ensure risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny</li> </ul>
1.05	<p>With regards to R5, ongoing discussions are being held with Local Authority Building Control (LABC) who are the body representing Building Control authorities in England and Wales and with other local authorities on a format and approach to Local Action Plans. It is acknowledged that producing a Local Action Plan is an important piece of work and is currently in progress.</p>
1.06	<p>R6 recommends that Local Authorities urgently review their financial management of the Building Control function. This piece of work is already underway with a review of the Council's fees and charges for Building Regulations.</p> <p>This is also an area of work identified to be looked at with colleagues from Internal Audit as part of their programme for audits for 2024/25.</p>
1.07	<p>R7 says that local authorities should work with partners to make better use of limited resources, exploring collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience.</p> <p>The Building Control team works closely with partners and stakeholders already, including local police and fire services, local builders and others to</p>

	ensure the best use of resources. Staff recruitment and retention is a nationwide issue and not just restricted to Building Control or Flintshire. Flintshire's Building Control Team is well staffed compared to neighbouring authorities, particularly in Denbighshire and Conwy.
1.08	<p>R8 says Local Authorities should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, reviewed and recorded.</p> <p>Risk Management will form part of the internal audit review of the Building Control service which, in turn, will inform and shape the risk management processes for this service. This will have regard to the Council's Risk Management Strategy and Framework and will seek to apply best practice to the identification, assessment and control of key risks within the Building Control service.</p>
1.09	<p>Appendix 1: Cracks in the Foundations – Updates &amp; Actions gives additional information in respect of the four recommendations outlined above.</p> <p>Whilst some progress has been made on some of the recommendations made in the Audit Wales report, it is acknowledged that this has been slow to date and needs to be accelerated. The priority for the Building Control Service has been to recruit into the three vacant posts and to ensure all Building Control Officers have progressed their registration requirements in line with the new Building Control Competency Registration Framework. Without such registration the Service would not be able to operate and in order to fully appreciate the recommendations of the Audit Wales report it has been important to ensure the Service is fully resourced.</p>
1.10	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2024, all Building Control Officers have undertaken and passed their exams required under the new Building Control Competency Registration Framework and submitted their registration to the Building Safety Regulator for England and Wales. All officers are now registered to practice.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> there are no immediate implications for the approved revenue budget for this service for the current financial year. However, the ongoing review of fees and charges for building control services will improve the budget position for future financial years as it seeks to recover the costs of the service whilst also seeking to remain competitive within the market.</p> <p><b>Capital:</b> there are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> there are no immediate implications for additional capacity or for any change to current workforce structures or roles. However, as work around R7 progresses and local authorities explore better use of resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and regionalisation then workforce structures and roles may need to be adapted/reviewed.</p>

	<p><b>Technology:</b> additional development work is required to fulfil the full potential of the Building Control service back office system (AGILE). At present, full agile working for inspectors when on site is limited as a result of technology and this is an area identified for further development work with our business support officers and our external systems partner.</p>
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	The principal risk(s) identified have been around sufficient resource and also to ensure that the requirements of the Building Control Competency Registration Framework have been achieved by the deadlines set by Welsh Government and the Building Safety Act 2022. Without registration, Building Control Officers would not be able to operate and the Building Control Service would not be provided. This would severely impact on the service's ability to bring in fees and charges in connection with Building Regulations applications. As outlined at 1.10 all Flintshire County Council Building Control Officers are now successfully registered to practice in line with the new requirements.
3.02	Additional risks already identified include the functionality of the back office system and development work required to realise the full potential for agile working functions for the building control surveyors when on site. This would significantly speed up the delivery of building regulations for customers.
3.03	The Building Control Service has been identified as an area for internal Audit to assist in their programme of work for 2024/25, particularly around the review of fees and charges and introducing a more robust risk management approach and the processes for doing so.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	No consultations required/carried out, however, it is worth noting that following the Audit Wales report, dialogue continues at both a regional and national level, aided by LABC & LABC Cymru to identify a consistent approach around the format and content for Local Action Plans and around the issue of collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	Appendix 1: Audit Wales – Cracks in the Foundations – Actions/Update 2024.
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>‘Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales’ – Report by the Auditor General for Wales August 2023</p> <p><a href="https://audit.wales/sites/default/files/2023-07/Cracks_in_the_Foundations_Building_Safety_in_Wales_English_0.pdf">https://audit.wales/sites/default/files/2023-07/Cracks_in_the_Foundations_Building_Safety_in_Wales_English_0.pdf</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Matthew Parry Davies – Service Manager (Development)  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703248  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:matthew.parry-davies@flintshire.gov.uk">matthew.parry-davies@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Wales Audit Office:</b> works to support the Auditor General as the public sector watchdog for Wales. They aim to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.</p> <p><b>Financial Year:</b> the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April</p> <p><b>Revenue:</b> a term used to describe the day to day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.</p> <p><b>Building Control Service:</b> the Council’s team responsible for ensuring that building work is carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations.</p> <p><b>Building Regulations:</b> set out certain standards that must be met during the design and construction of building work carried out in domestic and commercial premises. These standards ensure the health and safety of people around and within buildings and also provide for such factors as access to buildings for disabled people, means of escape in case of fire and energy conservation.</p> <p><b>Approved Documents:</b> The Building Regulations have various parts. Each part is supported by its "Approved Document" which contains practical and technical guidance on ways in which the requirements can be met. They cover subjects such as structure, fire safety, ventilation, drainage, energy conservation and access and facilities for disabled people. The most recent versions of the Approved Documents can be viewed via the Planning Portal  <a href="https://www.planningportal.co.uk/applications/building-control-applications/building-control/approved-documents">https://www.planningportal.co.uk/applications/building-control-applications/building-control/approved-documents</a></p>

<p><b>LABC:</b> Local Authority Building Control. This organisation represents all local authority building control teams in England and Wales with a network of around 3,500 professional surveyors.</p>
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Appendix 1: Audit Wales – Crack in the Foundations Report – Actions/Update 2024

Audit Wales Report Date	Title	Recommendations	Response & RAG (if applicable)	Target Completion Date
August 2023	Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales	<b>Recommendation/Proposals for improvement:</b>		
		<p><b>R1</b> The Welsh Government should provide greater clarity on the implementation and expectations of the Building Safety Act to ensure local authorities are able to deliver their new responsibilities and duties. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarifying the detailed requirements for competency and registration to enable local authorities to plan for these changes;</li> <li>• a specific timetable for development and adoption of Welsh guidance to ensure local authorities and others can deliver their duties; and</li> <li>• the Welsh Government should work with key stakeholders, such as LABC Cymru, to support understanding and implementation when guidance is issued.</li> </ul>	This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government	N/A
		<p><b>R2</b> The Welsh Government should ensure that it has sufficient resources to deliver the legislative and policy changes for Building Safety to reduce implementation risks</p>	This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government	N/A
		<p><b>R3</b> The Welsh Government should review the mixed market approach to building control and conclude whether it continues to be appropriate and effective in keeping buildings in Wales safe. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess the status quo against potential changes, such as the model of delivery in Scotland;</li> <li>• be framed around a SWOT analysis of costs, benefits, threats, and risks;</li> <li>• draw on existing research to identify good practice; and</li> </ul>	This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government	N/A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be published and agree a way forward.</li> </ul>		
	<p><b>R4</b> The Welsh Government should increase its oversight and management of the building control sector to ensure there is a robust assurance system in place for building control and safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating a national performance framework with clear service standards to promote consistency of service.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>This should also include outcome measures to monitor performance and an evaluation and reporting framework for scrutiny.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a national building safety workforce plan to address the most significant risks facing the sector. This should include regular data collection and publication, as well as coverage of priorities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a greater focus on trainees to mitigate succession risks;</li> <li>○ establishing aligned, national job roles matched to competency levels;</li> <li>○ increasing the diversity of the sector to ensure it reflects modern Wales; and</li> <li>○ specific funding to enable surveyors to obtain and maintain competence should also be considered.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the Welsh Government should explore with the further education sector how best to provide building control training in Wales to support succession planning, skills development, and competency.</li> </ul>	This recommendation is targeted to Welsh Government	N/A
	<p><b>R5</b> Local authorities should develop local action plans that articulate a clear vision for building control to be able to plan effectively to implement the requirements of the Act. The Plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be based on an assessment of local risks and include mitigation actions;</li> <li>• set out how building control services will be resourced to deliver all their statutory responsibilities;</li> </ul>	<b>We don't currently have a Local Action Plan that articulates a clear vision for how BC plan to effectively implement the requirements of the Act. This needs to be developed and put in place. This would include</b>	<b>End of August 2024</b>

- illustrate the key role of building control in ensuring safe buildings and be linked to well-being objectives and other corporate objectives; and
- include outcome measures that are focused on all building control services, not just dangerous structures.

**amongst other things the 4 bulleted points in R5.**

**Work with other local authorities across Wales supported by LABC Cymru continues around further discussion on Local Action Plans and their format and approach and whether any best practice has been identified within other local authorities. Next meeting is due in May 2024.**

**The Building Control Service at Flintshire has also been 3 members of staff down due to vacancies for the past 2 years, which amounts to around a third of the overall team. This has included 2 technical support posts and one Building Control Officer post. The priority has been to recruit into these posts to build in resilience within the team and all three posts have now been filled.**

**Additionally, the introduction of new Building Control Competency Registration requirements has meant that in order to continue to practice, all Building Control Officers have to**

**undertake their registration process by 6 April 2024. There are 3 levels of competency: domestic, general and specialist. The deadline was extended until 6 October 2024 to allow building control inspectors across Wales to undertake exams and assessments and all officers within Flintshire's Building Control Service have undertaken their exams and assessments and waiting on their results. In the meantime, in order to allow them to continue to practice whilst the validation process and exam results are ongoing, all officers have temporary registration in place that will see them through until 6 October 2024. This has been a very high priority for the service as without registration the service will be unable to operate.**

**As at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024, all Flintshire County Council Building Control Officers have successfully completed and passed their exams required to enable them to register under the new requirements and the Council now has Building Control**

			<p><b>Officers registered with the Building Safety Regulator for England &amp; Wales at all three levels of competency.</b></p>	
		<p><b>R6</b> Local authorities should urgently review their financial management of building control and ensure they are fully complying with Regulations. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a timetable of regular fee reviews to ensure charges reflect the cost of services and comply with the Regulations;</li> <li>• annually reporting and publishing financial performance in line with the Regulations;</li> <li>• ensuring relevant staff are provided with training to ensure they apply the Regulations and interpret financial reporting correctly; and,</li> <li>• revise fees to ensure services are charged for in accordance with the Regulations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fees for Building Regulations are set locally by Flintshire County Council. Fees were last comprehensively reviewed in 2018. A review of Fees will take place in 2024 and will include a comparison with other local Councils, particularly neighbouring Councils in North Wales. The Service will also be assisted by internal Audit who have programmed Building Control into their 2024/25 work and this will also include work around fees and charges.</b></p> <p><b>Building Control is a competitive service. Customers can use other means to secure their Building Regulations outside of the Council (e.g. use independent Approved Inspectors) so a review and any subsequent review of Fees will need to ensure we remain competitive and do not out price the Council's services out of the market.</b></p>	<p><b>End of September 2024</b></p>

			<p>A review of the fees and charges will reflect the cost of the service and ensure the service is complying with the new Regulations. Such fees must be CIPFA compliant.</p> <p>Additionally, the Building Control budget is monitored and reviewed regularly by the Service Manager for Development with Finance colleagues (monthly budget reviews)</p> <p>The Service provides training for its staff to ensure compliance with Regulations. Officers are also required to maintain their qualifications under the new competency framework.</p>	
		<p><b>R7</b> Local authorities should work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience through a cost benefit analysis of partnering with neighbouring authorities, establishing joint ventures and/or adopting a regional model where beneficial.</p>	<p>This will require discussion at regional level to explore the potential for collaboration and establishing a regional model.</p> <p>Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Partnership Authority Scheme is already in place which is shared by all LA building control teams in England and Wales and this allows customers to work</p>	<p>End of 2024</p>

			<p>with any LA building control team to undertake all pre-app and design vetting work, regardless of the project's geographical location. We already provide this service for Iceland Foods. We vet their plans for new stores and re-fits regardless of where they are located geographically.</p> <p>Further discussion with local authorities through LABC and LABC Cymru networks and regional meetings will continue, sharing best practice and further exploring the potential for collaboration.</p>	
		<p><b>R8</b> Local authorities should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny.</p>	<p><b>A review of risk management processes needs to be undertaken. There are a number of risks already identified including the functionality of the back office system and a lack of agile working functions (for surveyors on site) &amp; the new requirements for registering as Registered Building Inspectors from 6 April 2024.</b></p>	<p><b>End of 2024</b></p>

			<b>The Building Control Team/function is included as an area supported by an internal Audit Review as part of their programme for work in 2024/25.</b>	
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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Destination Management Plan
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism generates an estimated annual contribution to the Flintshire economy of £325m, supporting around 3,300 jobs. The draft Destination Management Plan has been co-produced with a wide partnership of businesses and partner agencies to take a co-ordinated approach to supporting the development of the visitor economy sector and responding to the challenges and opportunities that will be faced over the next few years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet consider and endorse the draft Destination Management Plan.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>
1.01	Tourism is an important economic driver for the County and the wider region. It is currently worth an estimated £325 million to the Flintshire economy generated from 3.7 million visitors. It supports in the region of 3,300 jobs. (STEAM data 2022).
1.02	<p>Destination Management is concerned with managing the destination in its widest form for the benefit of all.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It covers all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, residents, businesses, and the environment.</li> <li>2. It focuses on the elements that attract visitors, as well as the infrastructure and services that support their visit. The term 'visitor' applies to those spending their holidays in an area as tourist, but it also includes local people visiting an area for a day or less.</li> <li>3. Destination Management recognises the wider impact of people including those who live relatively nearby and who use services, infrastructure and enjoy local assets. It extends to all aspects of the economy and requires collaboration to run effectively and sustainably.</li> <li>4. Destination Management ideally involves the physical, financial, and operational management of a destination, but also its planning, development, and marketing.</li> </ol>
1.03	The Council, together with the Destination Flintshire Partnership, has developed a draft Destination Management Plan to take collective actions across the partners to support the development of the visitor sector, improve the appeal of the County to visitors and increase the economic impact of the sector.
1.04	<p>The Destination Flintshire Partnership brings together the key partners responsible for managing Flintshire as a destination. Representatives from: tourism businesses; Flintshire Tourism Association; Clwydian Range Tourism Group; and local food and drink groups sit alongside: Coleg Cambria; Aura; Theatr Clwyd; North East Wales Heritage Forum; town centre partners; and a range of Flintshire County Council functions including Regeneration, Countryside Services, Planning, Streetscene and Place-Making.</p> <p>The role of the group is to develop, implement and monitor an effective action plan to improve the management of Flintshire as a destination. The draft Destination Management Plan was developed in consultation with this group.</p>
1.05	The Destination Management Plan for Flintshire considers the national strategic drivers from Welsh Government including Welcome to Wales 2020-2025 and the National Events Strategy for Wales 2022-2030 as well as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

1.06	Locally, the Destination Management Plan contributes to the Council Plan 2017-2030 and will be delivered in conjunction with the development of the Flintshire Coast Park and town centre Place Making Plans.
1.07	<p>The Destination Management Plan sets out four priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People, skills, and employment – closing skills and employment gaps in the sector and addressing the poor perceptions of working in the industry.</li> <li>2. Marketing and communication – developing a clear brand for the area, extending tourism into the off-peak season and encouraging visitors to explore beyond the most popular locations.</li> <li>3. Great products and places – development of the Flintshire Coast Park and Place Making Plans, supporting business investment and responding to the changing regulatory landscape for visitor businesses.</li> <li>4. Partnership and engagement – continue to grow cross-border partnerships in North East Wales and North West England and with local tourism and food and drink groups.</li> </ol>
1.08	An action plan has been produced for the period 2024-26 and is included within the Destination Management Plan. It is expected to be an organic document, which will adapt to funding, marketing and environment changes and respond to new opportunities and issues. In balance to this, it also provides an outline monitoring framework for the plan against which to review progress.
1.09	<p>The action plan will be monitored to ensure that it makes progress towards the outcomes anticipated, offers good value for the investments made and realises wider benefits from tourism to the County. Progress towards delivering this plan will be reported to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flintshire Destination Management Partnership</li> <li>2. Flintshire County Council Cabinet and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>3. Relevant partner organisations or funding bodies</li> </ol>
1.10	<p>There are a number of work streams currently underway which are contributing to the delivery of the Destination Management Plan, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of the Flintshire Coast Park funded through UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund in addition to the day-to-day management of the coast for local people and visitors by the Council.</li> <li>2. Development of Place Making Plans funded through a combination of Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding and UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> <li>3. Tourism grant programme funded through UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> <li>4. Town centre events and activities grants funded through UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> <li>5. Business decarbonisation projects funded through UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> </ol>

	<p>6. Development work in Greenfield Valley funded through UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.</p> <p>7. Activities by individual town councils to improve and promote their towns for visitors and to run or support events.</p> <p>8. Day to day promotion of the County to visitors at both local and regional level.</p>
1.11	At this stage, the Destination Management Plan does not take any account of the proposed National Park for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley area as it is too early to know whether it will be agreed and when. If approved, though, it could be expected to have a significant positive impact on the visitor economy of the County as well as potentially bringing destination management resources, opportunities, and pressures to manage.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	No resource implications arise directly from this report. The work on Destination Management already features within the work programmes and budgets of the relevant Council teams. Development work on Destination Management will continue to be supported by externally funding wherever it can be secured.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>																	
3.01	<p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>The approach taken to Destination Management seeks to manage the key destinations in the County in a sustainable way – reducing the impact of visitors while maximising the economic benefits.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td rowspan="2">The approach taken to Destination Management brings together all the relevant partners to manage the visitor destinations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>No change</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Well-being Goals Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Prosperous Wales</td> <td>The approach taken to Destination Management seeks to manage the key destinations in the County in a sustainable way – reducing the impact of visitors while maximising the economic benefits.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resilient Wales</td> <td>No impact.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Healthier Wales</td> <td>No impact.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More equal Wales</td> <td>No impact.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	The approach taken to Destination Management seeks to manage the key destinations in the County in a sustainable way – reducing the impact of visitors while maximising the economic benefits.	Prevention	No change	Integration	The approach taken to Destination Management brings together all the relevant partners to manage the visitor destinations.	Collaboration	Involvement	No change	Prosperous Wales	The approach taken to Destination Management seeks to manage the key destinations in the County in a sustainable way – reducing the impact of visitors while maximising the economic benefits.	Resilient Wales	No impact.	Healthier Wales	No impact.	More equal Wales	No impact.
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Healthier Wales	No impact.																	
More equal Wales	No impact.																	

	Cohesive Wales	No impact.
	Vibrant Wales	Destination Management includes supporting the cultural assets of the County.
	Globally responsible Wales	The approach taken to Destination Management seeks to manage the key destinations in the County in a sustainable way – reducing the impact of visitors while maximising the economic benefits.
	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
	Public sector budget pressures	Destination management already represents a series of compromises between how the visitor destinations in the County could be managed to maximise their appeal versus the available private and public sector resources. Further cuts to public sector budgets will create a need to revisit these compromises on a case-by-case basis. The Destination Flintshire Partnership, though, enables a co-ordinated approach to reviewing impacts and finding mitigation measures where possible.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	The draft Destination Management Plan was co-produced with members of the Destination Flintshire Partnership.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Draft Destination Management Plan.

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

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Niall Waller (Enterprise and Regeneration Manager) <b>Telephone:</b> 07342 093133 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk">niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

8.00	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b> – UK Government funded programme with projects selected locally by the Council. Runs until March 2025.</p> <p><b>STEAM</b> – Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model – a commercial model that extrapolates visitor information from businesses to generate an estimate of the County’s economic benefit from the sector.</p> <p>Transforming Towns – Welsh Government funding programme to support town centres.</p>

## Flintshire Destination Management Plan 2024-2026

### Setting the scene

Tourism is an important economic driver for the County and the wider region. It is currently worth an estimated £325 million to the economy, generated from 3.7 million visitors. (STEAM data 2022).

Visitors, more than ever, want to explore an area, learn about it and come away with a sense of having experienced somewhere different, somewhere unique.

The county has two exceptional natural assets. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is recognised for its nationally important landscape which runs down the west of the county. The Dee Estuary is one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe. Although both areas are widely used for recreation and tourism more can be done to increase access and interpretation, whilst protecting their valuable but sensitive environment.

Visitors, more than ever, want to explore an area, learn about it and come away with a sense of having experienced somewhere different, somewhere unique.

The plan will support our communities and tourism businesses across Flintshire to improve, grow sector value, whilst benefiting our visitors and residents. It will allow us to play a role in ensuring that Flintshire has a sustainable and buoyant visitor economy, which seeks to gain national and international recognition for our sense of place and for everything we offer our communities and visitors.

### Our Vision for Flintshire's Visitor Economy 2023-26

We want Flintshire's tourism industry to be one which will make use of the superb natural environment, along with the richness of its Welsh heritage, culture, language, and products, to invite people to explore, understand and enjoy the County. The diverse offer will be complemented by a commitment to quality; easy access to information; and by striving to ensure that every facet of the visitors' experience meets their expectations.

### What is a Destination Management Plan?

Destination Management is concerned with managing the destination in its widest form for the benefit of all.

- It covers all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, residents, businesses, and the environment.

Flintshire is remarkably rich in historical remains, simply because it's been frontier country for centuries. Strategically placed Iron Age hillforts, such as Penycloddiau and Moel y Gaer, dominate the skyline of the Clwydian Range and Halkyn Mountain.

The county is dotted with castles built during the ongoing power struggle between the Welsh princes and Anglo-Norman kings. Ewloe and Caergwrle were built by Welsh hands, but Flint was the first in the mighty chain of 13th-century fortresses built by Edward I all along the North Wales coast as far as Harlech.

Flintshire was important spiritually too. St Winefride's Well was one of the most revered places of Christian pilgrimage in Europe and the now ruined Basingwerk Abbey was wealthy and influential. Our picturesque village churches and chapels bear testament to the key role religion played in everyday life.

The 18th and 19th centuries brought new prosperity to Flintshire, changing the face of the countryside and transforming our towns and villages. Greenfield Valley was one of the cradles of the Industrial Revolution in Wales and Halkyn Mountain was pitted and scarred by a lead mining and quarrying boom.

- It focuses on the elements that attract visitors, as well as the infrastructure and services that support their visit. The term ‘visitor’ applies to those spending their holidays in an area as tourist, but it also includes local people visiting an area for a day or less.
- Destination Management recognises the wider impact of people including those who live relatively nearby and who use services, infrastructure and enjoy local assets. It extends to all aspects of the economy and requires collaboration to run effectively and sustainably.
- Destination Management ideally involves the physical, financial, and operational management of a destination, but also its planning, development, and marketing.

**The Destination Flintshire Partnership** brings together the key partners responsible for managing Flintshire as a destination. Representatives from tourism businesses, Flintshire Tourism Association, Clwydian Range Tourism Group, local food and drink groups sit alongside Coleg Cambria, Aura, Theatr Clwyd, North East Wales Heritage Forum, Town Centre partners and a range of Flintshire County Council functions: Regeneration, Countryside Services, Planning, Streetscene and Place-Making.

The role of the group is to develop, implement and monitor an effective action plan to improve the management of Flintshire as a destination.

Communication will be vitally important to the group and will include:

- The members of the Partnership are expected to communicate with their wider memberships or stakeholders so that the work of the Partnership is based on a broad information base.
- An annual event with the wider community is held to provide an update on progress and to refresh the priorities for the future.
- An e-bulletin will be distributed to businesses and other stakeholders to keep them abreast of events, new initiatives and wider developments.
- The Partnership will report progress regularly to the ‘Economic Recovery’ and ‘Place Making’ groups to ensure a complementary approach is taken.

There are many factors driving the need for Flintshire’s Destination Management Plan to make it ready to work with the challenges and opportunities of 2023 and beyond.

This plan will have to respond to the following Destination Management and Flintshire corporate priorities: -

- The changing visitor profile i.e., converting day visitors into overnight visitors.
- Growth in unlicensed short-term lets (Airbnb properties).
- An increase through digital presence of existing online platforms to reach a wider audience, how we respond and engage to raise awareness of tourism products and the visitor offer.
- Skills and employment gaps in the sector.
- The physical risk of climate change, along with the increasing pressure of visitor numbers on the environment.
- Protection and promotion of the Welsh language.
- Second home policies and taxes.
- Proposals for an introduction of a visitor levy in Wales on visitors staying overnight in visitor accommodation.
- Supporting local businesses in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and become more resource efficient.



- Building upon the success of partnership working develop it further by looking towards greater integration with regeneration activity in the county, as well as developing stronger partnerships with organisations in North West England.

### **Strategic context**

The Destination Management Plan aims to consider and support the wider strategic objectives identified in local, regional and national policies.

### **Welsh Government Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

The Act has seven well-being goals. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards. They are a set of goals; the Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. The 2023-26 Destination Management Action Plan aims to support Flintshire County Council in achieving these goals.

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

### **Welcome to Wales: priorities for the visitor economy 2020 to 2025** (National)

The ambition is to: 'Grow tourism for the good of Wales', and the approach is: High quality, year-round experiences, and 'Inherently Welsh' but with a global outlook (Bro & Byd) The core offer is outstanding natural landscapes, creative culture, and epic adventure. There are four priorities for actions: -

- Great products and places
- Quality visitor experiences
- Innovative brand
- An Engaged and vibrant sector.

### **The National Events Strategy for Wales 2022 – 2030**

There are three strands:

- Align the industry – a long term 'build' approach supporting the capacity to grow, sustainably.
- Authenticity – Welshness and alignment with the Wales brand
- All of Wales – ensuring geographical spread, inclusive and community connections.

### **AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy** (Regional – emerging)

Emerging themes are around sustainable destination and businesses, positioning and marketing and business engagement.

### **Flintshire Council Plan 2017-30** (Local)

Flintshire County Council's Plan has six themes:

1. Poverty
2. Affordable and Accessible Housing
3. Green Society and Environment

4. Economy
5. Personal and Community Well-being
6. Education and Skills

The most relevant theme to this Plan is Economy i.e., regenerate & reinvent our town centres, enable business continuity and encourage appropriate investment, develop and promote effective transport connectivity and work with partners to support individuals to gain employment.

### **Flintshire Coast Park Study (Local)**

Building foundations for an accessible Coast Park in Flintshire which celebrates the natural environment and heritage of our Welsh coast by:

- Delivering a 5-year development plan with a costed business case
- Producing and implementing a marketing and branding plan
- Establishing the working arrangements for the future administration of the coast park
- Delivering a series of pilot initiatives to enhance green infrastructure, including tree, hedge planting and access projects.
- Strengthening the connection of the coast with the local community and businesses through volunteering opportunities, stakeholder engagement and events.
- Creating spatial plans and feasibility studies for the coast park hubs

### **Flintshire Placemaking Plans (Local – emerging)**

In Flintshire, the Council has committed to developing and implementing Place Making Plans for the towns of: Buckley, Connah’s Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Shotton and Queensferry to increase the appeal of the town centres to the local population and day visitors.

### **Our Aims**

The plan will aim to:

- Develop a stronger sense of place for Flintshire and raise the quality of the location as a visitor destination.
- Increase the value of business and activity tourism in Flintshire.
- Improve the awareness of our visitor offer and provide ease of access to information for residents and visitors.
- Further improve the quality of accommodation and attractions
- Support the development of new infrastructure and attract and invest in high calibre staff.
- Monitor the impact of tourism and the effectiveness of interventions.
- Support industry partners with decarbonisation.

### **Headline Priorities 2023-26**

Actions within the plan are grouped under four headline priorities: -

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>People, Skills and Employment</b>	Poor perceptions of working in the tourism industry  Skills and employment gaps in the sector	School involvement and education to increase engagement of children learning about their place, environment and looking after it sustainably.

		<p>Flintshire Tourism Ambassador Course – learning &amp; improving knowledge about unique qualities of the area.</p> <p>Educate and develop skills among local people – create a career.</p>
<p><b>Marketing &amp; Communication</b></p>	<p>Developing a clearer brand for the area</p> <p>Changing visitor profiles</p> <p>Seasonality – do more to grow off-peak tourism.</p> <p>Spread – ‘honey pot’ sites are very busy.</p>	<p>The visitor economy can bring multiple benefits to the local community, but there is an opportunity for these to be developed and better communicated.</p> <p>Our culture, heritage, uniqueness is undersold. Opportunity to improve awareness of places through signage and celebrating local identity and brand.</p> <p>Becoming a more sustainable destination – embracing sustainability is an opportunity for Flintshire to further develop its brand.</p>
<p><b>Great Products and Places</b></p>	<p>Public Transport Access – less served by public transport, especially rail.</p> <p><b>** New rules for Second Homes and holiday lets may have a disproportionate impact on businesses where tourism is not as a high. **</b></p> <p>Growth / current lack of quality assurance in short term Air BnB lets. Need to understand and build relationship with this market.</p> <p>The physical risk of climate change, along with the increasing pressure of visitor numbers on the environment.</p>	<p>Developing foundations for an accessible Flintshire Coast Park celebrating the natural environment and heritage of the coast.</p> <p><a href="#">Place Making Programme</a></p> <p>Wales Coast Path – investment in infrastructure, marketing, and development of the coastal path.</p> <p><a href="#">Potential for new National Park status in North East Wales.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Shared Prosperity Fund programme.</a></p> <p>Making our products more visible to communities and visitors e.g., heritage sites</p>

	<p>Seasonality – extending the season. Do more to grow off-peak tourism.</p> <p>Spend – encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more.</p>	<p>Programme of investment in tourism products.</p>
<p><b>Partnership &amp; Engagement</b></p>	<p>Funding and resources</p>	<p>Continue to strengthen the cross-border partnerships, particularly the North-East Wales Partnership. It provides a vehicle to promote the wider area, attract funding and achieve economies of scale.</p> <p>Continued development of partnerships e.g., Destination Flintshire Partnership and Local Tourism / Food &amp; Drink Groups.</p>

\*\* Increase to the maximum level of council tax premiums for second homes, as well as new local tax rules for holiday lets. The change increased thresholds to being available to let for at least 252 days and actually letting for at least 182 days in any 12-month period.

## Delivery

It is expected, in delivering this plan, that Flintshire County Council will continue to play a vital role in leading and co-ordinating the various activities of the partners and in supporting their work. The Local Authority will continue to use its own resources, in partnership with the Destination Management group, to make targeted investments in tourism to enhance the offer, increase visitor numbers and continue to develop activities that will improve visitor experiences and the value of the tourism economy to make use of the opportunities that external funding can present.

An action plan has been produced for the initial period 2023-26. It is expected to be an organic document, which will adapt to funding, marketing and environment changes and respond to new opportunities and issues. In balance to this, it also provides an outline monitoring framework for the plan against which to review progress.

## Monitoring the Action Plan

The action plan will be monitored to ensure that it makes progress towards the outcomes anticipated, offers good value for the investments made and realises wider benefits from tourism to the county.

Progress towards delivering this plan will be reported to:

- Flintshire Destination Management Partnership
- Flintshire County Council and the reporting structures within the organisation
- Relevant partner organisations or funding bodies

Monitoring the strategy will include several tiers:

- Many of the activities within the action plan will themselves have their own targets developed to ensure that they are effective, offer good value for money and meet the needs of its funding partners.
- The collective actions within the plan will deliver a range of outcomes, summarised in the table below. Progress towards achieving these will be monitored over the lifetime of the action plan and actions will be adjusted to reflect progress.
- The plan seeks to maximise the benefit of tourism in Flintshire, especially in terms of visitor expenditure and increasing the number of staying visitors.

The broad aims of the Destination Management Plan are to: -

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Baseline 2022</b>	<b>Broad aim 2027</b>
Increase in number of staying visitors and high-yield visitors to the region	860,000 (STEAM 2022)	Increase by 10%
Increase in the number of FTE jobs supported by tourism spend	3,342 (STEAM 2022)	Increase by 5%
Increase in the economic impact of tourism (£)	£325 million (STEAM 2022)	Increase by 10%
Increase in the number of Flintshire Tourism Ambassadors (online course)	25	500

## Flintshire Destination Management Action Plan 2023-26

### Headline Priority 1: People, Skills and Employment

Ref	Action	Delivery Partners	Priority		
			2024	2025	2026
1.1	Work closely with and support local FE Colleges with linking businesses into employability schemes and providers	FCC, CC, FTA, CRTG, CRFDG, NEW	✓	✓	✓
1.2	Engage with schools, colleges, and Local Authority Education Services to encourage careers in the tourism and hospitality industry.	FCC, FTA, CRTG, CC	✓	✓	✓
1.3	Work with industry partners to develop methods for monitoring and gathering data on skills related issues in the sector e.g., the challenges of recruitment and retention. Utilise this data to develop promotional and engagement campaigns that will support in raising awareness of career opportunities for future generations.	FTA, CRTG, CC, VW	✓		
1.4	Flintshire Tourism Ambassador Course – continue the development of this accredited online knowledge and learning platform, including the introduction of new modules to increase awareness of local and regional destinations and share knowledge that has been learned with visitors.	FCC, NEW, FTA, CRTG, CRFDG	✓	✓	✓

## Flintshire Destination Management Action Plan 2023-26

### Headline Priority 2: Marketing and Communication

Ref	Action	Delivery Partners	Priority		
			2024	2025	2026
2.1	Work with industry partners to strengthen the Come to Wales brand and marketing activity to promote our visitor offer	FTA, FCC	✓	✓	✓
2.2	Maximise number of PR opportunities through press releases and blogs on the Come to Wales and North East Wales platforms	FCC, NEW	✓		
2.3	Develop and run promotional campaigns that will encourage visitors to consider a broader range of sites across the county to relieve pressure on 'honeypot' destinations	DFP, FCC	✓	✓	✓
2.4	Develop clear and consistent imagery and messages based on Flintshire's strengths and encourage their use across other industry sectors and organisations.	FCC, FTA, CRTG, NEW	✓	✓	✓
2.5	Encourage industry partners to work together to form clusters and develop marketing packages – identify opportunity areas, provide the vehicle for networking and discussions, identify, and promote good practice.	FCC, DFP	✓	✓	✓
2.6	Develop and co-ordinate an appropriate and effective distribution service to ensure current marketing material is available to the public, developing new outlets as appropriate.	FCC	✓		
2.7	Review and develop the tourist information point network to enhance the impact of the local distribution of information.	FCC, FTA, CRTG	✓	✓	
2.8	Collaborate with partners to develop and run group travel promotion campaigns that will increase the number of coach tour operators visiting destinations in Flintshire.	FCC, DFP	✓	✓	

## Flintshire Destination Management Action Plan 2023-26

### Headline Priority 3: Great Products and Places

Ref	Action	Delivery Partners	Priority		
			2024	2025	2026
3.1	Work with local heritage sites and industry partners to raise the profile of the heritage offer with visitors and raise awareness of other places of interest across the County.	DFP, NEWHF, FCC	✓		
3.2	Contribute to the development of the coast park, advocating on behalf of the visitor sector and helping to ensure that the needs of the sector are reflected in the emerging strategies, policies and governance.	DFP, FCC	✓	✓	✓
3.3	Improve Flintshire's profile as a high-quality food and drink destination through promotion of local food and drink producers with industry partners	CRFDG, FCC, DFP	✓	✓	✓
3.4	Identify strategic alignment between the Place Making Plans and the Destination Management Plan and ensuring the actions emerging from each are mutually supportive and beneficial for industry partners and visitors.	FCC, DFP	✓	✓	✓
3.5	Work with industry partners to deliver the provision for a new visitor centre building at Flint Castle and Foreshore.	FCC, DFP	✓	✓	✓
3.6	Conduct and maintain an audit of all tourism sites and visitor attractions which are available across Flintshire to provide a current baseline of information to raise awareness and increase footfall, celebrate and promote the offer we have. Encourage the providers to cross refer and collaborate. i.e., Bailey Hill, Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Park in the Past.	DFP, FCC	✓		
3.7	Collaborate with visitor accommodation providers to establish better links with the construction industry to accommodate construction workers within the county, to contribute to the local visitor economy and supply chain e.g., construction projects such as new build residential homes and schools.	FCC, DFP, FTA, CRTG, VW	✓	✓	✓
3.8	Engage with industry partners to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ build an evidence base on what the visitor sector needs in terms of transport to influence national and regional transport planning.</li> </ul>	FCC	✓	✓	✓



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a clear view on what facilities the sector needs to improve its visitor experience in key destinations e.g., public conveniences, EV charging, car parking, accessible rights of way. Use this evidence base to influence regional and local plans and service delivery.</li> </ul>				
3.9	Improving the visibility of our assets through implementing a programme of new & upgraded tourist and boundary sign packages for sites of cultural, heritage & natural significance and to develop use of open spaces along the Dee Coastline.	FCC	✓		
3.10	Ensure the Destination Management Partnership is kept informed on the Council's future work programme to review rural issues and encourage the sector to participate in the any consultations to better understand the needs of rural areas in the county.	FCC	✓	✓	✓

## Flintshire Destination Management Action Plan 2023-26

### Headline Priority 4: Partnership & Engagement

Ref	Action	Delivery Partners	Priority		
			2024	2025	2026
4.1	Continue to implement and develop an effective two-way communication with the trade, other organisations, and public sector organisations. Collaborate with the Flintshire Tourism Association to encourage tourism industry use of the Business 2 Business opportunities on the Come to Wales digital platform.	DFP, FTA, FCC	✓	✓	✓
4.2	Support development of local tourism groups and building capacity (FTA, CRTG, CRFD) to enhance their status as the collective voice of the tourism industry in Flintshire.	DFP, FCC	✓	✓	✓
4.3	Support the development of community involvement in tourism. Consider the most effective approach of how we reach out to communities to develop and improve relationships for the good of tourism e.g., using the Flintshire Tourism Ambassador Course as a tool for engagement.	DFP, FCC	✓		
4.4	Encourage the industry to engage with financial and business support which is available for the sector to develop and implement decarbonisation / net zero projects.	FCC	✓	✓	✓
4.5	Continue to strengthen the North East Wales brand and marketing activity to promote our regional offer e.g. capitalise on Visit Wales' "Year of" and Wales Way campaigns to drive traffic and engagement – in partnership with Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils.	NEW, FCC, VW	✓	✓	✓

**Legend:**

- AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management
- CC - Coleg Cambria
- CRFDG - Clwydian Range Food and Drink Group
- CRTG - Clwydian Range Tourism Group
- DFP - Destination Flintshire Partnership
- FCC - Flintshire County Council
- FTA - Flintshire Tourism Association
- NEWHF - North East Wales Heritage Forum
- NEW - North East Wales Marketing Area Partnership
- VW - Visit Wales

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Communal Heating Charges 2024/25
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Communities portfolio currently operates eight communal heating schemes within Flintshire, with 417 properties on communal heating systems. The Council has recently renegotiated the fuel tariff to be charged for 2024/25 as the previous contract ended in March 2024.

The rate chargeable for gas is expected to decrease by approximately 51% over the next 12 months. Communal contract holders are billed based on the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate and although electricity and gas market prices remain two times higher than historic average market prices, the Council contracted gas rates are now reducing from their high point in 2022/23.

New communal heating charges are based on the prior year's energy use which ensures an accurate assessment of costs and impacts on the heating reserve account. To recover the projected heating charges in full we will need to align our communal heating charges to ensure full cost recovery.

The proposed recharges for 2024/25 are set out within this report.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approves the changes to the current heating charges at Council properties with communal heating schemes, as outlined in the report. All changes to take effect from 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2024.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COMMUNAL HEATING RECHARGES
1.01	<p>The Housing and Communities portfolio currently operates eight communal heating schemes within Flintshire, with 417 properties on communal heating systems. Contract holders are recharged based on the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate which has recently been renegotiated by the Council as the previous contract ended in March 2024. The tariff for gas is expected to reduce by approximately 51% for the next 12 months.</p>
1.02	<p>The cost of fuel used within these communal heating schemes is paid for initially by the Authority through a heating reserve account and then collected from contract holders in addition to their weekly rent.</p>
1.03	<p>Each year the new communal heating charges are calculated based on the previous year's energy use which enables us to project the costs and impacts (negative or positive) on the heating reserve account.</p>
1.04	<p>Any proposed changes to charges are intended to ensure that each communal heating scheme recovers the full energy cost charged in respect of each scheme.</p>
1.05	<p>Currently, the Council charges contract holders for the energy consumed within each block. This is a basic flat rate charge irrespective of individual usage. The method of applying heating charges is to apply uplifts or decreases to contract holders each year, based on previous year's usage plus energy rate costs. Steps are in place to start charging contract holders for their individual usage within the next 12 months.</p>
1.06	<p><u>2021/22</u></p> <p>In 2021/22 on average, the total energy usage reduced slightly across our communal heating schemes and there was a further reduction in costs of 14%. This resulted in a small surplus on the heating reserve in most of our properties.</p>
1.07	<p><u>2022/23</u></p> <p>In 2022/23, the total energy usage reduced slightly in most of our communal heating schemes and the rate per kWh remained the same as the previous year. This resulted in a small surplus on the heating reserve in all but one of our properties, which is factored into the 2023/24 recharge calculations.</p> <p>Contract holders at these properties were eligible to apply for the Energy Bills Support Scheme (£400 for winter 2022/23) if they had not already received the support on another of their utility bills.</p>
	<p><u>2023/24</u></p>

For 2023/24, we reduced the amount charged to contract holders on the communal heating scheme, based on the “heat loss estimate” in communal areas as shown below.

Site Address	Heat Loss (%)
Acacia Close, Mold	30%
Bolingbroke & Richard Heights, Flint	20%
Castle Heights, Flint	25%
Chapel Court, Connahs Quay	30%
Glan Y Morfa Court, Connahs Quay	20%
Llwyn Aled, Holywell	30%
Llwyn Bueno, Holywell	30%

In addition to this, we ‘annualised’ the charge to contract holders for one year only (i.e., calculate the weekly cost for the full year, excluding the shortfall that is building up between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2023 due to the 2022/23 recharge rates being applied in this period) to be recouped in future years as utility prices stabilised. This was estimated at a £0.080m deficit but due to additional energy support the Council received in 2023/24 this has reduced to £0.029m which will need to be recovered in 2024/25 charges.

1.08

2024/25

If we continued to calculate the charge in the same way as previous years, contract holders who are on the communal heating systems would be subject to reductions of circa 51% for 2024/25, based on the newly agreed gas tariff of £0.057 per kWh and dependant on their prior years usage.

The charges proposed would be as follows:

Communal Area		Weekly Charge 2023/24	Increase/ (Decrease) 2024/25	Revised Weekly Charge 2024/25	% Decrease
Bolingbroke Heights, Flint	1 Bedroom	£ 12.65	-£ 7.70	£ 4.95	-61%
	2 Bedroom	£ 15.18	-£ 9.24	£ 5.94	-61%
Richard Heights	1 Bedroom	£ 12.65	-£ 7.70	£ 4.95	-61%
	2 Bedroom	£ 15.18	-£ 9.24	£ 5.94	-61%
Castle Heights, Flint	1 Bedroom	£ 12.90	-£ 6.40	£ 6.50	-50%
	2 Bedroom	£ 15.48	-£ 7.68	£ 7.80	-50%
Llwyn Beuno, Holywell	1 Bedroom	£ 20.80	-£ 14.30	£ 6.50	-69%
	2 Bedroom	£ 24.96	-£ 17.16	£ 7.80	-69%
Llwyn Aled, Holywell	1 Bedroom	£ 22.25	-£ 17.55	£ 4.70	-79%
	2 Bedroom	£ 26.70	-£ 21.06	£ 5.64	-79%

	Acacia Close, Mold	1 Bedroom	£ 19.90	-£ 15.25	£ 4.65	-77%
		2 Bedroom	£ 23.88	-£ 18.30	£ 5.58	-77%
		3 Bedroom	£ 26.87	-£ 20.59	£ 6.28	-77%
	Glan-y-Morfa Court1, Connahs Quay	1 Bedroom	£ 19.00	-£ 8.70	£ 10.30	-46%
		2 Bedroom	£ 22.80	-£ 10.44	£ 12.36	-46%
	Glan-y-Morfa Court2, Connahs Quay	1 Bedroom	£ 18.20	-£ 7.80	£ 10.40	-43%
	Chapel Court, Connah's Quay	1 Bedroom	£ 18.85	-£ 9.65	£ 9.20	-51%
		2 Bedroom	£ 22.62	-£ 11.58	£ 11.04	-51%

1.09 The energy contract prices are fixed for a 12-month period only due to the volatility of the markets.

1.10 We will be implementing a phased approach in 2024/25 to individual billing for all communal contracts based on actual usage rather than a proportional charge due to triggering the requirements of The Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations.

The Council have commenced with the installation of individual meters to all Council owned dwellings within the HRA, which are served by a communal heating system. This will include linking the new meters to a portal so the Council can accurately provide our contract holders with a statement of their energy usage and bill them accordingly. The Council are also in the process of installing additional heating controls to our contract holders' homes where feasible, so that their heating can be individually controlled and regulated. These works will be completed within the 2024/25 financial year.

In addition, works are also planned to replace any communal heating system that is reaching the end of its life cycle, replacing them with new and more efficient heating systems.

Based on this, it may prove difficult to recover any deficit remaining on the heating reserve and this will need to be considered when looking at the 2024/25 recharges.

## 2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 As identified above.

## 3.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

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

3.02 Estimates have been based on energy usage during 2023/24. A severe winter could lead to higher costs which may lead to an increased charge during 2024/25.



3.03	Contract holders have previously benefitted from preferential rates due to the Council having secured a low fixed rate for fuel up to March 2023. Due to energy price increases, it is likely that contract holders will be liable for higher energy costs which could impact individuals' ability to pay.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	No formal consultation required.

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

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

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

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

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Purchase of 'buy backs' using the Welsh Government (WG) Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The properties at 93 and 95 Hawarden Road in Hope were previously commercially let as part a takeaway / restaurant. The properties have been vacant for many years and become derelict. The legal process of ending this type of commercial lease was very protracted.

Last year the properties were removed from the lease and returned to FCC. They have been secured and made safe. As former Housing Revenue Account (HRA) homes they are ideally suited to meet the criterion set by Welsh Government under the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP). This is 'top sliced' funding from the Social Housing Programme (SHG) to bring back into use derelict or 'moth balled' properties quickly to tackle the burgeoning homeless crisis across the UK.

Authority is sought to complete the internal transfer of 93 and 95 Hawarden Road Hope from the Council fund to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) including a transfer cost of £0.150m from the HRA to the Council Fund (£0.075m per dwelling). Also, to note the refurbishment and project costs for the properties which were approved using delegated powers subject to the grant of TACP from Welsh Government as outlined in the report below.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	To approve the internal transfer of the properties from the Council fund to the HRA for a transfer cost of £0.150m
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Background</b>
1.01	Welsh Government have, for the second year, invited bids from Local Authorities (LAs) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to bid for funds from the TACP (Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme). The purpose of the TACP fund is to help tackle the growing numbers of households in temporary accommodation through homelessness and the refugee programmes for Syrians, Afghans and Ukrainians.
1.02	This year we have again bid for resources to bring back long-term voids. We have also bid for properties to acquire. A small number of acquisitions are built into the Planned Development Programme (PDP) to be funded by SHG. The bids were massively oversubscribed and LAs were invited to prioritise their bids, which we did. WG initially allocated funding of circa £1.6m. Following further discussions additional TACP funding was allocated, taking our allocation to circa £3.5m. This has enabled us, in partnership with our RSL partners to both acquire 14 additional homes and to assist in bringing over 100 void properties back into use.
1.03	<p>The TACP must be used to house those in temporary housing / homelessness situations. Unlike SHG, the funding can be for temporary use (3-5 years), or (5-10 years) and then resold. Minimum standards still apply, but these are not as rigorous as the WHQS / DQR.</p> <p>TACP can also be used to acquire a property where there is a sitting tenant under threat of homelessness, where the local authority would have a duty to secure and where the tenant household fully occupy the dwelling ('a homeless rescue as it were').</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>93 and 95 Hawarden Road Hope</b>
2.01	The properties at 93 and 95 Hawarden Road are two three-bedroom properties. They are former HRA homes that were let as part of a commercial lease for a restaurant / take away business over 20 years ago. They were subject to enforcement action by environmental health around 8 years ago. The legal issues surrounding the lease were complex and steps to bring the residential element back to FCC were very protracted. Eventually they were returned to FCC last year. They were vacant and in a very poor state of repair. They have been secured, fully refurbished, and made safe. The intention is to return them to the HRA and bring back into long term use.
2.02	The properties met all the criterion set by WG for access to the TACP funding stream. A bid was developed and submitted to WG. This included a valuation of the vacant dwellings by an independent RICS surveyor. Wingetts undertook the survey and estimated the value of £75,000 per dwelling. This valuation has recently been updated and confirmed the

	valuation still at £75,000. WG accepted the principle that an internal charge between the Council Fund and the HRA could be met from TACP funds.
2.03	<p>The buy-back was supported by the Capital Assets Programme Board (CAPB) on the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and although the scheme did not meet the financial hurdle rates, the property acquisition was supported to go ahead for strategic reasons, to bring empty homes back into use, and for £0.076m of HRA s106 monies to be used to fund the funding shortfall. We currently have £1.6m available.</p> <p>Following CAPB the final grant claim has now been approved and FCC have been awarded £0.313m from TACP grant funds and therefore the scheme now meets the financial hurdle rates set by FCC.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
3.01	The Standard Viability Model (SVM) demonstrates that the scheme as outlined above is within the agreed parameters set by FCC for development schemes. Funds exist within the Council's SHARP budget and within the TACP allocation for FCC.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	
4.01	<b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b>	
	Long-term	Positive – There is a commitment to increase supply to provide the right types of homes in the right location.
	Prevention	Positive – It is our aim to provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home.
	Integration	Positive - Achieving WHQS for all existing council houses and delivering new social housing will contribute to the integration within communities.
	Collaboration	Positive - To deliver in partnership with stakeholders to support positive impacts for all our tenants.
	Involvement	Positive - Communication with tenants, Members and other stakeholders.
	<b>Well-being Goals Impact</b>	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive – Ensuring social homes are WHQS compliant and meet the changing housing needs. Maximising local employment and training opportunities for local people.

	Resilient Wales	Positive – Increasing the supply of social housing
	Healthier Wales	Positive – Ensuring all existing homes and new homes are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all people.
	More equal Wales	Positive - Provide good quality homes for the most vulnerable people in society.
	Cohesive Wales	Positive – Contributing to attractive, viable and safe communities
	Vibrant Wales	Positive – Ensuring all communities housing needs are supported
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive – The HRA will contribute to the improvement of the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
5.01	No formal consultations have taken place.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
6.01	N/A.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
7.01	N/A.

<b>8.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
8.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Paul Calland Strategic Housing and Development Programme Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 07825 377623 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:paul.calland@flintshire.gov.uk">paul.calland@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>9.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
9.01	<b>Standard viability model (SVM)</b> – a model to financially assess social housing purchases  <b>Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme - TACP</b> provides grant funding to local authorities and registered social landlords (RSLs) to bring forward good quality longer term accommodation at pace to support everyone in housing need (those in temporary accommodation and initial accommodation for resettlement).

## EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS - DECISIONS TAKEN REPORTED TO CABINET – 18.06.24

### Streetscene and Transportation

- **Proposal to Construct a Puffin Pedestrian Crossing on the A548 Chester Road, Flint**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to construct a Puffin Crossing on the A548 Chester Road, Flint, incorporating minor amendments to the advertised design.
- **Proposal to Construct a Puffin Crossing Facility on the B5444 Wrexham Road, Mold**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to construct a Puffin Crossing on the B5444 Wrexham Road, Mold.
- **Proposal to Construct a Zebra Crossing on Ffordd Llewelyn, Flint**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to construct a Zebra Pedestrian on Ffordd Llewelyn, Flint, incorporating minor amendments to the advertised design.
- **Proposal to Construct a Puffin Pedestrian Crossing on the A5119 Main Road, Sychdyn**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to construct a Puffin Crossing on the A5119 Main Road, Sychdyn.
- **Proposal to Construct a Puffin Pedestrian Crossing on the A5119 Ruthin Road, Mold**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to construct a Puffin Crossing on the A5119 Ruthin Road, Mold.
- **Proposal to Implement Waiting Restrictions (double yellow lines), on the B5444 Wrexham Road, Mold**  
To note that formal objections have been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which have been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated report confirms the progression of the proposals to implement waiting restrictions (double yellow lines), on the B5444 Wrexham Road, Mold.
- **Proposal to Reduce the Existing Speed Limit of 40mph on the A5026 Holway Road, Holywell and Introduce a Restricted Road (20mph) on a Section of the A5026 Holway Road, Holywell and the A5026 Whitford Street**  
To note that a formal objection has been received as part of the statutory consultation procedure which has been reviewed and considered impartially. This delegated

report confirms the progression of the proposals to reduce the existing speed limit of 40mph on the A5026 Holway Road, Holywell and introduce a Restricted Road (20mph) on a section of the A5026 Holway Road and the A5026 Whitford Street, Holywell.

### **Housing and Communities**

- **Housing Benefit Overpayment**

Financial Procedure Rules (section 9.6) – Income and Expenditure) stipulate that any individual debt between the values of £10,000 and £25,000 shall be reported to the Head of Finance for consideration to write off, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance. The schedule attached to the delegated powers report details a Housing Benefit Overpayment where the overall debt is greater than £10,000.

Copies of the Delegated Powers reports are retained by the Team Leader – Committee Services and available to view on request by Members.



**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS  
COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY  
1 June 2024 TO 30 November 2024**

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
June					
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (S &amp; H)</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Social Services	<b>Deferred Charges Audit Report</b> To present to the Committee an update on the progress following the Deferred Payment Audit Report.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Social Services	<b>Safeguarding Adults and Children's Annual Report</b> To provide members with information in relation to the Joint Adults and Children's Safeguarding provision within the county boundaries.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Social Services	<p><b>Draft Social Services Director's Annual Report 2023/24</b></p> <p>For Members to view the draft Annual Social Services Report and feedback on the draft content considered for inclusion, which include the key developments of the past year and our priorities for next year.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Social Services	<p><b>Age Friendly Communities</b></p> <p>To update on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales report "Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise" and recommend improvements to ensure Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken more consistently across the Council.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6/06/24	Social Services	<b>Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales, Performance Evaluation Inspection November 2023 - Action Plan Update</b> To update on the outcome of the Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection in November 2023 including the resulting action plan based on the report's recommendations.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/06/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Env)</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/06/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Workforce Travel Survey Report</b> To approve the recommendations within the report	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/06/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Cracks in the Foundations Building Safety in Wales – Audit Wales Report</b> To consider Audit Wales report “Cracks in the Foundations” and the recommendations made within that report and how key elements of the Building Safety Act 2022 are being implemented in Wales.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/06/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Destination Management</b> To seek approval for the draft Destination Management Plan.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/06/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (Env)</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/06/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (CH &amp; E)</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/06/24	Housing and Communities	<b>Void Management</b> To provide an update to the Committee on the number of Void properties and the work being undertaken to bring the properties back into use.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/06/24	Housing and Communities	<b>Housing Strategy Action Plan Performance Update</b> To provide an annual update on the current Strategy.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/06/24	Housing and Communities	<b>Communal Heating Charges 2024/25</b> To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2024/25 prior to Cabinet approval.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/06/24	Housing and Communities	<b>‘Together we can’ Community resilience and self-reliance</b> To provide an overview of the Audit Wales report and outline reflection of the content and recommendations made. A proposed response to the recommendations is made for consideration.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Governance	<b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Social Services	<b>Joint Funded Care Packages - Update Report</b> To share an update on the current situation on the long term debt with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board since the last report was received.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Education and Youth	<b>Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24</b> To present the draft Welsh Language Annual Report for 2023/24 for approval and provide assurance that the Council has been making progress in meeting the statutory requirements of the Welsh Language Compliance Notice.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes</b> To review the Recommendations for Improvement along with the Council's response.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	People and Resources	<b>Employment and Workforce End of Year Update</b> To present end of year workforce statistics and their analysis.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/06/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Audit Wales - Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise</b> To update on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales report "Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise" and recommend improvements to ensure Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken more consistently across the Council.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	18/06/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Destination Management</b> To seek approval for the draft Destination Management Plan.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Cabinet	18/06/24	Housing and Communities	<b>Purchase of 'buy backs' using the Welsh Government (WG) Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)</b> To seek approval for the internal transfer of the properties from the Council fund to the HRA.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/06/24	Housing and Communities	<p><b>‘Together we can’ Community Resilience and Self-Reliance</b></p> <p>To provide an overview of the Audit Wales report and outline reflection of the content and recommendations made. A proposed response to the recommendations is made for consideration.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	18/06/24	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Housing Strategy Action Plan Performance Update</b></p> <p>To provide an annual update on the current Strategy.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing
Cabinet	18/06/24	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Communal Heating Charges 2023/25</b></p> <p>To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2024/25 prior to approval.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/06/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24</b></p> <p>To receive the Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24 and provide an overview of progress in complying with the Welsh Language Standards.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Cabinet	18/06/24	Finance	<p><b>Insurance Services Contract Extension</b></p> <p>To seek approval to extend the Insurances Services Contract.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	18/06/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Audit Wales report (Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes)</b></p> <p>To review the Recommendations for Improvement along with the Council's response.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/06/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Audit Wales: Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise</b>            To update on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales report “Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise” and recommend improvements to ensure Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken more consistently across the Council.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	18/06/24	Social Services	<p><b>Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales, Performance Evaluation Inspection November 2023 – Action Plan Update</b>            To update on the outcome of the Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection in November 2023 including the resulting action plan based on the report’s recommendations.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/06/24	Social Services	<b>Age Friendly Communities</b> To provide an update on the development of age-friendly communities in Flintshire and seek commitment for ongoing support across portfolio areas.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	18/06/24	Social Services	<b>Recommissioning of Learning Disability Day and Work Opportunities Services</b> To provide an update on adult day and work opportunity services and to approve recommissioning of current contracts.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	18/06/24	Social Services	<b>Deferred Charges Audit Report</b> To provide an update on the progress following the Deferred Charges Audit Report.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/06/24	Planning and Development Control	<p><b>Cracks in the Foundations Building Safety in Wales - Audit Wales Report</b> To consider Audit Wales' report "Cracks in the Foundations" and the recommendations made within that report and how key elements of the Building Safety Act 2022 are being implemented in Wales.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
Page 9 of 13 Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Digital Strategy – Audit Wales Review, Recommendations and Proposed Actions</b> To present the outcome of the audit on the Council's Digital Strategy, to gain approval for the proposed action plan in response to recommendations from Audit Wales.</p>	All Report Types	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Governance and Audit Committee meetings.</p>	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Audit Wales - Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes</b> To review the Recommendations for Improvement along with the Council's response.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Audit Wales: Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise</b> To update on progress to meet the recommendations of Audit Wales report "Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise" and recommend improvements to ensure Integrated Impact Assessments are undertaken more consistently across the Council.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Housing and Communities	<p><b>‘Together We Can’ Community Resilience and Self-reliance</b></p> <p>To provide an overview of the Audit Wales report and outline reflection of the content and recommendations made. A proposed response to the recommendations is made for consideration.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing
<p>Page 415</p> <p>Governance and Audit Committee</p>	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Annual Audit Summary for Flintshire County Council</b></p> <p>To receive the Annual Audit Summary from the Auditor General for Wales and note the Council’s response.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Internal Audit Charter</b></p> <p>To outline to Members the updated Internal Audit Charter.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	26/06/24	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme</b></p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Internal Audit Department.</p>	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/24	Education and Youth	<p><b>Safeguarding in Education including Internet Safety and Social Media</b></p> <p>To provide an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio. To include information on Relationship and Sexual Education and how this was contributing to reducing harm.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/24	Education and Youth	<p><b>Looked After Children Placements - Outcome of the review and impact on FCC local policy</b></p> <p>To outline the outcome of the review and impact of FCC Local Policy</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/24	Education and Youth	<p><b>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018</b></p> <p>To outline the approach to the identification and commissioning of education for Flintshire young people and also what was being done to meet the growing demand for specialist education.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Joint Education, Youth & Culture and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/06/24	Education and Youth	<b>Period Dignity Update</b> To provide Members with an update on the Council's support for Period Dignity	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
July					
Environment & Economy Overview Scrutiny Committee Page 417	16/07/24	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>The Council's Transition to a Restricted Capacity Residual Waste Collection Model</b> To update Scrutiny on the outcome of the waste and recycling modelling work undertaken by WRAP Cymru with the purpose of maximising recycling performance.	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/07/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Enforcement of Closure Notices and Closure Orders under The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014</b></p> <p>To give the Council the powers to issue Closure Notices and Orders under The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
<span style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); position: absolute; left: -40px; top: 50%; font-weight: bold;">Page 18</span> Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/07/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Open Access Agreement with Freshwave</b></p> <p>To seek approval to sign a non-exclusive Open Access Agreement with Freshwave Facilities Limited</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Council Plan 2023/28: End of Year Performance Monitoring report for 2023/24 (E&amp;E OSC)</b></p> <p>To review progress against the priorities identified within the Council Plan 2023/28</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy, Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Cabinet	16/07/24	Education and Youth	<p><b>Saltney/Broughton Schools Network Review</b></p> <p>To consider the proposed school network options for the Saltney/Broughton area prior to Cabinet approval.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (CH &amp; E)</b></p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2023/28: End of Year Performance Monitoring Report for 2023/24 (C&amp;H OSC)</b> To review progress against the priorities identified within the Council Plan 2023/28	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Theatr Clwyd Business Plan – annual update</b> To provide Members with an opportunity to view the finalised Theatr Clwyd Business Plan 2023-29 and receive an annual update on delivery against the Plan	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2023/28: End of Year Performance Monitoring Report for 2023/24 (EY&amp;C OSC)</b> To review progress against the priorities identified within the Council Plan 2023/28	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2023/28: End of Year Performance Monitoring Report for 2023/24 (S&amp;HC OSC)</b> To review progress against the priorities identified within the Council Plan 2023/28	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/24	Social Services	<b>Recommissioning of Unpaid Carers Services</b> To consult on the review of carers services and proposals for commissioning.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18/07/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (S &amp; H)</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Interim)</b> This report provides known key risks and issues to the revenue budget outturn position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Annual Audit Summary for Flintshire County Council 2023</b></p> <p>The Annual Audit Summary sets out the audit and regulatory work completed by Audit Wales of Flintshire County Council since the last annual report which was published in March 2023. The audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.</p>	Strategic	Cllr Linda Thomas
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Finance	<p><b>Governance for the Transformation Programme</b></p> <p>To approve the decision making on oversight mechanisms for the proposed programme of transformation reviews. The aim of the transformation programme is to review the way we work in order to make savings to help meet the funding gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	Strategic	Leader of the Council

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Third Sector Grant Funding</b> To present an update on third sector funding; Community Chest and Strategic Funding. This will include a progress update on implementing the actions stemming from the last review of funding and recommendations for next steps.	Strategic	Cllr Linda Thomas
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Governance	<b>Digital Strategy – Audit Wales Review, Recommendations and Proposed Actions</b> To present the outcome of the audit on the Council’s Digital Strategy, to gain approval for the proposed action plan in response to recommendations from Audit Wales.	All Report Types	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2023/28: End of Year Performance Monitoring Report for 2023/24</b> To review progress against the priorities identified within the Council Plan 2023/28	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Leader of the Council

Page 423

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Flintshire County Council	22/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Rolling Review of the Employees Code of Conduct</b> As part of the rolling review of the Constitution, we need to consider whether the Employees Code of Conduct needs any amendments to keep it up to date.</p>		
Flintshire County Council	22/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Annual Report of the Standards Committee</b> To approve the Committee's Annual Report of the Standards Committee.</p>		
Flintshire County Council	22/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Review of Political Balance</b> Due to a change in group membership we need to review the Political Balance and the allocation of seats on Committees.</p>		
Flintshire County Council	22/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Petitions received at Council</b> To inform Council of the outcomes of petitions which have been submitted over the past year.</p>		



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Enforcement of Closure Notices and Closure Orders under The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014</b></p> <p>To give the Council the powers to issue Closure Notices and Orders under The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Prudential Indicators - Actuals 2023/24</b></p> <p>The report provides details of the Council's actual Prudential Indicators for 2023/24 compared with the estimates set for Prudence and Affordability</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Governance for the Transformation Programme</b> To approve the decision making on oversight mechanisms for the proposed programme of transformation reviews. The aim of the transformation programme is to review the way we work in order to make savings to help meet the funding gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	Strategic	Leader of the Council
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Capital Programme Monitoring 2023/24 (Outturn)</b> To present the Outturn Capital Programme information for 2023/24</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Revenue budget monitoring 2024/25 (Interim)</b> This report provides known key risks and issues to the revenue budget outturn position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 (Outturn)</b> To present the Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report information for 2023/24	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Annual Audit Summary for Flintshire County Council 2023</b> The Annual Audit Summary sets out the audit and regulatory work completed by Audit Wales of Flintshire County Council since the last annual report which was published in March 2023. The audit summary forms part of the Auditor General for Wales' duties.	Strategic	Cllr Linda Thomas
Cabinet	23/07/24	Social Services	<b>Recommissioning of Unpaid Carers Services</b> To consult on the review of carers services and proposals for commissioning.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Theatr Clwyd Business Plan – annual update</b> To provide Members with an opportunity to view the finalised Theatr Clwyd Business Plan 2023-29 and receive an annual update on delivery against the Plan	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Third Sector Grant Funding</b> To present an update on third sector funding; Community Chest and Strategic Funding. This will include a progress update on implementing the actions stemming from the last review of funding and recommendations for next steps.	Strategic	Cllr Linda Thomas
Cabinet	23/07/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Open Access Agreement with Freshwave</b> To seek approval to sign a non-exclusive Open Access Agreement with Freshwave Facilities Limited	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Strategic Risk Overview</b> To provide Cabinet quarterly with an overview of strategic risks across the Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of all the strategic risks across the Council</li> <li>• High level overview of escalated and deteriorating risks</li> <li>• A real time view of what position the Council is at, at the date the report is produced.</li> </ul>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	23/07/24	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Third Sector Grant Funding</b> To present an update on all third sector funding, including strategic funding and progress in implementing the actions stemming from its review.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Digital Strategy – Audit Wales Review, Recommendations and Proposed Actions</b></p> <p>To present the outcome of the audit on the Council’s Digital Strategy, to gain approval for the proposed action plan in response to recommendations from Audit Wales.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	23/07/24	Streetscene and Transportation	<p><b>The Council’s Transition to a Restricted Capacity Residual Waste Collection Model</b></p> <p>To provide an update on the outcome of the waste and recycling modelling work undertaken by WRAP Cymru with the purpose of maximising recycling performance.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Cabinet	23/07/24	Governance	<p><b>All Wales Residents Survey</b></p> <p>To seek approval for Flintshire County Council to be part of the All Wales Resident Survey.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	23/07/24	Governance	<b>Business Rates - Write Offs</b> To seek authorisation to write off irrecoverable Business Rate debts more than £25,000	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Finance	<b>Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24</b> To present the draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24.	Operational	
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Social Services	<b>Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales, Performance Evaluation Inspection November 2023 - Action Plan Update</b> To update on the outcome of the Social Services Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection in November 2023 including the resulting action plan based on the report's recommendations.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Audit Wales - Audit Plan 2024</b> To review the Audit Wales - Audit Plan 2024 for the Council which sets out the proposed audit work for the year along with timescales, costs and the audit teams responsible for carrying out the work.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Internal Audit Progress Report</b> To present to the Committee an update on the progress of the Internal Audit Department.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<p><b>Annual Governance Statement 2023/24</b> To endorse the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.</p>	All Report Types	



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Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<b>Internal Audit Annual Report</b> To inform Members of the outcome of all audit work carried out during 2023/24 and to give the annual Internal Audit opinion on the standard of internal control, risk management and governance within the Council.	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Governance and Audit Committee meetings	All Report Types	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	24/07/24	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme</b> To present to the Committee an update on the progress of the Internal Audit Department.	All Report Types	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
August					
September					

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/09/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24</b> To accept and approve the findings of the Corporate Self-Assessment 2023/24 and approve the opportunities for improvement identified in Corporate Self-Assessment 2023/24.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/09/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Audit Wales report (Setting of the Well-being Objectives)</b> To review the recommendations for improvement advised by Audit Wales, along with the Council's response.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	26/09/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24</b> To accept and approve the findings of the Corporate Self-Assessment 2023/24 and approve the opportunities for improvement identified in Corporate Self-Assessment 2023/24.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	26/09/24	Chief Executive's	<b>Audit Wales report (Setting of the Well-being Objectives)</b> To review the recommendations for improvement advised by Audit Wales, along with the Council's response	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	26/09/24	Governance	<b>Risk Management Update</b> To be assured that the updated risk management framework is comprehensive and functional.	All Report Types	
October					
November					

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