

Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: All Members of the Council

18 September 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2024 at 1.00 PM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in The Lord Barry Jones Council Chamber, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire or on a virtual basis.

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 FOR ABSENCE

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Pages 5 - 6)

Purpose: This item is to receive any Public Questions: two were received by the deadline.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

4 MINUTES (Pages 7 - 30)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 16 April and 22 July 2024.

5 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose: To receive the communications as circulated.

6 PETITIONS

Purpose: This is an opportunity for Members of Council to submit petitions on behalf of people in their ward. Once received, petitions are passed to the appropriate Chief Officer for action and response.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF BUSINESS

7 ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

8 APPOINTMENT OF THE CABINET BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Purpose: To note the appointment of the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council.

9 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM SCHEME FOR SECOND HOMES AND LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES (Pages 31 - 138)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: To consider the feedback from the 12-week public consultation and the council tax premium rates on second homes and long-term empty properties and whether the rates should remain the same or be increased from April 2025.

ORDINARY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

10 REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE (Pages 139 - 144)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: Due to a change in group membership we need to review the Political Balance and the allocation of seats on Committees.

11 RECRUITMENT OF A LAY MEMBER TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (Pages 145 - 148)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: To approve the recruitment process of a Lay Member to the Governance and Audit Committee as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.

12 PETITIONS RECEIVED AT COUNCIL (Pages 149 - 152)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance)

Purpose: To inform Council of the outcomes of petitions which have been submitted over the past year.

13 NOTICE OF MOTION (Pages 153 - 160)

Purpose: This item is to receive any Notices of Motion. Four have been accepted and attached to the agenda.

FOR INFORMATION

14 QUESTIONS (Pages 161 - 162)

Purpose: To note the answers to any questions submitted in accordance with County Council Standing Order No. 9.4(A). Six were received by the deadline

15 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Purpose: To consider any issues raised by Members arising from the Minutes of the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and other Committees, together with any questions raised under Section 4.20 of the Council's Constitution. Copies of the Minutes of the various meetings that have taken place since the last ordinary meeting of the Council which have been approved and published on the Authority's website, can be obtained, if required, via the Committee and Member Services.

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

	Name of person asking question	Time and date question received	Question
1.	Amy Chesworth	06/09/2024 15.36	<p>The council’s decision to base transport eligibility on the “Nearest appropriate school” rather than the “Actual progressive school” for the area is creating significant disparities. Some children receive free transport while others, despite accessing the bus at the same stop as those approved for free transport, do not. There are many inconsistencies in the policy that need addressing, and it is concerning that these were not considered before implementation.</p> <p>This inconsistency has resulted in many parents struggling with the financial implications and undue stress as they manage transport costs. Additionally, there is the worry of children having to make their way to school if unable to pay for the bus due to the high costs per term, forcing them to walk down unsafe, highly trafficked roads at peak times. Furthermore, no assistance has been offered to families facing financial difficulties, nor has any exemption been provided for parents with health conditions that prevent them from driving their children to school.</p> <p>My question to you is, given the impact this policy is having on our village, could you commit to supporting a review of the policy or advocate for additional rules that consider the specific needs of our community? We are hopeful that with your backing, we can find a more equitable solution for all families involved.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>
2.	Lesley Murphy	06/09/2024 18.38	<p>Given that the current school transport policy places a significant financial burden on families living just outside the approved area, affecting both their mental well-being and financial stability, can we urge the council to reconsider the policy for those who are only a short distance away, and relieve our community of this unnecessary hardship?</p>

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
16 APRIL 2024

Minutes of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Tuesday, 16 April 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor Gladys Healey (Chair)

Councillors: Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Helen Brown, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan, Geoff Collett, Steve Copple, Bill Crease, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, David Evans, Chrissy Gee, David Healey, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Fran Lister, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Billy Mullin, Debbie Owen, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester, Jason Shallcross, Sam Swash, Linda Thew, Linda Thomas, Roy Wakelam, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Mike Allport, Paul Cunningham, and Ant Turton

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development, Transport Manager, Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration, Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Officers and Fr. P. Wheeler for prayers

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair welcomed Councillor Frances Lister as the newly elected Member of the Brynford and Halkyn Ward. She also took the opportunity to welcome back Councillor Ray Hughes who had joined the meeting following a period of illness and extended her best wishes for his full recovery.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

91. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 were received.

The minutes were moved as an accurate record by Councillor Sean Bibby and seconded by Councillor Chris Bithell

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2024 be approved as a correct Record.

92. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair drew attention to her communication which had been circulated prior to the meeting and listed the events attended from 21 February 2024 to 16 April 2024.

The Chair referred to her Charity Dinner which was held on 8 March, and thanked Members and officers for their attendance and generous support on the evening. She also thanked officers for their work to organise and facilitate the event and said it had been an enjoyable success. The Chair informed that £4788 had been raised for her chosen charities.

93. PETITIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the following petition had been received and gave a brief outline of the Council's process for administering petitions.

Councillor Roz Mansell presented a petition on behalf of the residents in her Ward: Keep Connah's Quay Tidy – please provide more litter bins in and around the shopping area.

94. RECRUITMENT OF A TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced a report to ask Members to consider the appointment of the favoured candidate to the Standards Committee. He provided background information and explained that all Town and Community Councils were asked whether they wished to nominate candidates and five were nominated. Councils were asked to select their 1st and 2nd preference candidates. Councillor Ros Griffiths from Saltney Town Council and Broughton and Bretton Community Council had a clear majority of both 1st and 2nd preference votes.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Ian Roberts and seconded by Councillor David Evans

RESOLVED:

- (a) That all the candidates be thanked for their interest; and
- (b) That Councillor Ros Griffiths be appointed as the Town and Community Council Representative until 6 May 2027.

95. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

The Chief Officer (Governance) introduced the report and explained that due to a change in group membership there was a need to review the Political Balance and allocation of seats on Committees. He provided background information and referred to the key considerations as detailed in the report.

The Chief Officer advised that the political balance would be subject to ongoing review and it had been agreed that a meeting would be held with the Chair

and Leader of the Council prior to the next Annual General Meeting of the County Council to undertake a full review of the composition of the political groups to ensure the allocation of membership was in accordance with the political balance and, if possible, with the wishes of Members. The Chief Officer explained that the political balance calculation was attached as Appendix A; which set out one possible allocation of seats and said other possible allocations may exist.

The Chief Officer responded to the questions raised by Councillor Mike Peers around the notional calculations provided in Table 2 of the appendix on the Group entitlement to Scrutiny Chairs and gave an explanation of how the allocation had been calculated.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Ian Roberts and seconded by Councillor David Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That seats on Committees be allocated in accordance with political balance as shown in appendix A; and
- (b) That any changes to nominees be notified to the Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible.

96. ROLLING REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the report to approve the changes to the Code of Conduct for Councillors that had been recommended by the Standards Committee as part of the rolling review of the Constitution. He provided background information and referred to the main considerations as detailed in the report. Members were asked to consider whether the value above which gifts and hospitality etc must be registered should be increased from £10.00 to £25.00

Councillor Richard Jones expressed the view that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) should set the monetary value above which gifts and hospitality should be registered and said this would achieve consistency across local authorities in Wales.

Councillor David Coggins-Cogan held the view that any gift should be declared regardless of the value and proposed that the recommendation in the report be amended to reflect that the value be zero. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Bernie Attridge.

Concerns were expressed by Members that reducing the value to zero would generate a significant increase in officers' workload as this would require all small gifts, citing as an example a drink of tea/coffee offered by a resident with a value of less than £1.00, to be identified and registered.

In view of the comments and points raised by Members Councillor David Coggins-Cogan withdrew his proposal.

Councillor Arnold Woolley proposed that the threshold above which gifts and hospitality had to be registered be retained at the current level of £10.00. The proposal was seconded by Councillor David Healey.

Councillor Richard Jones reiterated his view that the IRPW should give guidance to local authorities in Wales on the threshold above which gifts and hospitality should be registered and proposed that this be included as an amendment to the proposal put forward by Councillor Woolley. This was duly seconded. The amendment was accepted by Councillor Woolley and Councillor Healey.

When put to the vote the following recommendations were carried:

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the threshold above which gifts and hospitality etc must be registered remains at £10.00; and
- (b) That the IRPW be asked to consider if it would set a common value which could be applied by all local authorities across Wales

97. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

98. QUESTIONS

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

99. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

100. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that none had been received by the deadline.

101. DIVERSITY CALENDAR

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the item was for information only.

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

Councillor Sean Bibby moved exclusion of the press and public and this was seconded by Councillor Ted Palmer.

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as the following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the report contains information relating to or which might tend to identify a living individual and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the interest in disclosing the information.

103. COMMUNITIES FOR WORK PLUS PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive introduced a report to seek Council approval for the proposals for Communities For Work Plus Programme. The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) and Corporate Manger, People and Organisational Development, provided background information and referred to the main considerations as detailed in the report. Details of the Council's statutory and contractual obligations were also detailed within the report.

During discussion Officers responded to the questions and concerns raised by Members.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor David Healey and seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley.

Councillor Richard Jones put forward an amendment to the recommendation which was duly seconded.

Councillor David Healey spoke in opposition to the amendment.

A recorded vote was requested on the amendment and the requisite number of Members stood in support of this.

The following Councillors voted for the amendment:

Bernie Attridge, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Helen Brown, Steve Cople, Bill Crease, Rob Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Carol Ellis, Chrissy Gee, Dennis Hutchinson, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Richard Jones, Dave Mackie, Roz Mansell, Allan Marshall, Debbie Owen, Mike Peers, Dale Selvester, Jason Shallcross, Roy Wakelam, and Antony Wren.

The following Councillors voted against the amendment:

Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, David Coggins-Cogan, Geoff Collett, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, David Evans, Gladys Healey, David Healey, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Simon Jones, Fran Lister, Richard Lloyd, Gina Maddison, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Billy Mullin, Ted Palmer, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Sam Swash, Linda Thew, Linda Thomas, and Arnold Woolley.

The following Councillor abstained: Andrew Parkhurst

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

The substantial motion (the recommendation in the report) having been moved by Councillor David Healey and seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley was carried.

RESOLVED

That the severance packages (as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report) in accordance with the Council's approved 2024/25 Pay Policy Statement be approved.

104. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 1.00 pm and ended at 3.12 pm)

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Chair

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
22nd JULY 2024

Minutes of the meeting of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Monday 22nd July 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor Dennis Hutchinson (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Glyn Banks, Pam Banks, Marion Bateman, Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Gillian Brockley, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, David Coggins Cogan, Geoff Collett, Steve Cople, Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Carol Ellis, Mared Eastwood, David Evans, Chrissy Gee, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Ian Hodge, Andy Hughes, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Alasdair Ibbotson, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Fran Lister, Richard Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Allan Marshall, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Billy Mullin, Debbie Owen, Ted Palmer, Andrew Parkhurst, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Ian Roberts, Dan Rose, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester, Sam Swash, Linda Thew, Linda Thomas, Ant Turton, Roy Wakelam, Arnold Woolley and Antony Wren.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Chief Officer (Social Services), Corporate Manager, (People and Organisational Development), Corporate Finance Manager, Karen Edwards, Kathryn Whitfield, Dawn Holt, Lee Holman
Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officers.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors: Adele Davies Cooke, Roz Mansell and Helen Brown.

15. PRESENTATIONS

The Chief Executive introduced the following finalist awards for the 2024 Social Care Accolades at the Social Care Wales Ceremony.

1. Highly Commended - Building Bright Futures for Children and Families - Child to Adult Team (C2A) of Flintshire County Council.

The Chief Executive explained that this project supported children and adults with learning disabilities aged between 0 and 25 years and included their siblings, families and carers to achieve what mattered to them. The support provided emotional support for parents, home adaptations, help dealing with challenging behaviours of supporting older teenagers with further education, supported living and employment. The project worked closely with a diverse range of partners including

Children's Services, Barnardo's and Theatr Clwyd. Karen Edwards received the award on behalf of the team.

2. Winner - Effective Leadership Award - Sandra Stacey, Marleyfield House Care Home Manager

The Chief Executive introduced the next award, which was to Sandra Stacey, Residential Care Home Manager at Marleyfield House, who was nominated by Janet Bellis, Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults. The Residential Care Home Manager was nominated for her dedication to providing person centred care and making sure that the well-being of the care home residents was at the forefront of decision making. Janet said “Sandra’s values epitomised those of the local authority and her compassionate leadership style applied to everyone she came into contact with, from the care home staff to its residents and families. She always delivered the best outcomes for her residents and staff and was a shining example of compassionate leadership”.

3. Highly Commended - Working in Partnership – Flintshire Micro-Care

The Chief Executive introduced the next award saying that Flintshire Micro-Care provided a groundbreaking approach which helped small enterprises to provide care and support in the Flintshire area. In partnership with Social Firms Wales the project supported people who had shown an interest in running their own social care business. It provided practical advice around operating in the social care sector, support in becoming an accredited micro carer and specialist business advice. The project had strengthened the local care market by providing different care support options such as tailored day services, respite, direct care and well-being support. The award was accepted by Janet Bellis on behalf of the service with Dawn Holt and Lee Holman present online.

4. Working in Partnership – North Wales Together: Learning Disability Transformation Programme

The Chief Executive moved on the last award, the Working in Partnership North Wales Together: Learning Disability Transformation Programme. This was a partnership between citizens, six Local Authorities and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board which aimed to transform services for people with learning disabilities and improve their lives. Its activities included supporting people to gain paid employment, access everyday technology, together with funding activities for people with learning disabilities and their families to improve well-being and increase community connection. It had also co-produced a peer led health check and employed people with learning disabilities to promote health checks to other people with learning disabilities and their families. Special thanks were given to Neil Ayling who had chaired the regional work on this project and Kathryn Whitfield who was instrumental in developing the project and was present online. Janet Bellis accepted the Award on behalf of the group.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing applauded the finalists for their awards. All of the teams had competed with other local authorities and she commended them for the work they did in Flintshire.

16. TRIBUTES FOR FORMER COUNCILLOR GARETH ROBERTS

The Chair referred to the recent sad death of former Councillor Gareth Roberts. He expressed sincere condolences to his family and friends, and invited Members to pay their tributes.

The Leader of the Council led the tributes and said he first met former Councillor Gareth Roberts in 1991 when he became a member of the former Delyn Borough Council. Gareth was a prominent Delyn Borough Councillor at the time and regularly featured in the local press. Gareth was a special person who would be missed for his forthright views within his community, he was a passionate Welsh speaker who had also appeared on a number of Welsh television Programmes such as Pawb a'i farn. Councillors Peers, Richard Jones, Mackie, Glyn Banks, Palmer, Bibby, Cunningham and Johnson paid further tributes to Gareth Roberts who would be sadly missed.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Officer (Governance) referred to item 11, Schedule of Remuneration 2024/25, saying that the Code of Conduct provided that all Councillors had a personal interest which would be recorded.

Councillor Lloyd stood to ask a question on the validity of the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Swash given that he had a personal and prejudicial interest in the Ash Lane planning application, with Ash Lane being quoted in the Notice of Motion. He asked whether the words 'Ash Lane development' should be removed from the Notice of Motion.

In response the Chief Officer (Governance) said that Ash Lane was mentioned in the Notice of Motion but he took the view that it was mentioned by way of context and background to demonstrate the perceived need for change. He did not believe that the Notice of Motion would affect the current application for Ash Lane within the Local Development Plan or the application, which was underway currently, nor would it have any impact on Councillor Swash or his family members. He took the view that Councillor Swash had no interest to declare.

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 14 May 2024 (10.00 am) and (1.00 pm) and were presented for approval.

On being put to the vote the minutes were moved as approved and seconded.

RESOLVED:

That both sets of minutes be approved as a correct record

19. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair's Communications covering events attended since the previous meeting were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing thanked the Chair and his Consort for attending the Pride of Flintshire Awards which was appreciated by the young people.

20. PETITIONS

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin presented a Petition which was seeking for a road within her ward to become adopted.

21. REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE

The Chief Officer (Governance) presented the report on the revised political balance calculation. The report had been presented to Group Leaders who had requested a number of changes which had been made to the document before Members.

On being put to the vote the recommendations in the report were carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That seats on committees be allocated in accordance with political balance as shown in appendix A; and
- (b) That any changes to nominees be notified to the Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible.

22. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Governance) explained that this was the second Annual Report which the Standards Committee was required to produce. Included within the report were comments made in relation to the recommendations from last year's report together with the proposed new recommendations for this year. The report was presented for Council to receive and consider.

Councillor Carberry moved the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor Christine Jones.

Councillor Peers referred to the recommendation which was for Council to approve the report and suggested changing the wording to read “that the Council thanked the Standards Committee and accepted the report.”

The amendment was accepted by Councillors Carberry and Christine Jones.

RESOLVED:

That Council thanked the Standards Committee and accepted the Annual Report.

23. ROLLING REVIEW OF THE EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Governance) explained that the work was undertaken by the Standards Committee as part of their review of the Codes and Protocols within the Constitution which ensured that they were up to date and pertinent.

A number of changes had been recommended to the Code which reflected changes in legislation within the Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021. The Standards Committee proposed amendments around employees standing for political office, public speaking by officers, behaviour towards colleagues and dress code. Following approval by the Standards Committee the report was presented to the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee. Further amendments were made by that Committee in relation to circumstances where Councillors and work colleagues were related and behaviour within the workplace. These were included in blue in the appendix with the changes made by the Standards Committee in red.

Councillor Peers referred to section 3.5 and sought clarification to the amendment to the term “elected Member” which had been changed to “elected Councillor.” In response the Chief Officer (Governance) said that Councillor Peers was an elected Member and Councillor but that there were members who were not elected, such as those on Standards Committee, Governance and Audit Committee and Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The term ‘member’ referred to anyone who was part of the organisation and was a member of a committee.

Councillor Coggins Cogan referred to section 15.1, publication broadcasting and social media, and felt that it seemed broad and asked if it should be amended. For clarification, the Chief Officer explained that an officer should not publish anything where it indicated that they were an employee which could imply that they were speaking on behalf of the Council. Councillor Coggins Cogan suggested that 15.1 be split into three sections to make this clearer which was accepted.

On being put to the vote the recommendation within the report was carried

RESOLVED:

That Council adopt the changes being recommended.

24. UPDATE REGARDING URGENT ITEM DISCUSSED AT CABINET 30 MAY 2024

The Democratic Services Manager presented the procedural report and explained that items marked as urgent were not subject to the call-in process but had to be reported to the next meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency. He outlined the call-in process and the details of the Cabinet agenda being published.

The report provided a timeline for when Cabinet met, including the reason why the urgent item was taken. The Democratic Services Manager commented on the spreadsheet which had been circulated to Members and outlined the work involved, the reason for the urgency which was to ensure service continuity and not to prejudice the Council's interests.

Councillor Glyn Banks commented on the need for reports to go through the democratic process. In response the Chief Officer (Governance) said that this was not the first time such provision had been used and referred to the recent urgent item on the Fleet Contract.

Councillor Coggins Cogan appreciated the need for urgency but queried the interpretation of the Constitution and the lack of transparency with reports being marked as Part 2 and discussed in closed session. He moved an amendment to the recommendation to include a second recommendation "that Council was dissatisfied with the lack of post decision scrutiny".

Referring to Councillor Coggins Cogan's comments on the lack of transparency, the Chief Officer (Governance) commented that Flintshire did not have any more Part 2 items than any other Council. A discussion had taken place at Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee and it was agreed that a report be prepared for a future meeting outlining how the Council handled Part 2 items, including the number held over the Council term, with a comparison made with other local authorities. He felt the Council had been transparent in circulating the report and schedule of activities in private to Members to enable them to view the information and take them into account. Referring to the interpretation of the Constitution, he confirmed that the way the Council applied it was the same as other local authorities in North Wales and that other Monitoring Officers would regard this as a transparency provision which held the Council to account so that the provision was not overused.

Councillor Coggin Cogan appreciated the need for the urgency but felt it did not provide the correct level of transparency for such important decisions. Referring to the Fleet Contract, which contained a significant risk to the Authority and how it operated, he said that Members were still waiting to receive information on this. His

original motion still stood “that Council was dissatisfied with the lack of post decision scrutiny”, which was seconded by Councillor Parkhurst.

Councillor Ted Palmer moved the recommendation as outlined in the report.

The Chief Officer outlined the process for moving the recommendation and the motion provided by Councillor Coggins Cogan.

Councillor Richard Jones suggested the recommendations as detailed below, with Councillor David Healey suggesting the votes on them being taken separately, which Councillors Coggins Cogan and Parkhurst were in agreement with:-

- (1) That Council note the reasons for the item Future options: leisure, libraries, and museum services being classed as urgent when discussed at Cabinet on 30 May 2024; and
- (2) That Council was dissatisfied with the lack of post decision scrutiny.

The Chair made the decision to take the recommendation and motion in two parts.

- (1) That Council note the reasons for the item Future options: leisure, libraries, and museum services being classed as urgent when discussed at Cabinet on 30th May 2024.

On being put to the vote recommendation 1 was carried.

- (2) That Council was dissatisfied with the lack of post decision scrutiny.

On being put to the vote recommendation 2 was carried.

The recommendations as amended were approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council note the reasons for the item Future options: leisure, libraries, and museum services being classed as urgent when discussed at Cabinet on 30 May 2024; and
2. That Council was dissatisfied with the lack of post decision scrutiny.

25. SCHEDULE OF REMUNERATION FOR 2024/25

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the Annual Schedule of Remuneration report for elected and co-opted members which included the requirement by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) that these were published by 31st July 2024. It was explained that Appendix 1 of the report included an overview of the payments made and specific exclusions.

The Chief Officer (Governance) explained that these were set by the IRPW, not Councillors. There was a requirement to submit the report to Council but Members were unable to make any changes.

Councillor Thomas referred to the Members Support table on page 89 and explained that mobile phones had been provided to Cabinet Members in the past but that this was now not the case. It was agreed that would be amended in the report. The Chief Officer explained that a payment of up to £30 was provided to support Members with their mobile phone or broadband bills.

Councillor Palmer moved the recommendation.

Councillor Coggins Cogan moved an amendment to the recommendation "That the completed Schedule of Remuneration for 2024/25 as attached be **accepted** for publication."

Councillor Palmer commented that the IRPW should have the power to introduce these payments and not to refer back to Councillors as this put peer pressure for those who needed to accept it. He felt that the legislation should be changed in this regard. He accepted the changes proposed.

Councillor Coggins Cogan commented that this had been discussed at Community Councils meetings which he had attended and suggested that the Chief Officer write to Town and Community Councils to advise them to hold such discussions in private to avoid any embarrassment.

Councillor Peers agreed with the comments made by Councillor Coggins Cogan but felt that it would better to note the report rather than accept it.

Councillor Ibbotson referred to the comments made around mobile phones, expressing concern that if Cabinet Members were not issued with mobile phones, then their own personal devices could be subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

The Chief Officer agreed to write to Clerks of Town and Community Councils and also agreed to look into the comment made on Cabinet Member personal mobile phones in relation to Freedom of Information requests.

Councillor Palmer understood that the IRPW had already communicated with Town and Community Councils that they did not need to publish the allowance information, and the information was anonymised on the website.

On advice from the Chief Officer (Governance), Members unanimously agreed with changing the word 'approved' in the recommendation to 'note'.

RESOLVED:

That the Schedule of Remuneration for 2024/25 be noted for publication.

26. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Chief Officer (Governance) advised that the following Notices of Motion had been submitted:

Notice of Motion – Next Local Development Plan

Proposed by: Councillor Swash - Seconded by: Councillor Brockley

Flintshire County Council notes:

1. that Flintshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan (2000-2015) was adopted in September 2011, eleven years late.
2. that Flintshire County Council's Local Development Plan (2015-2030) was adopted in January 2023, eight years late.
3. the significant community opposition to proposed sites allocated within both the UDP and the LDP, with the Ash Lane development in Hawarden & Mancot being particularly notable in its unpopularity across both plans.

Flintshire County Council believes:

1. that the residents and communities of Flintshire have paid a high price because of the Council's inability to adopt Development Plans sooner, leading to local communities, notably including Penyffordd, Higher Kinnerton, and Buckley, being overrun with inappropriate speculative private housing developments which significantly undermines local public services and infrastructure.
2. that insufficient community engagement has taken place in advance of previous plans, resulting in the top-down allocation of sites designed in the interests of landowners and private developers, with little-to-no community support for proposed sites.
3. that Local Development Plans should be designed in the interests of Flintshire's residents and communities, not in the interests of private housing developers and landowners.
4. that the number of social homes and truly affordable homes delivered under previous Development Plans is completely inadequate, and that the construction of such large numbers of unaffordable homes in previous plans has actively exacerbated the housing crisis in Flintshire.

Flintshire County Council resolves:

1. that Council expects that work should start immediately on the replacement Local Development Plan.
2. that Cabinet should develop and publish a strategy for enhanced community involvement in the plan process no later than the end of 2024.
3. to recommend that the request for candidate sites should be commenced no later than Q2 2025.
4. to recommend that a draft plan should be ready for a vote on depositing with the Welsh Government no later than Q3 2027.

In speaking to the Notice of Motion, Councillor Swash said these covered unpopular sites being imposed on communities without local backing or villages being bulldozed with speculative housing without a plan in place or whether it was communities who engaged with the process to put forward sustainable developments only to see them withdrawn or rejected. Flintshire's previous development plans had succeeded in making almost everyone affected by identified sites unhappy, except landowners and developers. The current Local Development Plan (LDP) in Hawarden and Mancot saw the biggest opposition to any development in Flintshire's history but the campaign and residents voices were ignored. As he said when the current development plan was approved that it was his ward this time but it would be someone else's next time unless something was done about it. The Council could choose to learn lessons from mistakes of the past and could commit to have a plan in place in time for 2030 with proper community engagement which would see sustainable development brought forward with public support. Instead of developing a plan which benefited private developers and landowners there could be a plan in the interest of the people of Flintshire.

In seconding the Notice of Motion, Councillor Brockley said that this affected everyone either directly or indirectly with communities suffering for years from the invasion of speculative developers whose only aim and interest had been profit and not what the communities needed. Flintshire County Council's latest LDP was several years overdue and had given speculative developers even more opportunities to profit without community enhancement, involvement or engagement. It was crucial that work on the LDP 2 began now, an LDP which worked with and for our communities and not for private developer profits. The ward she represented would directly edge onto two major developments, one in Ewloe and the other in Ash Lane. Ash Lane was an incredibly unpopular site for private development for the reasons outlined by Councillor Swash. She sought Members support for the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Coggins Cogan spoke in support of the Notice of Motion saying that the UDP had been 11 years late and the current LDP was 8 years late, the reasons for which were not understood by residents or Town and Community Councils. Delivering the LDP on time was a way of protecting the Council's reputation.

Councillor Bithell said the UDP was not late and had been drafted well in advance of the adoption date in accordance with Welsh Planning Guidance at the time. Furthermore, the UDP gained weight as it progressed through all stages and was therefore used for development management purposes prior to its final adoption. On the LDP he said that there was no Welsh Government (WG) legislative requirement that required a development plan to be adopted before the commencement of the plan. He was not aware of any local planning authority which had adopted a UDP or LDP prior to the start date. Flintshire's LDP was adopted in January 2023 in year 8 of its 15-year plan period and compared well with other authorities. Consideration also had to be given to the number of setbacks which had to be overcome such as the impact on planning applications because of the introduction of TAN 15, the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of legislation on Phosphates. There were also delays in securing time slots in the Inspector's timetable to carry out public inspections. All of these issues and delays were out of

the Council's control. Councillor Bithell commented on the significant opposition to proposed unallocated sites within the UDP and LDP which was to be expected. The sites identified had to pass the Council's own internal processes and then had to undergo the examination in public by the Inspector, with the same objections put forward at that meeting. The Inspector accepted that all the sites were developable in planning terms, with the exception of one. The comments made that the process serviced the needs of developers and landowners was incorrect. It was explained that over 700 sites had been submitted with only 10 sites approved. The local plan was developed under a legal requirement to serve the needs and the interests of Flintshire local communities whilst providing homes for people. The affordable homes element increase for new developments was explained.

Councillor Ibbotson asked why work could not be commenced now. He felt that Members would agree that the Council needed a plan in place and felt that sites which were not allocated, and would not have been allocated within the LDP, could be given planning permission on the basis of the lack of an adopted plan in place. He requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Richard Jones referred to the speculative developments point and said these were not related to the LDP being in place as most related to paragraph 6.2 of Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN 1). This piece of law, had subsequently been revoked, as it identified a loophole to developers to have speculative developments when local authorities did not have a 5-year housing land supply. He explained that the LDP was placed on deposit in September 2019, submitted to WG in October 2020, with the examination being held in 2021 before being formally adopted in January 2023. It was a long process and officers recognised that work would need to be started soon. He also commented on the issue of affordable homes which included planned provision for 2,265 houses, including recent affordable homes being pepper potted through a development which were between 5% and 40% depending on the type of community.

Councillor Evans accepted the principle of this Notice of Motion but was not able to accept the timeline. Until it was confirmed by officers, he could not support the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Peers commented as a member of the Planning Committee and Planning Strategy Group he was familiar with the problems at Penyffordd and Wood Lane but the LDP had rectified that with the provision of a 5-year plan. There were objections which were considered by the Inspector and members of the Planning Strategy Group. He agreed that the UDP and LDP were late with significant community objections raised to all sites within the LDP. In the resolution there were specific dates and timescales and he agreed that based on the experience of the UDP and LDP that work needed to begin. He suggested that a report on the LDP 2030 be included at the earliest opportunity as an agenda item for the Planning Strategy Group who could look at the dates proposed and report back to full Council.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment and Economy) accepted that the plan would run out in 2030 but the Council had a development plan which had recently been tested and found to be sound. He provided information on recent

developments in Penyffordd and Buckley which were rejected by the Inspector applying the relevant LDP policies . The review of the LDP had to be based on facts and evidence. It would commence with an Annual Monitoring Report on the LDP which had to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG) by October this year and would set out how the authority was delivering against the LDP's objectives and would inform any review of the LDP. Alongside that was the Delivery Agreement (DA) between the Council and WG in relation to how the plan would be produced and setting out the timeline. The DA included a Statement of Community Involvement, which had been tested and found to be sound. Before the LDP review commenced the process would be explained to Members to assist them with questions from their residents. He referred to the timelines set out in the Notice of Motion saying that they were ambitious and likely to be rejected by WG. He then proceeded to outline the next steps:-

- The Annual Monitoring Report would be presented to WG by the end of October and include the evidence on whether the plan was delivering.
- Planning Strategy Group was the lead body where officers and Members worked together.
- The Annual Monitoring Report would then be presented to Cabinet.
- The Delivering Agreement would be presented to Cabinet which would be subject to consultation before it was adopted.

Councillor Ellis referred to the LDP and the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites and asked for clarification with regard to illegal sites. The Chief Officer said the Development Plan Policies would be used to assess any sites which came forward. If they had acted prematurely and retrospective planning applications were applied then the Development Plan Policies would be used to refuse that application.

Councillor Coggins Cogan proposed an amendment. That resolution 1 remained the same with the following amendment to resolution 2 "that Cabinet should develop and publish a strategy for enhanced community involvement in the plan process **as soon as possible** Resolutions 3 and 4 in place of the dates to have a functioning LDP **as soon as possible**. Councillor Parkhurst seconded the amendments.

Councillor Peers felt resolution 1 should start immediately but said the Chief Officer had explained that this could not start immediately because of the documentation which had to be presented to WG.

The Chief Officer (Governance) read out the proposed amendments:-

Recommendation 2 to read : "that cabinet should develop and publish a strategy for enhanced community involvement in the plan process as soon as possible.

Recommendation 3 to read: to recommend that the request for candidate sites should be commenced as soon as possible.

Recommendation 4 to read: to recommend that a draft plan should be ready for a vote on depositing with the Welsh Government as soon as possible.

Councillor Richard Jones said nothing could start until the Annual Monitoring Report was submitted at the end of October and the response was received. He felt it would be more beneficial for a report to be submitted to the Planning Strategy Group to discuss with a report then to County Council. Councillor Bithell agreed with the comments made by Councillor Richard Jones.

The Chief Officer (Planning Environment & Economy) referred to the review timelines and a response to what was proposed "as soon as possible". He said that by submitting the Annual Monitoring Report the Council would be in the review process. The response received from Welsh Government would be reviewed by Planning Strategy Group and he outlined the two functions that this Group managed. These were the functions of the development management process and the production of the Local Development Plan and Strategic Development Plan. Prior to the start of the review there would be a lesson learnt process reviewing the adoption of the current plan.

Councillor Swash commented that he was not willing to accept the amendment which was because not setting specific times made it difficult to measure success. He felt the Enhanced Community Involvement could happen immediately as could the request for candidate sites and he did not accept that no work could be undertaken now. He recognised the concerns regarding timing and delays because of WG but speculative development had occurred because a LDP had not been in place. He asked for the support of Members to ensure that proper community engagement took place which would ensure the next plan could proceed with the support of residents.

A recorded vote was requested on the amendment, to remove the dates and replace with "as soon as possible" and was supported by the requisite number of Members.

The following voted for the amendment:

Councillors: Bateman, Coggins Cogan, Copple, Crease, Rob Davies, Ellis, Owen, Parkhurst, Peers, Richardson, Selvester and Wren.

The following voted against

Councillors: Hutchinson, Buckley, Allport, Bibby, Bithell, Brockley, Carberry, Claydon, Collett, Cunningham, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Eastwood, Evans, Gee, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Hodge, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Ibbotson, Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Lister, Lloyd, Mackie, Maddison, McGuill, McKeown, Mullin, Palmer, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Preece, Roberts, Rose, Rush, Shallcross, Swash, Thomas, Turton, Wakelam and Woolley

The amendment was not carried.

Councillor Richard Jones proposed a further amendment to await the result of the Annual Monitoring Report, that the report be considered by the Planning Strategy

Group prior to informing Full Council in November. This was seconded by Councillor Ian Roberts

In response to a comment, the Chief Officer (Governance) suggested that a vote be taken on the substantive motion and if it was not supported, Council had an understanding of the process and timeline as regarding to Planning Strategy Group.

The following voted for the Notice of Motion

Councillors: Brockley, Coggins Cogan, Copple, Gee, Ibbotson, Parkhurst, Preece, Richardson, Rose, Swash, Turton, Wren.

The following voted against the Notice of Motion

Councillors: Hutchinson, Buckley, Allport, Bibby, Bithell, Carberry, Claydon, Collett, Crease, Cunningham, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Chris Dolphin, Rosetta Dolphin, Eastwood, Ellis, Evans, David Healey, Gladys Healey, Hodge, Dave Hughes, Ray Hughes, Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones, Simon Jones, Lister, Lloyd, Mackie, Maddison, McGuill, McKeown, Mullin, Owen, Palmer, Peers, Michelle Perfect, Vicky Perfect, Roberts, Rush, Shallcross, Thomas, Wakelam and Woolley.

The Notice of Motion was not supported.

Notice of Motion - Audit Wales "Cracks in the Foundations" Report
Proposed by: Councillor Rose Seconded by: Councillor Ibbotson

Flintshire County Council notes:

- 1) The Audit Wales report "Cracks in the Foundations – Building Safety in Wales", commissioned following the Grenfell disaster;
- 2) That the report states "Factors that should be considered when setting fees are specified in the regulations. Apart from the principle of breaking even and staff costs, the factors include use of the building, floor size, and cost. However, other potential considerations such as the competitiveness of fees and comparing with others are not specified in the Regulations... We have concluded that many local authorities' building control services are not charging and setting fees in line with the Regulations and CIPFA guidance."
- 3) That Flintshire's action plan to address the report states "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.", and
- 4) That the action plan, despite critical comments at Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee, was passed by cabinet.

Flintshire County Council believes:

- 1) That the action plan as drafted directly contradicts the Audit Wales report.
- 2) That the Council should comply with laws and regulations.

Flintshire County Council resolves:

- 1) That the Council regrets the Cabinet's decision to approve an action plan which endorses a fee-setting approach which Audit Wales have said falls out with the regulations, and
- 2) That, in setting fees and charges for the Building Control service, Cabinet should ensure that it complies fully with the regulations and ignores alternative methods of calculation.

In speaking to the Notice of Motion, Councillor Rose explained that the initial audit emanated from the Grenfell tragedy. The Notice of Motion related to two reports which were presented to the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 11th of June. The first was from Audit Wales published in August 2023 looking at building control in Wales and titled 'Cracks in the Foundations' to understand how well Welsh Government (WG), Local Authorities and Partners were strengthening and improving building control. The report stated that other potential considerations such as competitiveness of fees and comparing with others were not specified in the Regulations.

Such other considerations may therefore appear not to be relevant. This was very simple and clear as the plan which went to Council stated that building control was a competitive service with customers using other means outside the Council to secure their building regulations. A subsequent review would need to ensure that prices remained competitive in the market. He sought support in agreeing that Flintshire County Council should be conforming to regulations.

Councillor Ibbotson formally seconded the Notice of Motion and reserved his right to speak until later in the debate.

Councillor Bithell commented that it was important note that the Local Action Plan, as set out in recommendation 5 of the Audit Wales Report, had not been finalised. He assumed that the Action Plan reference in the Notice of Motion was the appendix to the Cabinet report on the 18th of June which detailed progress to date on the four recommendations set out by Audit Wales in respect of local authorities. Cabinet was asked to note the report and its appendix and approve the measures which were set out in relation to Audit Wales recommendations. He confirmed that the Local Action Plan had not been approved and a final plan would set out a clear vision for building control to be able to effectively implement the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022. Local authorities building control officers across Wales, with the support of Local Authority Building Control Cymru, had an ongoing dialogue to reach an agreement for a template for Local Action Plans that would provide continuity across Wales, at the same time allowing for each authority to build into its own Action Plan those elements which were individual to them, such as assessment of local risks and mitigating actions. On the comments on the review of fees and the

Council's fee setting approach, the appendix sought to advise Cabinet that the Building Control Service was a competitive one and that people seeking building regulations approval did not have to use the Council's service. The Council had set a target for building control fees income and the report was seeking to highlight that there were risks associated with fees income as a result of outside competition. In response to recommendation number 2 he could confirm and reassure the Council that in setting the fees and charges for building control services the Council fully complied with the set legal framework for financial governance of local authority building control which set out the building control under the Local Authority Charging Regulations 2010. The key principle of those regulations was that the local authority should recover their costs relating to chargeable functions and chargeable advice with users of the building control services only paying for the chargeable services that they had received. Aiding the Council in setting and properly accounting their building control fees and charges the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) which had developed detailed guidance and taken together with the regulations the Council would review and set updated fees having regard to those legal frameworks only. A review of Flintshire County Council's charges for building control would form part of the service's response to the Audit Wales Report, in particular, in respect of recommendation number 6 which recommended a review of fees and charges to ensure compliance with the regulations and the service would be supported by colleagues in Internal Audit for this review.

Councillor Ibbotson referred to the competitive market which existed in this sector and he was grateful for the Cabinet Member's confirmed support for reforms and his commitment to raise this with WG. He outlined the broader concerns and implications stating that the Council was obliged to set its fees at the breakeven point, if the fees were lowered then less of a service should be provided. Services were stretched across many services of the Council but building control fees were all fully recoverable. Officers prepared estimates on applications which included the costs and time involved, with a wide degree of latitude of the levels which fees may be set. Fees could be set at a competitive level without competitiveness being taken into account which was important. If this was carried out properly lives would be saved in Flintshire. He appreciated and welcomed the Cabinet Member's comments and asked Cabinet to commit to setting fees without competitiveness being taken into consideration when setting levels.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy) explained that work was currently being undertaken on the Action Plan. In relation to the proposals for fee settings being unlawful, he clarified that this was not the case and the regulations would be followed when setting fees. Flintshire's Building Control Service was one of the most successful in North Wales, with officers holding all the accreditation referred to in the Audit Wales Report. The service was in a positive place and Internal Audit were working with the service to ensure the fees were set at the correct level, were lawful and supported the function moving forward.

On being put to the vote, the Notice of Motion was not supported.

27. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None were received.

28. QUESTIONS

Six were received and had been included in the agenda for the meeting:-

- (1) From **Councillor Coggins-Cogan** on holiday hunger payments. A full written response was provided at the meeting.
- (2) From **Councillor Ibbotson** on support in place for payments eligible for those children in receipt of free schools meals over the summer holidays. A full written response was provided at the meeting.
- (3) From **Councillor Coggins Cogan** on attendance at a meeting by Aura. A full written response was provided at the meeting.
- (4) From **Councillor Parkhurst** On Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – Mold Ornamental Gardens. A full written response was provided at the meeting.
- (5) From **Councillor Parkhurst** on the Synthite Fire. A full written response was provided at the meeting.
- (6) From **Councillor Swash** On Council contracts or agreements with a value of more than £250,000 in each year. The relevant Cabinet Member responded.

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS ON COMMITTEE MINUTES

None received.

30. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There was no member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 1.00 p.m. and ended at 17.06 p.m.)

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Chair

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 24 September 2024
Report Subject	Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local authorities in Wales have discretionary powers to charge a council tax premium of up to 300% above the standard charge on long term empty properties and second homes.

To support bringing properties back into use, 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. 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 in February 2024, and a Cabinet decision in March 2024, Cabinet commissioned a further public consultation on the premium rates for long term empty properties and second homes. Specifically, it asked whether those rates should be varied from April 2025, and if so, to what level.

This report sets out the public feedback following the recent consultation, and the key considerations for setting or varying the premium rates.

Council will now have short window at the meeting to alter the premium (should Council wish to do so), before the 2025/26 Council Tax Base is set at the end of October 2024. Council is therefore asked to determine whether the rates should remain the same or be varied from April 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Consider the council tax premium rates and the consultation feedback then decide whether the council tax premium rates for second homes and/or long term-empty properties should remain the same or be varied from April 2025.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM SCHEME AND RATES
1.01	<p>Following the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Cabinet and Full Council agreed to introduce a council tax premium charge of 50% from April 2017 for dwellings designated as being periodically occupied (usually referred to as second homes) or long-term empty properties.</p>
1.02	<p>The Council increased the premium rates to 75% for long term empty properties and 100% for second homes from April 2023.</p>
1.03	<p>Since the premium rates were uplifted, the number of long term-empty properties and second homes subject to the premium have marginally reduced, as more owners are bringing their properties into full use.</p> <p>An analysis of the 766 properties by Town and Community Council area is shown in Appendix 1 to this report.</p> <p>There are currently 766 properties subject to the premium charge. 593 properties are subject to the 75% long term empty premium and 173 properties are liable for the 100% second home premium. This equates to 1% of all domestic properties being subject to some form of premium charge.</p>
1.04	<p>In line with the recommendations of Council at the meeting held on 20 February 2024, Cabinet committed to undertake a further public consultation to review the premium rates which could take effect from April 2025.</p>
1.05	<p>This report therefore sets out the results of the 12-week public consultation that was undertaken from April 2024 to July 2024 to canvass the views and opinions of the public on the current premium scheme, its effectiveness, and the use of the scheme to incentivise owners to bring properties into full use.</p> <p>There was a total of 215 responses to the consultation. A comprehensive breakdown of the consultation results is set out in Appendix 2 and the free format comments are detailed in Appendix 3.</p> <p>In summary, for second home premiums, the consultation confirms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 39.7% felt that second homes had a negative impact on their local community compared to 23% who felt they had a positive impact.• Over two thirds (67.3%) felt that the premium for second homes should remain at the current level, be reduced, or not charged at all, compared to 32.7% who felt it should be increased. <p>For long-term empty properties, the consultation confirms:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55.9% thought long-term empty properties have a negative impact on their local community compared to only 2.5% feeling they had a positive effect. • 55.1% felt that the premium for long-term empty properties should remain at 75%, be lowered, or not charged at all. • 56.2% of respondents felt that a long-term empty premium should not be linked to the period it is unoccupied. <p>When asked about both long-term empty properties and second homes, almost 49% felt they decrease the availability of affordable housing with only 3.4% suggesting they increase availability, and 52.7% indicated that if the premium was to increase, the number of second homes and long-term empty properties may reduce.</p> <p>The consultation results show limited public appetite for increases to the current premium rates for either second homes or long-term empty properties.</p>
1.06	<p>The previous public consultation conducted in November 2021 illustrated stronger public support for consideration in varying the premium rates with 50.4% advising they would like to see an increase in the premium at the time on second homes and 50.9% favoured an increase in a premium on long-term empty properties.</p> <p>There was also higher confidence in respondents to the previous consultation in 2021 that second homes and long-term empty properties contributed to a decline in availability of affordable housing with 55.3% indicating they reduced availability in 2021 compared to 49% in the 2024 consultation.</p>
1.07	<p>When considering any changes to the council tax premium scheme or the levels being charged, elected members must continue to have due regard to the Welsh Government guidance which says:</p> <p><i>“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 deciding 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 considered 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”.</i></p>
1.08	<p>When considering whether to amend the premium levels, elected members must also consider the discretion given to Local Authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help Local Authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure, and affordable homes; and • increase the supply of affordable housing and enhance the sustainability of local communities.

1.09 Following the consultation, if Cabinet and Council is inclined to vary the level of the premium, other key considerations should be based on local housing needs, including:

- Numbers and percentages of long-term empty homes or second homes in the area;
- Distribution of long-term empty homes or second homes and other housing throughout the authority and an assessment of their impact on property values in particular areas;
- Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry;
- Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes;
- Potential impact on local public services;
- Potential impact on the local community;
- Other measures that are available to authorities to increase housing supply;
- Other measures that are available to authorities to help bring empty properties back into use.

1.10 In relation to long term empty properties, the regulations also allow Councils to charge different premium rates based on the length of time long term empty properties have been empty. This enables Councils to take a stepped approach, with incremental increases to the premium applying over time.

Several local authorities in Wales are now adopting this incremental approach where the charges increase over time. This enables Councils to target those properties that have been empty for an extended period, and in some case for many years. Implementing this approach can encourage owners to either sell or bring property back into full occupation.

For long term empty homes, the table below provides a summary of the number of properties subject to the premium and the length of time such properties have been empty and not in use:

Period of non-occupation	Number of LTE Dwellings
1-3 years	287
3-6 years	122
6-11 years	108
11-16 years	31
16-21 years	22
21-26 years	10
Over 26 years	15

The Revenues service has regular contact from residents who become liable for the premium charges and there are many reasons properties may remain unoccupied for an extended period. In many cases, the circumstances can be wide ranging and complex but typically include

	<p>financial constraints to make properties habitable, barriers and the financial practicalities of properties being designated with Listed Buildings status, or the works required not being economically viable for a return on the investment.</p> <p>Many properties that have been empty for extended periods of time include flats over shops where it may not be practical to let out or there may be complex access issues to comply with other regulations, properties with negative equity and properties that have complex legal matters ongoing regarding ownership following the death of the previous owner.</p>																
1.11	<p>Council Tax legislation provides for several exemptions from the charge, including time limited exemptions where a dwelling is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished (up to 6 months exemption) and dwellings undergoing major repairs (up to 12 months exemption). During the period of exemption, dwellings that are exempt from council tax are not liable for the premium.</p> <p>However, where a dwelling is no longer eligible for an exemption, but remains unoccupied, it may become liable for the premium.</p>																
1.12	<p>Additionally, a premium cannot be charged on a dwelling that falls with an exception class. The regulations set out the following exceptions from the premium. Some exceptions are time limited and as such some of these dwellings may proceed to being liable for the premium in the future.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="365 1077 1342 2024"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="368 1081 1110 1173">Exception Class</th> <th data-bbox="1110 1081 1339 1173">Number of exceptions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1173 1110 1245">Class 1 – Properties being marketed for sale (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1173 1339 1245">65</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1245 1110 1317">Class 2 – Properties being marketed for let (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1245 1339 1317">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1317 1110 1386">Class 3 – Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of the main property</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1317 1339 1386">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1386 1110 1482">Class 4 – Properties which would be someone’s sole and main residence if they were not residing in Armed Forces accommodation</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1386 1339 1482">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1482 1110 1621">Class 5 – Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings where the caravan or boat currently has no resident but when next in use will be a person’s main residence</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1482 1339 1621">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1621 1110 1890">Class 6 - Where year-round occupation is prohibited by planning conditions preventing occupancy for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a continuous period of at least 28 days in any one year period; or • specifying that the dwelling may be used for short term holiday let only; or • preventing occupancy as a person’s sole or main residence </td> <td data-bbox="1110 1621 1339 1890">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="368 1890 1110 2020">Class 7 – Job related properties where a property is left empty because the person in relation to the dwelling is now resident in another dwelling which is ‘job-related’ (as defined by Regulations).</td> <td data-bbox="1110 1890 1339 2020">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Exception Class	Number of exceptions	Class 1 – Properties being marketed for sale (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)	65	Class 2 – Properties being marketed for let (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)	1	Class 3 – Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of the main property	2	Class 4 – Properties which would be someone’s sole and main residence if they were not residing in Armed Forces accommodation	2	Class 5 – Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings where the caravan or boat currently has no resident but when next in use will be a person’s main residence	0	Class 6 - Where year-round occupation is prohibited by planning conditions preventing occupancy for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a continuous period of at least 28 days in any one year period; or • specifying that the dwelling may be used for short term holiday let only; or • preventing occupancy as a person’s sole or main residence 	7	Class 7 – Job related properties where a property is left empty because the person in relation to the dwelling is now resident in another dwelling which is ‘job-related’ (as defined by Regulations).	0
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1.13	<p>The Council was one of the first local authorities in Wales to introduce a council tax premium scheme in 2017, and 82% of local authorities in Wales now operate a premium scheme.</p> <p>Appendix 4 to this report sets out the council tax premium rates across Wales for 2024/25.</p> <p>In summary, and in respect of second homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four local authorities do not charge a second home premium. • Three charge a second home premium less than 100% • Twelve levy a 100% rate – the same rate charged in Flintshire. • Three local authorities charge a rate above 100%. <p>In respect of long-term empty homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four local authorities do not charge an LTE premium. • Two, including Flintshire, charge a premium less than 100%. • Sixteen charge a premium at 100% or above, and of these, nine levy a premium which is aligned to the length of time a property is left empty.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>If County Council are inclined to increase the level of the premium on long term empty properties and/or second homes following the recent consultation, the uplift will be incorporated into the forthcoming Tax Base calculations for 2025/26.</p> <p>Also, the additional revenue generated may also help meet local housing needs, in line with the policy intentions of the premium scheme. For example, the funds could be used to help with a pressure bid for the empty homes scheme which is designed to bring houses back into use.</p>
2.02	<p>The premium scheme specifically provides additional total council tax income of around £1.21m per annum.</p>
2.03	<p>If the premium rates are increased, the total additional revenue generated to support services across the three precepts will depend on the revised rate levels.</p> <p>For long-term empty properties, and assuming the number of properties remains the same, this will consist of an additional £114.7k for every 10% increase above the current 75% level. In other words, if the rate was increased to 100%, the additional revenue will be £286.8k.</p> <p>For second homes, and assuming the number of properties remains the same, this will consist of an additional £35.4k for every 10% increase above the current 100% level.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	To support the latest review, a public consultation was undertaken from April 2024 to July 2024. The feedback from this consultation is summarised in the body of the report and set out in full at appendices 2 and 3 .

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Changing the council tax premium levels brings an increasing need to balance several risks. Firstly, minimising council tax levels and avoiding financial hardship for the owners of empty properties and second homes, especially those who might be genuinely trying to bring long term empty properties back into use. Secondly, the need to use the local taxation system to address the issue of housing shortages within communities and addressing the negative impact on communities that empty homes can bring.
4.02	Any change to premium rates will feed into the Tax Base calculations, and impact on the Councils revenue plans and must be considered in its budget setting and MFTS and therefore a decision at Council in September 2024 is required as any potential uplifts in the premium rates, must be reflected in the 2025/26 Tax Base which will be calculated in October 2024 and approved by Cabinet in November 2024.
4.03	The setting of the 2025/26 premium rates, which is included in the overall Tax Base, is integral to the revenue budget and council tax setting process and allows the Council, the Police & Crime Commissioners Office for North Wales, and the thirty-four Town and Community Councils to calculate their own precept requirements for 2025/26.
4.04	<p>When taking strategic decisions, the Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language, and the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.</p> <p>An impact assessment has been undertaken using a decision support tool. It provides the decision makers with a high-level assessment of how decisions around the council tax premium scheme meets policy goals and the impact on residents. Appendix 5 and 6 sets out the outcome of the impact assessment.</p> <p>In relation to the wellbeing considerations, the continuation of the premium scheme is intended to help bring properties back into full use, the improve the availability of housing and to support the sustainability of local communities. The premium scheme will continue to positively contribute to the well-being objectives:</p>

- **Prosperous Wales** – the premium scheme helps to incentivise owners to bring properties back into full use, thereby helping to develop resilient and sustainable communities.
- **Resilient Wales** – the premium scheme helps to incentivise owners to bring properties back into full use, thereby helping to develop resilient and sustainable communities.
- **Healthier Wales** – adequate provision and availability of housing is recognised as a key enabler to good health.
- **More equal Wales** - the premium scheme is designed to ensure empty homes are brought back into use and enable residents to secure homes. This will create fairness in the system as we know that housing issues tend to be more acute for younger people who often find it difficult to secure homes.
- **Cohesive Wales** - Pressures in the local housing market are such that people who live and work in the County are increasingly find it difficult to get on the property ladder and secure a house. The premium scheme could have a positive impact by encouraging owners to bring empty properties back into use and thereby helping to develop strong and cohesive communities by addressing housing needs.
- **Vibrant Wales** - the policy disincentivises properties being left empty or being periodically occupied and instead encourages properties to be lived in full time as a primary residence. Having a higher percentage of properties being permanent residences will encourage the uptake, maintenance of the Welsh language in the community. It will also provide more opportunity for residents to have access to housing stock when they require to stay living local and contribute to the local culture of the area rather than migrating away.
- **Globally responsible Wales** - No impact

Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact:

Long-term	Positive: Access to affordable housing remains, as well as bringing empty homes back into full, use remains a strategic long-term priority for the Council to enhance the local housing market and improve local communities. The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use ensuring that we maximise the use of our existing resources prior to exploring the possibility of encouraging new developments.
Prevention	Positive: The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. Reducing the number of empty homes will in the long term tend to reduce housing disrepair. Empty homes can also have a detrimental impact on local communities and many of the respondents to the consultation.

	Integration	Positive: There is a close alignment with Welsh government priorities of the refurbishment of empty properties into homes. One of the Councils key objectives is ‘Developing affordable and accessible housing’.
	Collaboration	No change
	Involvement	Positive: A full public consultation has been undertaken. The summary of the consultation is set out in Appendix 2 and 3 to this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Analysis of Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes • Appendix 2 - Results of the 12-week public consultation • Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the public consultation • Appendix 4 - Analysis of premium schemes and rates across Wales • Appendix 5 - Impact Assessment and Decision Support Tool • Appendix 6 – Impact Assessment Summary

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 • Local Government Finance Act 1992, sections 12A and 12B • Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regs 2015 • The Council Tax (Long Term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 • Welsh Government Guidance on the implementation of the Council Tax Premium scheme https://www.gov.wales/council-tax-premiums-long-term-empty-and-second-homes-guidance-local-authorities-html • The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 <p>Contact Officer: David Barnes, Revenues & Procurement Manager Telephone: 01352 704848 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	<p>Council Tax Premium: an additional amount of Council Tax of up to 300% (a premium) can be charged by local authorities in Wales for property defined as either being second homes or long-term empty property. There are some exceptions from the Council Tax premium, some of which are time limited.</p> <p>Long Term Empty Property: is defined as a property which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of six months or more, but to be liable for a premium, it would be unoccupied and unfurnished for a continuous period of one year or longer.</p> <p>A Second Home: is defined as a property which is not a person's sole or main residence, is substantially furnished and which could be periodically occupied.</p>
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APPENDIX 1 - ANALYSIS OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM CASES

	Number of Properties	Second Homes Premiums	Long Term Empty Premiums	Total Premiums	Proportion of Premium Cases
Argoed	2,538	3	10	13	1.70%
Bagillt	1,808	4	14	18	2.35%
Broughton & Bretton	2,898	1	10	11	1.44%
Brynford	439	1	8	9	1.17%
Buckley	7,522	7	37	44	5.74%
Caerwys	632	3	9	12	1.57%
Cilcain	608	7	6	13	1.70%
Connahs Quay	7,342	13	49	62	8.09%
Flint	6,192	9	58	67	8.75%
Gwernaffield & Pantymwyn	871	4	5	9	1.17%
Gwernymynydd	530	4	5	9	1.17%
Halkyn	1,284	4	11	15	1.96%
Hawarden	6,328	12	34	46	6.01%
Higher Kinnerton	754	0	1	1	0.13%
Holywell	4,371	16	41	57	7.44%
Hope	1,892	7	22	29	3.79%
Leeswood	977	2	15	17	2.22%
Llanasa	2,194	27	55	82	10.70%
Llanfynydd	825	0	7	7	0.91%
Mold	4,934	11	37	48	6.27%
Mostyn	871	2	11	13	1.70%
Nannerch	214	4	5	9	1.17%
Nercwys	264	2	3	5	0.65%
Northop	1,398	1	9	10	1.31%
Northop Hall	764	1	7	8	1.04%
Penyffordd	2,181	1	9	10	1.31%
Queensferry	969	1	21	22	2.87%
Saltney	2,347	3	12	15	1.96%
Sealand	1,703	3	21	24	3.13%
Shotton	2,994	8	26	34	4.44%
Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor	414	2	5	7	0.91%
Treuddyn	749	2	7	9	1.17%
Whitford	1,045	6	19	25	3.26%
Ysceifiog	548	2	4	6	0.78%
Total Number of Properties	71,400	173	593	766	
% of LTE's and Second Homes		0.24%	0.83%	1.07%	

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Consultation on Reviewing the Council Tax Premium Scheme for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes in Flintshire

Page 43

July 2024

Introduction

The public were invited to submit their views on the current premium scheme and the level of premium.

The consultation was open for 12 weeks and was formed of 15 questions and was live from Monday 15th April 2024 to 8th July 2024.










215 full or partial responses were received either in English or Welsh to the consultation.

The responses are documented over the coming pages.



Responses included 12.56% who identified as existing long-term empty property owners and 15.94% who indicated they were existing second home owners.

1. From the list below please select the option(s) which best describe you. Please tick all that apply to you

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I am a permanent resident of Flintshire who currently pays Council Tax		73.91%	153
2	I am a permanent resident of Flintshire who currently does not pay Council Tax		0.97%	2
3	My main residence is in Flintshire, and I own a second home in Flintshire		4.83%	10
4	My main residence is in Flintshire, and I own another long-term empty property in Flintshire		9.18%	19
5	My main residence is outside of Flintshire, and I own a second home in Flintshire		11.11%	23
6	My main residence is outside of Flintshire, and I own another long-term empty property in Flintshire		3.38%	7
7	I am a Flintshire County Councillor		1.93%	4
8	I am a Town or Community Council Councillor		4.83%	10
9	Other (please specify):		10.63%	22



Almost 56% of respondents felt long-term empty dwellings had a negative impact on local communities

2. In Flintshire there are currently 616 long-term empty properties subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do long-term empty dwellings currently have on local communities?

Page 46





Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Positive impact		2.45%	5
2	No impact		30.39%	62
3	Negative impact		55.88%	114
4	I do not know		11.27%	23



Only 23% of submissions indicated that second homes had a positive impact on their local community

3. In Flintshire there are currently 170 second homes subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do second homes currently have on local communities?

Page 47

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Positive impact		23.04%	47
2	No impact		24.51%	50
3	Negative impact		39.71%	81
4	I do not know		12.75%	26



Almost 49% of respondents feel that long-term empty properties and second homes decrease the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire, compared with only 3.4% who suggest they increase availability.

4. In Flintshire there are currently 2,088 people on the waiting list for social/affordable housing. In your opinion, what impact do long-term empty dwellings and second homes currently have on the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire?

Page 48

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Increase availability		3.41%	7
2	Have no impact		37.56%	77
3	Decrease availability		48.78%	100
4	I do not know		10.24%	21



Most respondents felt that an increase in the premium on second homes and long-term empty properties would have no impact on the opportunity to learn Welsh, or the number of Welsh speakers or have an impact on Welsh speaking communities.







5. Do you think an increase of the council tax premium on both long-term empty properties and second homes could have a negative/positive or neutral impact on:

Answer Choices	Positive impact	No impact	Negative impact	I don't know	Response Total
Opportunities to use Welsh socially?	11.33% 23	61.08% 124	18.23% 37	9.36% 19	203
Increase the number of people speaking or learning Welsh in Flintshire?	10.78% 22	66.67% 136	11.27% 23	11.27% 23	204
Use of Welsh language services?	9.80% 20	66.67% 136	10.78% 22	12.75% 26	204
Welsh speaking communities?	11.82% 24	62.07% 126	13.79% 28	12.32% 25	203

Page 49



67.3% of respondents felt that the premium for second homes should remain at the current level, be reduced, or not charged at all

6. The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 100% on second homes. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Should remain at the current level of 100%		24.88%	51
2	Should be raised to between 101% and 150%		7.80%	16
3	Should be raised to between 151% and 200%		9.76%	20
4	Should be raised to between 201% and 300%		15.12%	31
5	Should be reduced below the current level of 100%		22.44%	46
6	Should not be charged		20.00%	41



55.1% of replies felt that the premium for long-term empty properties should remain the same at 75%, be lower, or not charged at all

7. The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 75% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?			Response Percent	Response Total
Answer Choices				
1	Should remain at the current level of 75%		12.20%	25
2	Should be raised to 100%		17.07%	35
3	Should be raised to between 101% and 200%		12.20%	25
4	Should be raised to between 201% and 300%		15.61%	32
5	Should be reduced below the current level of 75%		19.51%	40
6	Should not be charged		23.41%	48





Q8 asked respondents to briefly explain the reason for their selections in questions 6 and 7.

The full free text responses are detailed in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation.



A majority of those responding felt that the level of premium for long-term empty properties should not increase the longer it remains unoccupied.

9. A premium becomes payable for a long-term empty property after it has been vacant for 12 months – unless it qualifies for an exception. Do you think that the level of the premium charged should increase, the longer a property remains continuously empty?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		43.84%	89
2	No		56.16%	114



Most respondents (52.7%) indicated that an increase in the premium would reduce the number of second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire with only a minority of 4.9% feeling it would increase the number.

10. If the premium were to be increased, what impact do you think this would have on the number of second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire?

Page 54

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	The number would increase		4.88%	10
2	The number would stay the same		28.78%	59
3	The number would decrease		52.68%	108
4	I do not know		13.66%	28



24% believe that an increase in the premium on long-term empty and second properties would decrease house prices in Flintshire, however, 45.1% felt an increase in premium would have no impact.








11. What impact do you think an increase in the council tax premium on long-term empty properties and second homes could have on house prices in Flintshire?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No impact		45.10%	92
2	A decrease in house prices		24.02%	49
3	An increase in house prices		9.80%	20
4	I don't know		21.08%	43

Page 55



Of those completing the consultation who are current owners of second homes or long-term empty properties in Flintshire, the most common action that they would undertake is to sell the property. 43 respondents provided an explanation of why they selected “other”. These responses are in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation

12. If you are the owner of a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, what action would you be likely to take if the premium was to be increased.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No action, I would pay the premium		6.03%	12
2	Sell the property		10.05%	20
3	I would move into the property myself		4.52%	9
4	Rent the second home		3.52%	7
5	Refurbish the property to a habitable standard and rent it out		3.02%	6
6	Not applicable - I do not own a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire		51.26%	102
7	Other (please specify):		21.61%	43

Page 56



31.2% of replies indicated that they felt that an increase in the premium above the current levels would have a negative impact on their local community, slightly higher than the 29.3% who felt it would have a positive impact.

13. In your opinion, what impact would an increase - above the current premium level - have on your local community.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Positive impact		29.27%	60
2	No impact		23.41%	48
3	Negative impact		31.22%	64
4	I do not know		14.15%	29
5	Not applicable - I am not a resident of Flintshire		1.95%	4

Page 57

A high percentage of responses indicated that they felt that there were circumstances where they felt the premium should be waived. 133 respondents provided further free text response regarding the circumstances they feel the premium should be waived and these responses can be viewed in full in Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation

Page 58

14. In the event a property becomes subject to the long-term empty premium, do you think there are any circumstances where it should be waived

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	66.01%	134
2	No	19.70%	40
3	Don't know	14.29%	29

90 respondents provided further comment which can be viewed in Appendix 3 – Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation.

15. We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	90

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Appendix 3 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation

Index

Question 8Pages 2-24
Question 12.....Page 25-27
Question 14.....Pages 28-35
Question 15.....Pages 36-48

Q 8 Please briefly explain the reason for your selections in questions 6 and 7.

For reference:

Q 6 The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 100% on second homes. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?

Q7 The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 75% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?

The responses have been summarised into the categories below.

Response Received in Support of the Premium on Second Homes

I feel this would make second homeowners either rent out their property or sell it. This would then help the people on long waiting lists. Or would increase revenue to local government
Second homes are an added advantage that should see an increase in 101% and 150% as these are not in permanent use above 151% is too high.
Hopefully encourage owners to use homes to help reduce housing shortage
Second homes are unnecessary, domestic houses are built to be lived in at all times, not just during a holiday period. The people living in them would be part of a community, they may work and shop elsewhere but their heart/body will remain in their community.
If homes are not used they bring little/no value to the local economy and Flintshire residents are denied opportunities for homes. Therefore, there should be a deterrent.
I believe that empty homes should pay the highest rate suggested to encourage those who own them to make use of them. I can see some benefit to having second home owners if those owners utilise their properties and engage with the local economy so I suggest the second to highest increase. If the second home could also be described as long term empty then the highest rate should apply.
There is a large demand for homes from resident people and so second homes especially for leisure use should be discouraged. People who can afford to have second homes should contribute more to council services or mitigate council tax increases for permanent residents.
For second home owners, rates should be raised significantly. Many are out of County home owners (non-resident in Flintshire for their main residence) - this should be reviewed to keep money within the Welsh economy. There should be a cut off limit of 2 years for empty properties - and then a hike to between 201% and 300%.
Second home owners, however, are decreasing the availability of homes for local people.
If people are rich enough to own a 2nd home then surely they can afford to pay council tax for both homes
The purpose of these premiums should differ for both types but should both rise to the maximum level. On second homes, the purpose is to reallocate additional funding from these luxury assets via the local authority.

f people can afford second homes they can afford to pay higher council tax rates. If these homes are being used for short term rentals then they should be classed as business premises and possible planning permission given to see if a change of use is acceptable.

Q6 This should be done individually taking account of the use the second home and any benefit to the community

No one needs two homes, holiday homes have destroyed some Welsh communities and those who own them should pay a premium

Wales needs to stand up for itself many counties in England charge and many more abroad if people are rich enough to own a second home depriving locals make them pay or bugger off. Second home owners NEVER support the local community only line their pockets

6. In all likelihood, those able to afford a second home can afford to pay a higher rates. They have opportunities to earn income e.g. renting their second home, without contributing further to the local community. A second home is a choice, chose a second home, pay the higher rate.

Question 6: The richer holiday home owners will pay whatever council tax premium regardless, they can afford to. Those properties are usually of a high standard and out of reach price wise to working people with normal jobs.

If second homes include those which are lived in periodically, or let out as holiday homes, then owners should be able to afford to pay a council tax premium, particularly if they are generating income from the property.

Responses Received in Support of the Premium on Long-Term Empty Properties

Empty houses are an eyesore
the empty properties are sometimes a blight on the community given owners are letting some get into a very run down state. these properties could be updated and let out relieving some of the stress locals find in renting properties. Owners should either update them or sell to someone that would, even if this were the council or a housing association.
Empty dwellings are often unkempt.
In respect of long term empty homes if it meant homes which are not empty because somebody was, for example, long term in the hospital or similar situations, but rather that somebody was speculating on the price, and as well as there were quick planning permission turnaround (for example to turn an originally business property into residential and vice versa and other similar situation) I would charge even more than currently charged 75% to encourage the owners to put the property(ies) on the market (whether selling, renting anything).
Empty properties often are neglected and an eyesore for local people, attracting fly tipping and rubbish, and empty properties become over time become derelict, sometimes these properties are owned by building companies who really want to clear the site for new developments.
The purpose of these premiums should differ for both types but should both rise to the maximum level. For empty properties the purpose is to tip the balance in to making it more economic to bring them in to use than leave them empty, or to encourage them to be brought in to use earlier than they would be otherwise.
If properties are long term empty and the owners known then they should pay higher rate council tax or they should be renting the properties on a long term basis. If the owners are not traceable then the Authority should be looking at taking over the properties - renovating to an acceptable level and renting on a long term basis - any expenditure incurred can be recouped if and when the property is sold
Q7 Empty properties are a waste of a resource and higher rates might encourage letting or developing.
An empty property can have a negative effect on the surrounding area, especially if it is not maintained
6. Not their primary residence so don't get the full service from the council. I think 75% is fair to be fair. I actually don't have a problem with people having second homes in Flintshire. They still spend locally. And contribute to communities.
Second homes in Flintshire account for only 0.2% of the total housing stock. Taxing second homes in Flintshire has no relevance to increasing the supply of 'affordable housing' given such low numbers and the fact that the Council have no idea how many are indeed 'affordable' if they came on the market. Many are inherited properties, regularly used by those who grew up in Wales and their local communities. It is solely a punitive tax intended to raise extra cash - with minimal effort. By contrast long term empty properties can be a problem, and a premium would be appropriate.
7. A deterrent to leaving properties empty for long periods of time. This impacts local communities e.g. properties in poor condition, they become neglect. Of greater importance is these properties could be used in a different way to address

the significant and increasing homeless challenges. The increase in income to the Council could e.g. support homeless budgets which are significantly overspent.

As a permanent resident of Flintshire in full time employment who pays full council tax, I feel that we should not be subsidising others, especially when it feels like the less you work the more you get free. Owners of long term empty dwellings on the other hand, should pay more council tax as empty properties kill communities, become derelict if not kept well and can be repurposed instead of building cheap quality McDonald's houses that blight the area. They could help those who are in need of housing. Notwithstanding, increases are only warranted if councils spend wisely and not wastefully and most certainly not on vanity projects for a very small portion of society when fundamentals that benefit the greater part of society should come first .

if the council tax rate was increased it may then discourage people from leaving properties empty for a long period of time - as by them leaving properties empty this then has a negative impact on occupants who are living in that area and seeing the homes empty from day to day and in some cases when they are being left empty/un-occupied the properties are also left to go to rack and ruin and the gardens can become overgrown which also leaves a negative impact on residents seeing the said property day in day out.

and by increasing the council tax this may then force the owners of these properties to sell the properties/or rent them out save them being left empty.

People are in need of homes. An empty house is a waste. If left empty they can impact negatively on the area. Too many families are in temporary accommodation who could be housed in the empty properties once refurbished.

Because empty homes are a more negative aspect of the housing sector.

Reponses Received with Concerns Regarding Premiums on Second Homes

<p>Because someone is lucky enough to able to own a second property doesn't mean they should be in all honesty fined, plus houses aren't selling so if you have an empty house from a deceased relative you can't sell why should they lose out as well</p>
<p>Why should people with 2nd Homes pay extra. They don't use services as much. Council need to stop wasting money and trying to get extra Money off second home owners or empty properties. They get enough money from residents and it is wasted.</p>
<p>6 - people shouldn't be unduly punished for having second homes especially given second home in Flintshire have little impact on additional cost to council services.</p>
<p>Second homes are not using the council's facilities</p>
<p>6 - Why charge somebody more than what a full time resident would be charged?</p>
<p>People have right to have a second home if they can afford it and even 100% C/T charge is more than enough considering that they hardly use the services 'for that property'. To charge an extra 'rich' tax is not fair in my opinion. or not fair to hide it under C/T.</p>
<p>Flintshire is hardly classed as a Coastal Location, so should not really have many people wanting second homes here?</p>
<p>I can understand why Flintshire CC has doubled the Council Tax for 2nd homes. I accept the need to raise additional revenue (albeit only a very modest amount) & consider the current rate to be fair. However, I do not feel that further raising the Tax will lead to people selling their properties to bring more properties onto the market for local affordable homes.</p> <p>The number of 2nd homes is only 170 dwellings, while the number of empty properties is well over 4 times the number of 2nd homes. My family use our property often (about 50% of the year) and spend a considerable amount of money locally (shops, local tradespeople e.g. gardeners, plumbers, electricians etc etc). Empty properties have no occupants to contribute to the local economy unlike second homes but they pay a lower rate of Council Tax.</p>
<p>The number of second homes in Flintshire is very low (170). It is not an area where there is a problem of holiday homes pushing out long term residents or inflating house prices so as to prevent residents from buying properties. I am not aware of any evidence produced by the council to show any adverse impact of second homes.</p> <p>In my personal situation, the second home is a grade II* listed property which has been owned by my family since the 1980s. We have spent large amounts of money to convert outbuildings/stables into 11 cottages which we rent out for modest rents. At present the tenants benefit from the gardens and estate far more than our family. However, the repair of listed buildings is very expensive and despite the income from the cottages we inject significant funds into the estate to keep it running, employing local people.</p> <p>In recent years, high interest rates and increases in taxation on landlords (through the reduction in interest being allowed as an expense) have made the financial situation difficult. Meanwhile, we have to pay an additional £5000 of council tax in respect of the main house which I have not been able to live in as my main residence because of work commitments elsewhere. This simply takes money</p>

away from repairs to the listed buildings and the estate, to the detriment of the tenants. It also contributed towards delays in refurbishing a rented cottage because of a lack of funds.

Furthermore, the main house (to which the second home premium applies) is a large historic building which cannot in reality be let out and could not possibly constitute affordable housing. The heating and maintenance on the building are prohibitively expensive. The council tax premium therefore does nothing positive; it simply dissuades me from investing in the area (and maintaining 11 reasonably priced rental cottages on a historic estate), to the detriment of the local community. On the contrary, the area needs to encourage investment.

I would therefore suggest that, at a minimum, any second home premium should not apply to listed properties unsuitable for affordable housing.

Visitors use services and have a positive effect within local communities

WHEREAS our second home is well maintained and used by my family weekends and every school holiday as we have 3 foster children who benefit from being outside a city where they are schooled. I believe second homes with families who have foster children up to 18 or 25 if special needs, should be treated in same way as families who foster in Flint with the Flint CC, we should not be penalised as our holidays are therapeutic and it is too expensive to holiday abroad. 2 of our 3 children, all with special needs have been baptised locally and we play an active part locally in our community in Wales. There should be an exemption for families with foster children or children with an EHCP or SEND needs.

Some second homes are used approx. 6 weeks out of 52 leaving ghost towns and lost community. Not all empty properties are available or suitable to be let . I.e. owners in hospital long term due to lack of carers and care package . Working away for economic reasons

There is no correlation between increasing council tax and assuming the properties would no longer be vacant/used as holiday rentals and the placement of social housing or speaking Welsh. In fact it is extremely unlikely that these houses would be used for renting to social tenants. Many second homes are located in extremely rural settings and are large or have amenities that a social landlord would not provide. It is a completely different market. If the idea is to force these property owners to sell this is also a bad idea as the people whom you are trying to house would not be in a position to purchase said property. You will just end up going in circles or forcing more empty properties. There is also no correlation with speaking Welsh, since the use of the language has decided so much there is zero guarantee that if a house were let to a current resident of Wales that they would speak Welsh. Instead you should be focusing your energy on school/education/communities to build language skills. Housing is completely irrelevant and charging council tax to force owners to change their target market is not going to work.

The number of second homes in Flintshire is very small and I think, therefore, that this has a minimal impact on the housing situation. These properties should be reviewed for council tax increases on a case by case basis. For instance, in my case, the property is tiny and far too small for a family home having been built as a holiday home. I have a leasehold contract which does not allow subletting. When sold these properties are never bought by Welsh families due to their size, leasehold status and proximity to the sea despite their affordability. There should

be an occupancy threshold, for second homes, which dictates the amount of additional tax liability. My family and I spend nearly 7 months of the year in the property but, as I don't let it commercially, it's assumed that it's lying empty for long periods which it certainly is not. I contribute both socially and economically to the local community.

I bought a small terrace cottage in The Cottage was not fit for purposes and the lowest category of energy rating as well as had no roof, we could see up to the stars from the bedroom. The cottage had no heating system, boiler and was head to toe in damp. We received 12 months grace on the council tax and then was forced to pay £2800 to the council for the premium council tax WHISLT we spent 2023-to date making the cottage habitable for our family to live in. Whilst renting a property in Flintshire so to avoid being homeless, we have managed to save what we can and when we can to pay for the cottage renovation. This cottage is our ONLY sole property owned. We have not qualified for help in any direction to do with the renovation and have skimped and saved and paid for new materials and labour as we can afford it. This has taken over 12 months the to do. I'm sure you can appreciate the cost of living crisis as well as our current rental monthly bills have had to take a priority over our future home . Therefore it has taken us a little while to save and do what we can to it as we can afford it. As a result the cottage remained empty and uninhabitable, no energy rating and no bathroom, kitchen, running water etc.

When we had recently save almost £3000 for the Heating system to go in, so we could progress with the repairs and renovation, bringing the house up to standards for every rating (baring in mind we had NO HELP from authorised to do so). We were told that Flintshire County Council WANTED our savings off us for unpaid PREMIUM COUNCIL TAX. Therefore the £3,000 we had saved and worked hard to save in order to put a new system in, to make it habitable was TAKEN FROM US BY THE FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

I would ask what part of FAIR do you think this is?

You also state in a number of these questions about the value of the Welsh Language. As an indigenous resident of North Wales and a Welsh Speaker I would question the credibility of your motives and argue the way the local councils chose to favour the spending of our working tax funds on overseas "indigenous" cultures rather than looking after their own I.e. WELSH PEOPLE born and bred in WALES.

There are assumptions that second homes or vacant dwellings are taking away opportunities for affording housing. This position is misconceived. Flintshire Council Tax is already exorbitant. Second homes bring much needed income into traditionally poorer areas.

Second home owners put plenty back into the Flintshire economy i.e. shopping eating out using local shops and local amenities. We have had our second home for over 20 years so us our children their children and other family and friends have put an enormous amount of money back into Flintshire's economy. Yet we are penalised by having to pay at the moment 100% more than any of my neighbours. If you increase the council tax above the 100% then we shall be forced to sell. I am quite sure local people do not spend the same amount in the area as we do and that is all year round NOT just at holiday times.

<p>I own a second property within Flintshire. It has been up for sale for almost a year and due to the damage caused by the previous tenant the house can only be bought by a cash buyer hence the reason for it not selling. It is derelict and uninhabitable and I do not believe it is right that I pay 100% rates. According to Welsh Government guidelines I shouldn't. I think each property should be reviewed individually and the circumstances taken into consideration.</p>
<p>Second homes in Flintshire account for only 0.2% of the total housing stock. Taxing second homes in Flintshire has no relevance to increasing the supply of 'affordable housing' given such low numbers and the fact that the Council have no idea how many are indeed 'affordable' if they came on the market. Many are inherited properties, regularly used by those who grew up in Wales and their local communities. It is solely a punitive tax intended to raise extra cash - with minimal effort. By contrast long term empty properties can be a problem, and a premium would be appropriate.</p>
<p>I am unable to respond to these questions as they do not take all scenario's into account so any responses I provide will be biased. Although I understand the difficulties that 2nd homes can have on local populations, my situation as Trustee of a property in Flintshire is unusual. I can assure you that the property I look after is not suitable for habitation so has no impact on the local population housing difficulties.</p>
<p>2 ND home should be paid at normal charge</p>
<p>We would like to buy a property for our granddaughter, she can't afford to buy but don't want to be penalised buying a second home. We have 3 grandchildren and cannot just buy a home for one. To be fair our two grandsons who are 23 and 25 years of age are already on the property ladder.</p>
<p>Second properties in Wales are owned by people who wish to either retire or go to holiday in that area. They bring much needed income to shops, restaurants and pubs which are struggling to survive. Penalising second home owners is short sighted and a total capitalist approach which will not help any of the Council's housing issues.</p>
<p>Second homes are normally well maintained and periodically used by the owners, whereas long term empty properties, like one next door to us, are very rarely maintained at all and are a blight on our local village/neighbourhood.</p>
<p>I have lived in Flintshire all my life. I am a pensioner, I am Welsh speaking. I have an annexe on my house, and because we don't want a permanent resident living in such close proximity, we feel discriminated against by this unfair premium of 75%.</p>
<p>Higher tax may have an effect on properties available to Welsh people in holiday locations such as Snowdonia but has little effect in areas such as Flint which is not a desirable holiday home location</p>
<p>Second homes are normally more expensive than what locals can afford. So imposing increases in premiums and such will be detrimental as these properties will continue to be second homes and long term empty dwellings. You should focus more on how to bring more people into the local economy; people with these dwellings can afford to spend as well. Kill-off you wealthy visitors would simply kill-off the local economy. It's a lose-lose strategy.</p>
<p>Q6 There is a relatively small number of second homes in Flintshire. Few properties are bought as second homes for holidays in Flintshire or for holiday lets since Flintshire is not recognised as a county that attracts high levels of tourism. It is recognised more as an industrial county. The small number of second homes</p>

<p>are likely used to provide an income, supplement an income or bring about an alternative use for an otherwise disused building that may not be suitable as a primary residence. Some farmers have converted farm buildings to diversify and supplement income in an otherwise difficult and volatile industry.</p>
<p>A second home in Flintshire should be charged the same as every other home in Flintshire.</p>
<p>some areas rely heavily on tourism , if we drive the tourists away then the jobs go with them its common sense . build more houses is the answer , not fleece the second home owners who bring money into the economy.</p>
<p>As the property is not occupied continuously I do not receive as many benefits and services as full time residents. Therefore, even by paying at the normal standard rate (i.e. without any premium added) then I am helping to subsidise the services provided to the resident community. I therefore feel strongly that the premium is wrong and should be removed.</p>
<p>Many owners including ours come from families with Welsh roots and generations have lived in Flintshire. We travel to France to support Wales for the Rugby. With the house being empty the owners do not consume local council services, leaving greater access for residents to the NHS, use of less waste services and of utilities/ sewage. At the same time the owners provide employment to local trades e.g. gardeners and other trades people as the owner is not able to do these themselves. Regular visits are made to reconnect with their Welsh heritage and spending in local restaurants, markets, supermarkets and shops is higher than typical for a permanent resident. Work can force many Welsh people to reluctantly leave Wales. As families grow up and couples enter retirement, returning to Flintshire can be part of the plan and moving back to a bungalow that has been in the family since parents returned from fighting in World War 2 has many attractions. Being penalised for wanting to maintain roots in Wales is not fair. It feels that the council is trying to cut the ties of Welsh people not currently able to live in the country. The focus should be on building affordable housing rather than driving out people whose properties would not even be classified as affordable social housing.</p>
<p>I own a property in Flintshire which I visit at least 12 times a year. I contribute to local businesses and the community. I am not a UK resident and I feel I am penalised with the current council tax scheme. I would understand it if I lived in a coastal town.</p>
<p>People investing in your community bring in positive results. As much as I empathise and understand your want to give housing away as social housing all you will do is create ghettos reliant on welfare with no aspiration to leave them.</p>
<p>If a second home tax is increased it is more likely then to become a holiday rental or residential let & will not resolve any local social/affordable housing list due to the type & cost of these properties. People with a second home or holiday let generally bring more revenue to the area per visit. Some properties can also be inherited & therefore families do not wish to sell & have to look to alternatives such as holiday let etc. or maybe a family dispute as to why a property is empty.</p>
<p>I have read supporting on line information about the council tax premium. I would have liked to see data on how the application of the premium since 2017 has proved to be successful in achieving the objectives it is intended to support. For example, has the number of Long Term Empty properties remained the same, has it increased, or has it reduced since the premium has been applied? What is the rationale for basing a premium of 75 per cent on LTE properties while there is a</p>

higher premium applied to second homes? The 11 second homes in Hawarden are being charged more than the 35 LTE properties. It would have been helpful and interesting if there was an option for question 6 and 7 as follows " Do you think consideration for the level of council tax premium should include an option to review on a case by case basis?"

Long - term empty homes are more likely to be neglected whereas 2nd homes are more likely to be well maintained. It is more likely that long- term empty homes could be influenced by the council to "increase the supply of " affordable" homes. In Hawarden where we retain our original family home, we note 35 long - term empty properties and 11 second homes. Given my first statement, it is totally unfair that we are charged 100% premium whilst long - term empty are charged 75%. It is possible, though not certain, that the 'enforced' sale of long- term empty properties will assist 2,088 people on the waiting list, depending on a range of factors. The ' enforced ' sale of just 11 2nd homes would have nil effect since they will not be sold at a price 'affordable' to social housing clients, low income families or some, but maybe not all, first - time buyers. In terms of integrity, there has to be more justification for 100% premium than merely to "reduce the numbers". You cannot compare Hawarden with coastal resorts such as Abersoch in Gwynedd, although I would not be surprised if the number of Air BnBs and holiday rentals have a greater effect on housing supply even in Flintshire.

Every owner has different circumstances around the reason they have not been able to do something with an empty property, I'll health , financial around the way costs have doubled since Covid to modernise the property to bring it to the market. Also individual properties that need developing would not have any impact on social housing as the cost to rent such properties after the cost to restore them to a standard would be out of reach of most people applying for social housing. In our circumstances the should be no charge due to the fact Flintshire county council damaged the roof by sealing a traditional slate roof with flammable expanding foam which is all so toxic if heated (solar panels on next door roof fitted) can not move in

Responses received with Concerns Regarding a Premium on Long-Term Empty Properties

<p>Long term empty dwellings can be due to death and trying to sell the property which is a lot for the relatives to take on over 75%. If long term and empty no services are required from the Council such as refuse collection so the current level should remain as 75%. The raised level does not meet the need when no requirement for services from the Council and other standing bills such as water, electric and heating are still having to be met until the property is sold or lived in.</p>
<p>Long term empty dwellings can achieve this status for several disparate reasons and really it depends on the reason as to why the level of property tax is imposed. e.g. Putting the house on the market at an unrealistic price (so it will not sell) should attract a higher rate of tax than a house with the price level aimed at a better aligned market level. A house where the sale is held up by Probate issues should not have a higher rate imposed as it is not the owners fault for non-progression. These reasons can be delicate and guidelines that can be sensibly overridden by human intervention should be employed.</p>
<p>A property that is long term empty is using no services so why should there be a charge? The property may be validly empty for such a long time, such as it has been left to a family member after death, or somebody owns it but can't afford to repair it. It seems silly to hit such people 'in the pocket' and charge them Council Tax.</p>
<p>With the last empty and inhabitable property it took us 2 years to renovate it plus 3 court cases on top of that due to rough traders who disappeared with the money they demanded before the work started. Delays were not intentional and sometimes it a case of waiting 6 months for a good and trusted trader. For year one we've had an exemption but during year two all the utility bills and tax were just another nail to the coffin to the extent that I am reluctant to do it again and bring a property from 1900 to a modern eco efficient state. In my opinion it should raise gradually every year rather than having the same level each year. Otherwise, we risk seeing more properties left abandoned, as the extensive renovations required for such buildings yield minimal profits, especially considering the significant effort involved.</p>
<p>For a first time buyer trying to afford to renovate an empty property, it may take longer than 12 months. They may not be able to afford to mortgage enough to cover all refurbishment, so may need to remain at home, whilst refurbishing month by month. This could take 2 years. For properties which have been empty long term, with no improvements taking place in current timeframe/past 12 months, then it should be a higher threshold. Similarly, people who need to move out to undertake renovations and stay with a relative in order to complete the works, there should be some reasonableness applied.</p>
<p>My empty property is a top floor flat, the changes to tenancy laws require a 12mnth contract & 6mnths notice. I need to sell the property, so I felt unable to enter into new contract. I consider a reduction is fair, as the empty property makes no demands on any council services.</p>
<p>My long term empty dwelling is next door/attached to my primary dwelling. After the change in standards required for rental property the condition of my long term empty dwelling does not meet the minimum requirement. Because the property is in a conservation area I cannot afford the cost of modernising.</p>

<p>Refurbishment of properties not previously suitable for habitation - whether for sale or for rent - should be encouraged. The current policy does not encourage refurbishment and there is a danger that empty homes will remain just that - empty and uninhabitable.</p>
<p>Unfair to further penalise empty home owners if they are genuinely trying to sell.</p>
<p>Money is very tight right now, but we need to move on empty properties, so increasing the premium, make sense. However exception should be made where the property is subjected to probate, which can take years to resolve.</p>
<p>Long term empty are probably waiting to be sold (like the one I am having to pay c/ tax for , I already pay council tax on property I live in , now have to pay also on my parents empty property whilst on the market)</p>
<p>When I was moving out of a rental into a new rental with a months cross over period between homes the new home I was moving into had been a long term empty and was not allowed an exemption on whilst we did the move over, we could not apply it to the old house as we were living there and so spoke with the FCC and was told not only will we be required to pay two council taxes (expected) but we also had to pay a premium. It's this side of the premium that needs to be revised as I think it's absurd for tenants to pay a premium on a council tax whilst they have the switch over month</p> <p>Also - council tax already costs a fortune and from what I've read online the council haven't been meeting their requirements/targets for things like recycling collections and faced fines. Now suddenly the recycling centres are shut twice a week and weekly home collections are hit and miss - yet somehow our council tax has hiked up a scary amount this year. The roads are diabolical and we aren't seeing were all this money is going. Things are getting worse but the cost is going up and so I really don't see what a premium will make a difference in when the council tax is so high anyway.</p>
<p>Long term empty properties will not use any of the council services so no charge should be levied. If these/ second properties were brought back onto the market there is saying that those waiting for affordable/social housing would be able to afford to buy or rent them</p>
<p>Empty home should be reviewed depending on circumstances if a person passes away and the family need time to empty etc</p>
<p>Question 7: Regarding long term empty properties, I think it should be down to the individuals circumstances. See comments below.</p>
<p>I am being charged the premium when the property I own is my only residence and in process of being renovated and I am residing with my relatives I would not class this as long term empty.</p>
<p>Empty dwellings should not be charged in cases such as family having to sell a home after a death or because a loved one is in a care home.</p>
<p>My deceased Mothers house has been sold Twice and fell through due to the selling chain. As the financial climate is causing sales of houses. The house is sold Subject to contract again and hopefully it will be sold. The council should look individually at each property and assess the rates accordingly. My Mother was a tax payer and it is very upsetting going through this whole process. An exemption is required until the property is sold</p>
<p>In principle I agree with the incentive to bring a longstanding empty home back into use, but mindful of unduly punishing those who genuinely have these aspirations</p>

but are inadvertently punished by the system. For instance, the 12 month 0% premium for major work and renovations should reset once the property purchased (if the allowance has been previously taken at the location) and perhaps extended if reasonable steps have been taken to bring to property back into use

Many landlords who purchase and improve the poor housing stock in Flintshire do so for business purposes however it has a positive impact on the surrounding businesses supplying materials as well as offering work to local tradesmen. With Flintshire being so close to Chester it is subject to the economy of Chester and as such people require commutable properties to the well paid jobs; allow property improvement on empty properties to be exempt.

The situation is different with long-term empty properties. I think it depends on the circumstances, i.e. if a property remains empty with no plans to let out or sell or renovate, this is depriving someone from living in it. An empty property in this case has a negative impact on the housing situation and should be subject to a premium. However, if a long-term empty property is undergoing renovation before letting out or selling, then either a premium should be lower, or not charged at all.

In the case of an inherited/empty property which is being actively marketed for sale should not be charged a premium. In the current housing market, it can take a long time to sell a property and it would be unfair to the owner to be charged a premium during this period. Also, if the owner does not live in the area, they are not entitled to use any council facilities, such as recycling centres etc, and are already paying the basic rate of council tax despite this.

The empty properties I am aware of are large empty rundown properties tied up by businesses with no incentive to renovate due to legislation so I don't see why council tax premiums would make a difference especially to number of Welsh speakers (which is surely education not housing) or those on a waiting list who would not be able to reside in such properties

I am improving the home slowly and cannot afford to do as much due to the high council tax. The sooner the house is finished the sooner I can move in here. By not being here all the time I'm not using roads so less pollution, nor using the council services which I have to pay so much for.

Feedback Supporting the Premium on Both Types of Dwelling

<p>As the Council Tax Premium scheme is supposed to be used as a tool to bring houses back into use, it would seem obvious (and available evidence in Flintshire supports this) that increasing the premium encourages this. As such, it would be logical to increase the premiums on both second homes and long-term empty properties to 300% in order to maximise the impact of the policy.</p>
<p>If people can afford 2 homes, they should pay an extra charge for taking away availability for residents within Flintshire who are struggling to own their own homes.</p>
<p>People should be discouraged from having second homes and long-term vacant properties as they push house prices up by increasing demand, and push locals out of the area by making it harder to find and afford to buy or rent a place to live. This means fewer people consistently contributing to the local economy, fewer Welsh speakers, and families living further apart than they want.</p>
<p>Why on earth should these properties pay any less when there is a shortage of affordable housing within Flintshire?</p>
<p>If a home is secondary or long term empty then the owner is possibly more likely to pay a premium. This can help reduce the load on other council tax payers who have been subject to rises in recent years. It also provides incentive to reduce these empty or secondary properties.</p>
<p>Scandalous there are people needing homes whilst there are empty properties. Second homes hollow out communities. We are lower paid in Flintshire so second homers drive up prices and stop young locals being able to afford decent homes. We can't keep building new on green fields, need to release the empty.</p>
<p>The increase needs to be significant but not outrageous</p>
<p>Bring these properties back to use it would lessen the impact on homeless numbers, encourage Flintshire residents to stay in Flintshire, increase revenue for the council, more residents would spend more in local shops and businesses than holiday makers,</p>
<p>With the current housing issues there shouldn't be empty properties, charging more might change peoples minds about leaving them empty.</p>
<p>This would bring more dwellings into the open market and should in turn reduce prices and increase availability.</p>
<p>Mae angen rhyddhau tai ar gyfer pobol sy'n eu hangen. Os codir y gost, mae pobol yn fwy tebygol o ryddhau'r eiddo ar y farchnad. Eiddo gwag ddim yn les o gwbl ir gymuned am rhan fwyaf or flwyddyn. Housing needs to be released for people who need it. If the cost is raised, people are more likely to release the property on the market. An empty property of no use to the community for most of a year.</p>
<p>The number of long term empty properties indicates that this is currently having a negative impact on the housing situation. The owners of empty properties are making no contribution to the local economy and should, therefore, be expected to pay more, especially if the properties are becoming derelict and an eyesore. If these properties are suitable family homes perhaps enquiries could be made as to why they're neither sold nor rented, if this could be addressed their availability could have a very positive impact on the situation.</p>
<p>Increase council tax for those who can afford second homes/can afford to keep a house empty. This will subsidise services as a whole for everyone else.</p>

<p>Some second homes are also rented out... e.g. Airbnb. This should allow the local authority to charge it as a business. Checks could be made on Airbnb. Empty properties for sale or where the occupier is in a nursing home (etc) should be exempt. Buildings awaiting renovation or just empty, where owned by a company or individual who leave them empty to increase sale prices or to hold as stock for future use should pay a premium.</p>
<p>Owners of both types of home should be encouraged to rent out these properties and then the tax could be lowered.</p>
<p>It would encourage owners not to keep the dwelling empty and provide vital housing for those in need in the county.</p>
<p>I think it should be raised on second homes, in relation to the size of the property & if it's just used as a holiday home & not rented out & I think if it's raised to 100% on empty homes, it will stop properties being bought & just left empty, without any work taking place, which impacts on neighbours & community</p>
<p>Unfortunately costs in every area are increasing. I think this needs to be reflected in the costs charged in these situations. These homes are valuable to the community and in an ideal world would be available.</p>
<p>There are so many people desperately needing a home. There is no need for anyone to own a second home. They usually have more than enough income to stay in a hotel when they visit which would have the dual effect of assisting the economy more and releasing much needed homes for those without.</p>
<p>Empty properties are wasted properties, they look unsightly, can lead to vandalism or squatters, gardens become overgrown and can cause problems for neighbours. Everything possible should be done to try and get the properties back into occupancy.</p>
<p>Long term empty properties have a negative impact on local communities.</p>
<p>Local children struggle to grow up and move into their own homes in the area because of lack of availability. Long term empty houses fall quickly into disrepair and impact on the surrounding area. They should be actively discouraged</p>
<p>Homes are meant to be lived in. Welsh people are being priced out of the market as second home buying pushes the price out of their reach. Then left empty most of the year. Let them holiday in caravans or hotels and holiday parks, thus boosting the Welsh economy</p>
<p>It will reduce the negative impact on the amount of empty properties and enable local young people to have access to affordable housing</p>
<p>Increasing costs on empty dwellings will encourage landlords or owners to ensure their empty homes are occupied. Increasing costs on holiday homes will discourage people from purchasing thereby increasing the housing stock for local people. It will also help keep housing costs down so first time buyers are not pushed out of the market.</p>
<p>Often not he's properties are 'luxury' items. i.e. not actually necessary for the owners. This is unfair whilst so many cannot afford or even find one property for themselves and/ or their families.</p>
<p>No available houses to rent or buy because people are leaving them empty with no incentive to do anything about it. Increasing the charges may encourage them to either rent out or sell</p>
<p>I think long term empty houses look awful, it's stood empty for years, when someone should be living in it, or think if council tax was higher, it would</p>

encourage people to sell and not hold on to properties, I don't think it would have much of an impact on holiday homes , as they can obviously afford it , to the detriment of locals
Should not be made totally unaffordable therefore trial slight increase unless you wish to reclaim empty properties - there would be a cost to this.
There needs to be an increased deterrent in respect of second homes, and a greater concentration of the minds of owners of long-term empty properties to dispose of them.
Second homes benefit from the same services. Could have positive impact on the waiting list. Could generate more available homes for local residents, i.e. first time buyers.
Discourage second homes. LT empty homes are a disgrace when people don't have homes.
Q7 Raising Council Tax premium for long-term empty homes is unlikely to encourage owners to make necessary repairs to make an empty property suitable for rent/sale.
Keeping properties from prospective buyers is damaging to the local economy. The housing ladder is difficult enough to get on in these times, and we should be doing more to ensure that people who could otherwise afford a house are not stuck in a relentless loop of paying rents priced at multiple times the cost of a mortgage.
Houses need to be brought back into use. Increasing the tax premium will encourage people to sell their empty & second homes to those who need houses.
For me, as the owner of what Flintshire County Council describe as a 'long term empty dwelling', there is a clear distinction between a 'second home' and a 'long term empty dwelling'. On that basis, the levels of council tax levied through the so called 'premium scheme' need to be varied according to circumstance.
Everything has gone up in price so might as well increase it.
A planned increase over a couple of years to the maximum allowed on both
Empty properties need to be made available as soon as possible given the severe housing shortage. I understand some properties may be undergoing refurbishment but where they are just left empty is has a negative impact. Second homes are a luxury and only being used part of the year has a negative impact on the places where they are. It also means local residents have lost the opportunity to purchase that property
If second homes are not being used all the time and with empty homes, then it causes interest from many strangers to the community. People stopping and looking etc. If, like the empty house opposite me, it has been ignored for almost 3 years, it becomes unsightly, untidy. Obviously empty and attracts the wrong kind of interest from strangers.
To ultimately increase number of houses available for those that do not have them

Feedback with Concerns Regarding the Premium on Both Types of Dwelling

It's a choice to have a second home, or have an empty one, the affordable housing situation will not be affected by these minor tax rises but seen as a petty statement

I think the percentage should vary depending on the situation.

My mother's property is currently empty as she is living in a nursing home. I am desperate to sell this as I am responsible for its maintenance, however, I have to wait for the courts to grant permission. Percent should be determined based on individual circumstances.

'Should not be charged' unless circumstances have been reviewed. You take no account of pre-existing factors.

Example. In our case, a main house plus annex, on the same meters and services and same courtyard. Mortgage is through Halifax. This is the Halifax's position to avoid eviction processes of tenants in event main mortgage is not paid, they will not remove or reconsider that.

Your current policy does not consider such situations, ignoring them simply increase tax burden, without any opportunity for the owner to rent out / reclaim costs commercially.

I feel charging a premium on long term empty and second homes is profiteering and on second homes could have a negative effect on businesses that rely on tourists as if these homes were sold up less visitors would come and holiday makers are more likely to spend more money in the area than people who live here

If the property is empty it's not costing FFC nothing so no need to charge anything.. It's absolutely outrageous to even think about changing people so much. An where does this money go? Road tax goes on roads does it?

My understanding is that the Welsh Government are trying to encourage the development of empty homes to a satisfactory standard for occupation, by charging an unreasonable amount of Council Tax has an adverse effect in that it makes it unaffordable to carry out necessary repairs to then either sell the property or rent it out to provide affordable housing. I am in the process of selling my second home and am struggling to afford the Council Tax

My second house was flood damaged and the insurance company has taken over 18mths to undertake work. This is through no fault of mine yet I have to pay 75% rate on a property my son can't yet live individual cases should be considered as to why property is empty. The second home was my family home which was inherited and my son will live there once its finished. Giving access to the housing ladder. Without this he could not afford a home of his unindividual cases again should be considered.

An across the board increase does not identify for each individual circumstance. Most of the second homes are used and punishing owners by charging higher levels of tax does not work. In most cases local people would not buy them as they are priced above what they can afford. Remember most of the time it was locals that sold them to the present owners. they did not say I will sell it at a very low price for local people !

My property has an annex that the previous owner registered as another address to avoid paying Council tax on the remainder of the then in build larger part of the property. the valuation office said it was classed as another house and so the council now charges me two lots of council tax one at lower band and one at a

higher band. Other people have annexes and only pay one Council tax. My annex is never rented and is not a second home, it is used by us as part of our home everyday and yet we still have to pay two lots of council tax it costs me over a third of my pension. I can't afford to knock it down and we need the use of the property which also helps our son who suffers from mental illness and at times has to come and live with us for his recovery and care. It's all very frustrating and costly. The Council are not interested and blame the valuation office.

Homes that are long term empty following a death that are up for sale and uninhabitable houses shouldn't be charged

I have lived in Flintshire for 30 years but I have a house near my family I will be moving back near them in the future when my friend who is in her 80s goes into care. but because I have a house somewhere else I am told I have to pay extra council tax .my house is not a long term empty property as I am in it regularly

There needs to be some flexibility in the housing market. Buying and selling houses can take time and do not always match up.

Paying twice as much as other householders is quite enough given that I only have a second home in my home town of because I am unable currently to live there permanently until my commitments in Liverpool cease. Then I will live there full time so I can be near my sister and friends in my old age and hopefully be buried in the Cemetery with the rest of my family.

I am being penalised for trying to stay close to my roots in a village where my parents lived for over 70 years and my sister for her whole life.

I purchased my property with a plan of living permanently in my house in due course but I may have to abandon it and sell up as it is becoming too expensive.

This will have a huge impact on my plans to have a support network close at hand as I get older.

This is an unfair tax and an unfair means of the council gathering more income. Council tax is to pay for local services and not to subsidize housing. There no-one in these empty homes and hence there is not a proportional increase in the use of services than a home with multiple occupants.

The rental laws in Wales are extremely punitive to landlords and that alongside the tax arrangements for lettings mean that those who choose to privately let are at a disadvantage. The responsibility of finding affordable homes does not lie with private landlords.

I feel particularly home that are empty due to renovation should not be charged this premium. We are under doing major renovation which means our property is uninhabitable. This premium causes unnecessary additional stress and worry about finances due the additional expense. I feel there should be bimonthly checks to see that it is being renovated. It is not that the property is empty and no progress being made.

Individuals who have worked hard in order to be able to embark on purchasing a property of which may require extensive renovation are penalised greatly if the renovations exceed one calendar year.

Those whom are embarking upon extensive renovation may not retain the lump sum of funds required to complete the renovation work - therefore do so 'bit by bit' in order to complete the property to a habitable standard.

Thus by charging a premium of 75% it further depletes a home owners funds in completing the renovations within a timely manner.

<p>There are valid reasons for a property to be empty for which your limited exemptions cannot be applied.</p>
<p>Second homes are inevitably rented out to visitors to Flintshire. We have hired such to accommodate our large family joining us for Christmas and holidays, thus providing assistance to us and also valuable income to the location.</p> <p>The second home premium on 12 months is an arbitrary figure that does not suite all. Some people who are renovating a property require longer for completion. Others may take less. Could the Council not monitor progress and charge accordingly.</p>
<p>Council tax on a house should be the same regardless if lived in , empty or second home. Second homes bring huge economic income into Wales . Focus on reducing people on benefits who have multiple children just the a bigger house . Stop penalising people who want to make a living out of bringing tourism to Wales. Also if someone owns a property and leaves it's empty that up to them .</p>
<p>Both the long term empty dwellings and the second homes should be allowed to contribute to the community, the same as their neighbours. So why are they the charged more when they are not putting a drain on the Council Services.</p> <p>Effectively, the Council are being paid the full Council Tax or 175% or 200% for a small amount of services used and the Council appears to think it is "fair" to charge even more on the properties that are draining there services the least. This seem to be totally unjust.</p>
<p>Each home should have to pay council tax and therefore if you own two homes you should be required to pay council tax on both properties.</p> <p>I think there should be a further reduction to council tax on empty properties as many people and families find a property empty through unavoidable circumstances and therefore it is unfair to have to pay council tax an a property that is empty.</p>
<p>My long term empty property is totally uninhabitable as a result nobody wanted to buy it despite its low sale price at the time ,even these people who are supposedly desperate to get on the housing ladder, the council couldn't even fill these houses at one time due to lack of services and amenities etc.,</p> <p>I purchased the property with the sole intention of getting it back into an inhabitable condition as time and funds allowed even though the amount of money required to do that exceeds the retail value of the property in real terms, and financial bullying by Flintshire council is not going to improve that situation. In my eyes there is a massive difference between someone who is trying to resurrect a derelict property</p> <p>In a non-sought after area and a second home on the coast either way it should not be used as an easy revenue earner for the council. The council should be looking at its own housing stock where there are empty houses that again nobody wants to live in because they don't like the area ,and the houses that have been allocated to someone, and they don't even live there and are either sub letting or keeping them as a fall back.</p>
<p>It takes me a long time to renovate houses because I do much of the work myself, around one day a week (I work full time)but I do use contractors to 'speed up' progress when I can afford it.</p> <p>I estimate that council tax I have paid over the four years I have been working on the house is around £6k.</p> <p>If I had not had to pay this I would have engaged more contractors to do some of the work and it would have paid for about 21 days of work - roughly 4 working</p>

weeks a month.

So as a consequence I have had to do the work at 1 day per week which means your tax added around 20 weeks to the completion time,

I am not alone in this so if your claimed intention to charge extra tax on empty houses so they are made available more quickly is clearly not working so to use that as a justification (for punitive tax rates) in future will be a fiction.

One other point I would like to add is that you are asking empty house owners to a pay a punitive tax for services they barely use and further, I couldn't even get a permit to use my pickup to dump waste at the local recycling centre - further adding to costs (about £300 for an extra skip), equal to another days work I couldn't afford to pay for.

Just consider this - it is just like one of you decision makers going into a shop, paying extra for something but then not getting it. I am pretty sure you would have something to say about that.

On the matter of second homes, you say Flintshire has 170 with 2088 waiting for an affordable house. Clearly forcing the owners to sell these houses is not going to make a big impression and besides have you actually bothered to check how many of these 'second homes' would be affordable or in areas where these people want to live?

On a final point when I finally looked to sell the house I renovated (a two up two down terrace house) I had zero interest from locals but lots from people who work in Liverpool, Chester or Manchester.

So the idea that local Welsh speakers will buy these houses is clearly not going to work out is it - it'll be incomers from England.

Second homes and long term empty properties cost the council less than occupied properties due to the property not using services such as refuse collection. Yet they are being charged more than permanent residents for services they either do not use or use infrequently.

Second homes and long term empty properties will also have little to no impact on the number of people on waiting lists for social or affordable housing. Those on the waiting list for social or affordable housing are unable to purchase property on the open market, and so are unlikely to be able to purchase any of the second homes / long term empty properties should they become available to buy. The solution to the social housing crisis appears to be more government funding and councils investing funds in the right places, not penalising other members of the community.

The council tax premium also creates a hostile environment for tourists and discourages those who wish to invest in the community from doing so. Considering the Welsh economy is reliant on tourism for business, it seems counterproductive to drive away second home owners through ridiculous premiums on property.

Second homes bring income in to the community e.g. a holiday home when the occupiers visit or if they rent it out to other holiday makers.

The standard council tax rate should be more than adequate to cover expenses for the council. There may be less local services used if the property isn't always used e.g. bins aren't put out every week.

Long term empty properties are more of an issue but again don't drain public resources so there should be a small deterrent to encourage the property to be used but it doesn't need to be increased.

The premium for second homes and long term empty is stifling the available money for improvements to the properties that could bring them back to habitable condition. It is purely a money making scheme the council uses because they squander money on people who do not and will not work.

this is just another way in which the council raises money Flintshire should be helping owners not fining them, to bring long term empty back into use

We understand the need for the council to levy a premium, however 100% is already high £318 per month and wish to plead for the rate to remain the same.

The number of 2nd/empty homes is so insignificant in the Flintshire area that the charge will have no significant impact on the availability of affordable housing and as such can only be viewed as a tax on perceived wealth, particularly as the users of these homes already receive little in terms of services for the council tax that they pay. The owners of empty or 2nd homes are entitled to choose to own and use those properties in that way without penalty.

Are successful people not allowed a second home in Wales? Do you not like it? Do you want to discourage wealthy people from investing in our area? Wealthy people are hard-working, successful and take great care of their local area. They're an asset, they help to improve our areas. They have money to help make the area better and they are not stupid people. Do we want to scare them off and deter investment? Do you prefer lower class people in the area? How about travellers? Would you prefer them in the area? How does this affect the value of our properties?

Number 7 is a very bad idea in my opinion. Yes, we want long term empty properties back into use, this is a good idea, but it's not as simple as simply slamming the owners with a tax and hoping that somehow, the property will then be liveable and free for use! Long term empty properties may be empty for one or many of many very valid reasons. Just because it's long term empty does not mean that one is simply holding onto a good property for no reason. Valid reasons may be; costs of bringing the property up to date, there could be legal issues. A massive one is that a team may buy a property to "do it up". Why should such investors be penalised for this? Its absurd. What I'm saying is that properties should be addressed individually along with circumstances and then some plan to be determined.

I cannot believe this is even a thing. If someone wants to buy a house, with their money, money that have been taxed on already, whether it's empty or not they should NOT be charged. It is NOT the publics/home owners responsibility to help with "affordable housing" we are not employed by the government. It's getting like North Korea. Controlled and ridiculous.

these properties are not costing the council anything as they are not using any of the costly services.

we already pay far too much council tax and the idiot councillors spaff it all up the wall. we need less councillors wasting our money and more benefits for us who live here.

I don't believe penalising people who want to be a part of Wales is the right thing to do. There are far more opportunities to be had by welcoming people. There should be more language learning opportunities a pride in the country to share. I think a long term empty property needs some investigation - a know a few properties that are derelict so is not great for anyone if it was freed up. These questions are v generic, we live outside the U.K. for employment at the moment

and have retained a home in Wales where are family live. We return to support our elderly families. Every situation is different, we don't make money we want to have a home in Wales to return to one day. We actually need more affordable housing and more planning penalising people who can bring money into the country just doesn't make sense. Having said that I do realise some parts of Wales and U.K. do require some management but not Flintshire.

To act as a deterrent.

The above questions do not show some of the struggles some individuals are having paying not only a second council tax but also an increased tax on an empty property. I'm sure you appreciate everyone's circumstances are different and not all and they should be treated so. Not all second homes are purchases and left as holiday homes etc. Some are inherited and with family disputes/ lack of funding to make them habitable. By increasing council tax fees in some cases this will just push back the willingness and lack of cash to carry out the work. I have never missed a council tax payment as I believe they are fundamental to the local community. I am a great charity supporter and help out locally wherever I can. However in cases like this I have to question the council and ask, Is a blanket 100% increase for everyone a fair approach for people trying to the correct thing

Existing prices and percentages remain high enough at the current rate and area.

Other Comments

I think a different approach should be taken i.e. length of time a property is empty say 12months after this time it must be rented out either by the owner or leased by the council
The council service we receive is a shambles. I have moved from Salford to here and I honestly cannot believe we don't even have bins for recycling. I was a big recycler in England, now I cannot be bothered.
Hard questions to answer- need to see what the value of the current payments are and what this pays for. A breakdown is needed in order to determine if this covers the current cost.
Another tax upon more tax. When will it end?
I believe there is a difference between a second home and in my case an empty property I have inherited and trying to renovate to bring it up to date with current legislation to allow it to be rented.
Society has changed, we have more working adults living together / living at home and yet only one CT is paid, single people although discounted are disproportionately charged. A fair system would be to amalgamate the two systems, Poll and Council, so each adult in a property pays a charge, but this is banded. So, a sole person in band D pays 50, 4 in band D pay 200, single in A pays 20, and 4 pay 80. This would provide a more accurate representation of society change and a fair system for all.
I am not sure why a tax is applied to people who can freely buy property. The council are responsible for the lack of housing.
I am living in a property with my partner who I look after 24/7 as he is partly disabled .We are unable to get back to my property in Flint.
Charges for second homes should be in proportion to the services that can be accessed.
I personally think council tax is quite high in Flintshire

Q12 - If you are the owner of a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, what action would you be likely to take if the premium was to be increased.

Individual circumstances must apply and any one of the above list may be appropriate.
If I was a second home owner I would be working to bring it into the private rented sector.
Flintshire CC need to get a lot better at examining the reasons why the properties are empty. A more balanced view is necessary to ensure duplicate taxation is applicable.
I don't have an option to change my situation as I am trying to sell the 2nd property as an executor
If FCC was more responsive with planning permission maybe it wouldn't be empty
See question 8
I have been updating my second home in order to sell it, it is currently on the market
Impossible to say. Many factors might affect what we would do but we would probably choose one of the 1st 3 options.
We have been trying to sell our property since September 2022 when Liz Truss set her new budget. At least 4 sellers have withdrawn because of mortgage problems etc. at the moment we are in a chain awaiting to complete the sale.
Pay until foster children with special needs not at home and move in ourselves.
I would need to increase the amount I charge thus leaving less money from visitors to the community. I would also have less personal income to invest locally since we only let the property a few times per year.
Sell it, but this is not a good thing in my opinion. The original owner is likely to be punished. The buyer then has a liability from the council. It's damaging as it deters investment, and that slows down money being pumped into our area.
I would have to turn it into a holiday let to make it pay for itself until I can live there permanently.
Demolition of the property.
Despite the prohibition on the lease I would rent it out just enough to cover the increase
As stated previously I am trying to sell the property. I could not afford to pay a higher premium and my circumstances should be reviewed individually
Dispute the increase if the property was already on the market for sale.
Move a friend in free of charge
Really don't know - possibly have a breakdown from the stress this is causing me!!!!
Vote for a change of Councillors
Increasing the premium is purely a revenue earning stream in wanting properties like mine recommissioning you should be assessing the properties and any that you can't be mortgaged should pay no council tax or at least the standard rated council tax, instead of bullying people into selling.
I was looking to buy another house to renovate but I wont be now. What is going to happen is derelict empty homes will remain unsold and fall into further ruin and probably be demolished to save paying your tax. One other possibility is the sale

prices could go down to reflect the punishing tax rates but all contractors will do is add the cost of that tax back onto the sale price.
I'm getting it ready to sell anyway. If the empty house didn't need renovation, I'd have just moved in and sold my current house.
I would love to refurbish my property to rent it out but I have to use the money to pay the council tax. It is the law of diminishing returns
I am not sure now, our dream was to move there taking early retirement
If I could afford a second home, I could afford the increase - unless of course it was something inherited.
I really don't know. It would be very difficult. I don't want to sell the property, because I think someone far richer than me, probably from England, would buy the property.
This would potentially put already struggling law abiding families in Flintshire into even more debt. This would also slow down the time and empty pockets to allow needed work on the properties to make them fit to sell or rent
I am not prepared to give this answer because my situation is subjective to our situation. I have no feelings or opinions on empty houses. It's all a big money making ploy from the council as far as I'm concerned and I say that through personal experience of being penalised. I have one empty property in need of full renovation and repair to make it habitable. Yes I was charged £2800 for premium tax. It's in just and it's discrimination
I am a home owner with planning permission for a holiday let on an outbuilding to provide me with a pension - if council tax premiums were increased when the holiday is completed I would sell up and leave the County, though my family have lived in the area for 33 years.
decrease the premium
Possibly rent or sell
Struggle to pay until property sold in current difficult market.
I am the executor and have to sell
I would take no action, but remain very unhappy about having to pay the premium. My family has owned this house for over 70 years and has contributed to the local economy and community, to different extents, throughout this time. It seems grossly unfair to me that people like myself should be penalised in this way when we never have, nor never will, seek to make a profit from our ownership.
Property is up for sale and has been for eight months. Its price has been reduced but has still to sell. No further action possible.
Reduce spending on employing people, visit less and spend less in the local area to offset any increase.
Unclear at this stage. Would review circumstances.
I would consider the impact. Flint's council should be prepared to consider impacts on a case for case basis. Also the council would need to have evidence to support how applying a premium (and potentially increasing it) to my property is supporting the objectives.ng
Serious consideration would be needed, in terms of the integrity of such an increase. Selling would not help the waiting list at all.
Unfortunately the cost for redevelopment of an empty property have more than doubled in the last 2 years and banks are reluctant to lent money for such developments when the cost of the council taxes can be doubled or trebled while the work in in progress

Can not live in due to Flintshire county councils actions

As explained above, my property is a large listed building which requires extensive repairs, renovations and maintenance and could not realistically be rented out. If I sold the estate, 11 rented properties would be lost from the market and employment would be lost for those working to maintain the properties.

Q14 - In the event a property becomes subject to the long-term empty premium, do you think there are any circumstances where it should be waived?

Houses not selling
Some reasons are mentioned above at 8. The general flow of the action should be towards getting the property occupied long term.
In the event of death and if the property is empty to be refurbished. A time limit on refurbishment can be set for 12 months before charging 75%
Reasonable length for refurbishment where the house is intended to become the main residence.
Difficulty selling or renting property
If the property is for sale
Dementia care home resident
If a house is inherited by family following the death of the owner and the family cannot sell the property in-time. As long as they can prove that they are trying to sell the property, it should be waived.
As I have described my situation above.
If they already pay council tax on the property, I don't think they should pay extra. What is the logic of doing that...???
If the owner was owner occupiers and is now in residential care
Properties which are in probate
As suggested above, if reasonable commitment and efforts by the owner shows they are working to bring the building back into use
As described above in point 8. Mortgage conditions pre-existing.
If there are extreme issues, i.e. owner has dementia and delay in accessing ownership deeds/transfers. If the owner is in the middle of selling but there are delays on the chain or issues with sale outside of the remit of the owner.
As referred to in 8.
Similar to the previous scenario, the renovation is still in progress due to unforeseen circumstances or delays caused by unfair traders who needs to be monitored better.
Delays in granting probate, property can't be sold
yes, if there was a planning permission in place and pending the decision. But only after the FCC had all the requested information and the 'delay' was the FCC decision making process rather than that the owner was extending all the periods by not providing the requested information or asking for unreasonable extension etc.
If someone is receiving care or caring for someone else
I don't think it should be increased as there are many reasons a property could be empty long term from a sick or elderly person having to go into care or through work commitments that could take you out of your area for a couple of years but you wish to return plus many other reasons
If someone is trying to renovate a property for their own use or to let it but are being delayed by planning applications preventing them from starting that work: no premiums should be charged in these cases as I understand they are where I live

in Denbighshire e.g. my neighbour working on a low wage living with his sister wanting to renovate a small property for and by himself but could not start work due to delayed planning applications, he was forced to pay a high CT premium and eventually just had to sell the property because he could not afford the CT premium on his low wage.
under probate
If the owner can show genuine enthusiasm in selling and is asking a realistic price for the property.
As detailed above - first time buyers/people with no other property who are trying to afford to improve a property with plans.
Bereavement, trying to sell
I'm waiting on yourself for planning. It's taken over 2 years
All long term empty dwellings should be inspected by the council to ascertain the condition of the property and suitability for rental.
If the property is being renovated for re sale or rental market as renovations can be costly and red tape takes time.
If the property is not suitable for renting If the pressure on owner to manage the rental is too difficult.
When renovations under insurance claims take longer than anticipated and are out of control of the property owner.
Further to the above our property has been on sale and we have reduced the price fan confirm this. At NO time has the no-sales been our holdup. At present we have a buyer who is very keen to buy but is held up in a chain. We have tried very hard, by reducing the price etc. to sell the property. WE are both pensioners living and having to pay Council Tax on both properties is making life a little difficulty. At no time have we held up a sale but current trading is difficult. The current buyer agreed a price and indicated no chain was required, but since agreeing has change his mind. We agreed to the change in order to keep our sale going. We think there ought to be help for people in our position.
Individual circumstances should be considered instead of an across the board increase or tax.
there has been an empty property degrading in our street for almost 4 years, far too long in my opinion
if the property is inherited and uninhabitable
if the house is derelict / uninhabitable, for sale
House being sold due to death if occupier...very annoying to pay for unused services whilst house is being sold.
Legal wrangling
I don't know what current exemptions there are, but I would say properties where an owner is in care or nursing home long term, may impact the elderly persons mental health if they feel they have to sell before ready to.
When being actively redeveloped for social housing only.
Where the property is up for sale following the death of the owner
If a property is for sale and reasonable attempts have been made to sell. If the property is empty due to ill health of owner who is in temporary care and the long term outcome is unknown.
I am a pensioner and at the moment I want to stay to see what friends I have left in the area before I sell

Death, sickness, circumstances such as actively trying to sell or rent. If the house is well maintained.
If it is for sale or let
If it has been bought by a new owner and they are refurbishing it prior to moving in
Yes, some common sense needs to be put into the decision. Is the owner trying to do something about it? Are they spending money on it? Are they trying? Do they understand? It's damaging punishing someone who is working hard, or is innocent. Remember that somehow, this person become owner of this property. It's not your property - it's their property for a reason, and just because someone owns something that isn't being used does not mean that you have a right to take it from them. Help them! If you start punishing owners, you start to damage work ethics and many other things.
Ownership dispute With solicitors / land registry
long term improvement of the property
If the house is empty because the owner is in a home it should be waived because paying for a care home is expensive enough without other expenses making a care home unaffordable.
A barn on my farm was once occupied. It is now empty and has been used for storage for the last 25 years. It is not a suitable property for large expenditure on the major renovation needed to make it habitable. As far as I can work out the only option will be demolish a stone barn and replace it with a storage shed.
When it is ongoing refurbishment and cannot be sold, despite being on sale
Yes, if the owner is in long term care and has no relatives, time should be given to allow social services/legal teams etc. to deal with the situation.
-Extensive renovations for individuals whom are doing it sectionally if the funds are not readily available to do so
As stated previously each property and the circumstances surrounding the property should be assessed individually
All cases should be reviewed case by case with clear guidelines. Consider using a committee to review cases to ensure a democratic view. We need to focus more on people and what's best for the community rather than a tick box exercise
When trying to be sold following bereavement.
Medical issues (care home etc), delays by on planning, legal issues beyond owners control.
As previously mentioned, if a property is inherited but is being actively marketed for sale, given the current housing market, the premium should be waived. Also, the basic rate of council tax should be reduced for owners of these properties who do not live in the area and are not entitled to use any local council facilities.
if it needs doing up, the problem comes , as it is too expensive to do up and to find someone to do it
Some refurbishment programmes can be long drawn out - particularly where planning permission is involved. The sale of such a property cannot begin until all work has been completed and then it is at the mercy of market conditions.
If person is hospitalised
There are probably circumstances relating to health or family circumstances so it should be an option.
Some properties are empty due to the owners being in care/ nursing homes and whilst they are still alive nothing can be done with the property

Always waived. Absolutely ridiculous this is even a thing. Do NOT penalise home owners for the Flintshire council or UK government not being able to sort out their own issues when it comes to housing. We already pay TAX for this!
If empty due to the owner passing away and probate etc being protracted then the premium should not apply
Outlined above, when the house has been inherited and a sale is planned
For instance, should a person have to go into care but there is a strong probability that they will be able to return to their property.
I don't think undergoing renovation is a reason for them not to pay the premium. And renovation should, realistically, only take a matter of months not years.
if owner intends to sell the property but is not yet ready to put it on the market
Complex cases of ownership.
See note 8
This should be based on individual circumstances and the council should investigate these instead of applying basic rules. In my circumstance, as a Trustee, I do not own the property within the woodland and also I do not feel it is suitably habitable for individuals. I would welcome an opportunity to demonstrate this.
In all cases it's up the owner of a property if they live in it or not
Os ydi rhywun yn derbyn ty gan aelod o deulu sydd wedi marw, ac yn cymeryd amser i benderfynu beth i wneud gyda'r ty ayyb If someone receives a house from a deceased family member, and takes time to decide what to do with the house etc.
Under genuine renovation which may be experiencing difficulties
If people can't afford repairs to properties how do you expect them to pay a premium? Just another tax on people who support themselves
After 12 months there's no excuse for not sorting out. Its neglect
Maybe someone passed away and there are legal reasons it can't be sold.
Only while actively being sold or rented
Waiting for deceased persons estate to be sorted out
where property has been left to more than 1 family member and difficult to sort affairs and where renovations are taking place
If someone is very sick and needs to live with a relative or a care facility to recover then it should be waived
Family bereavement or circumstances
If struggling to sell the property
If, like the house opposite me, the lady was sectioned, so maybe initially while legal matters are sorted it should be waived. However nearly 3 years on and being told that she will never come home any waiver should be rescinded at the point that decision was made by the medical professionals.
Family or probate dispute following bereavement of owner. Long term sickness of owner.
Owners that have to reside elsewhere for longer term employment contracts.
Long term ill health, owner incapacity with no power of attorney in place although maybe a 'charge' could be put on the property when the time comes.
If it can be shown that genuine efforts are being made to sell or let the property.

You already have some waivers, such as people in hospital or under NHS care. Considerations should be given to the circumstances surrounding the property being empty. The Council does not know what, why, how an empty property has come about and what position the family/owners are in - but does the Council care????
Waiting for the property to be sold due to hold ups
The owner becomes ill. Family bereavement. Financial issues have affected the renovation e.g. impact of inflation or loss of income. The owner has a residence in Flintshire where they pay full council tax.
The property might well be under a long term refurbishment scheme.
Owner in residential care or hospital stay
If the owner makes an under taking to renovate the property to allow it to be rented.
Where a property requires total refurbishment, this would probably encourage more people to get more houses up to standard and back on the market, maybe even putting a realistic time scale in as a clause to encourage progress.
Due to planning issues if fault of FCC
When it could be demonstrated that work was genuinely ongoing on its restoration.
I have no issue paying normal council tax on the property after having the "furnished" and "unfurnished" exemptions which were generous and I'm grateful for. As an only child and unmarried, I am trying to do everything myself with the property I inherited from my late parents. It was full to the brim with stuff and took so long to sort through, incredibly time consuming. At the moment, I am decorating and tidying up to get it on the market. I have stress and anxiety issues after looking after my late parents - I was up there everyday after work and at weekends for four years helping. My relations live further afield or are elderly and I work full time on shifts in Cheshire so it's just me. It's slow going and incredibly frustrating by myself but I am trying. The 100% mark up I'm currently paying just gives me more stress. Whilst paying this, I can't afford to pay tradesmen to speed up the process so it's a vicious circle.
If a person has inherited the property, depending on personal circumstances, 12 months is not enough time to deal with legal matters, sort out the property and sell it before the premium starts. In this instance, the premium should be waived.
Probate that takes a while to go through House isn't up to a living standard and needs work or planning permission
Where the property is genuinely undergoing a major refurbishment with the intention of improving the property. There is not always a limitless amount of cash to fund the refurbishments required and excessive council taxes.
Flintshire do not know and are not interested why the property is empty, The council tax is high enough without adding more on, the council should help people not fine them with added costs
if it is having a refurb but there could be other good reasons
If I were placed into a medically induced coma and was revived 14 months later, what would my reaction be to an increase – not so simplistic is it.
when the idiots in the council are fit for purpose and can do the job we pay them to do only then count it be fair to consider paying a single penny more.
For inherited property

When the property is the person's only residence but is temporarily not habitable .

If it was up for sale but hadn't sold for sometime,

I have set out our circumstances in a previous question.

There are several people in similar circumstances in This area. We all feel we are paying far too much council tax already, and are not getting value for our money.

As stated above - if the person in charge of the council tax are tenants it should ABSOLUTELY be waived.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the issue of the long-term empty property premium. In my opinion, there are indeed circumstances where the 100% council tax on empty properties should be waived.

My sister and I inherited our late grandmother's property several years ago. Unfortunately, due to differing views, my sister has been unwilling to sell or invest in making the property habitable. Despite these challenges, we have always paid the council tax in full and on time, even as it increased significantly due to the long-term empty status of the property.

I am currently attempting to purchase my sister's share of the property so that I can undertake the necessary repairs to either sell or rent it out. However, the financial strain caused by the increased council tax is hindering my ability to make these essential improvements. The situation is beyond my control, and it feels punitive despite my compliance with tax obligations over the years.

Given these circumstances, I believe the council should consider waiving the 100% premium in the following situations:

Inheritance Issues: When a property is inherited and co-owners have conflicting interests that prevent timely sale or renovation.

Financial Hardship: When the increased tax burden impedes the owner's ability to fund necessary repairs and improvements.

Active Efforts for Resolution: When the owner is actively seeking solutions, such as buying out co-owners or selling adjacent land to fund repairs, but faces delays due to external factors like slow planning processes.

In my case, if the property were 100% in my name, I could proceed with the required work to make it habitable again. The property needs significant renovation to bring it to a sellable or rentable standard. Additionally, I have been attempting to sell an adjacent plot of land to finance these efforts, but the planning process has been slow and unhelpful.

Waiving the premium in such scenarios would not only provide relief to property owners striving to improve their properties but also contribute positively to the local community by reducing the number of long-term empty homes.

Thank you for considering my perspective. I look forward to a response that takes into account the unique challenges faced by property owners in situations similar to mine.

If a property is well kept and has been kept for a reason such as distress or an adverse effect to mental health and not for any personal gain this should be taken into consideration

As above I am not writing it all again. Please see my personal circumstance.

Properties become empty long-term for many reasons. I don't think raising the premium would ensure they would be inhabited any sooner, but more likely put financial pressure on the owner.
As stated above, where a family is trying to sell a home due to a death or loved one in a care home.
The tax is not fair or equitable at all and should not be imposed.
I cannot get back to my property because of my circumstances now You are increasing
I think we need more detail. Deceased person, lack of funds to renovate
As we are selling the property for a deceased person and I am the executor. I just need the sale to go through. If the council can help that would help alleviate the worry and anxiety.
If it is being refurbished
Or previous tenants have damaged property and it requires works
All the time -it shouldn't be applied.
Depends on peoples situations
If the property has been inherited from a bereavement, there is usually an upkeep period where the house cannot be sold due to possessions/repairs/renovations required. A deferred long-term empty premium of an additional 12 months would serve not to penalise people who have obtained property in this way.
I regularly maintain the garden and exterior of the property so that it does not negatively impact on the local community. This should be recognised.
In contrast a property in the same street has been partly demolished by a 'professional developer' and has created a blight on the community but avoids paying any council tax as the property is uninhabitable. This loophole needs to be closed.
It should not exist at all.
When the owner visits the property at least every month and stays at least 1 night at every visit.
On the face of it, I would think it makes more sense to apply an increased premium to LTEs than to second homes. However, as for second homes, I think the Council should be prepared to consider on a case by case basis.
As the owner of a 'long term empty property' that is currently subject to an extensive renovation programme, involving a substantial financial investment, that will improve the property and bring it up to modern standards, the imposition of the council tax premium has been, for me at least, nothing more than a financial penalty, a tax grab I'm sorry to say. I pay Council Tax on the property I live in now, and receive the council/police services etc in return. For the long term empty property I receive absolutely nothing in return in terms of council/police services, no bins or recycling collected as I don't generate any waste there. The idea that I could modernise a property in 12 months given the work required, and subsequently, the costs involved, is, frankly, insulting to say the least. I would have had no problem paying a Council Tax on the long term empty property if levied proportionately to the situation, but that is obviously a bit too much to ask of you lot in County Hall, to come up with a fairer solution, rather than a blanket imposition.
One would need to know the circumstances behind each property.

Each property should be looked at individually not just an increase across the board.

We're Flintshire county council has damaged the property and put financial burden on us till sorted

Listed properties often take much longer to renovate (because of the necessary consents which can be delayed by the council) and are more expensive to renovate. Exceptions should be provided where repairs are being carried out to listed properties.

If it were being considered (within a set time frame) to be developed into affordable housing

Q15 - We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.

<p>Increasing the premiums will either increase the amount of properties available as people will sell or let out their empty properties or second homes, or they will choose not to do this and the Council will increase the amount of tax taken, which can be reinvested into social housing. Increasing the premiums is a no-brainer.</p>
<p>The impact of changing the from the current charging structure will be minimal, both to property availability (1% of the total number of properties in Flintshire) and the level of income FCC receives.</p>
<p>Councils charging 300% are doing it from nothing but spite to the owners.</p>
<p>The amount of houses you are allowing to be built mostly over priced unaffordable housing for the normal working person that should be bringing you in more council tax money so why rob other people for it who are lucky enough to be able to own a second home etc. It's the council's fault we have no social housing, you sold stock without building and sell land off to rich building companies who build houses in excess of 400 thousand pounds so it's your fault we have no social housing</p>
<p>The amount percentage extra should be prominent on the invoice as should the pounds amount. It should also show what the following years amount will probably be, together with a full explanation of why it is being done.</p>
<p>To be able to afford a second home an increased Council Tax rate should will be accepted. For long term empty properties it is usually empty for a reason and finance may be the reason to getting it completed to be lived in so an increase in council tax premium could increase pressure of finance not readily available. When you a left with a property after a relative passes away you are not always in the position to pay Council Tax on your own property and the property that is awaiting refurbishment to be sold.</p>
<p>I think empty properties i.e. housing should be taken over by the council and rented to families on the waiting list but only if the owner refuses to take action</p>
<p>Pressure should be made so the courts make decisions to allow family members to sell properties in a timely manner. I have been waiting over 3 years for permission from the courts so I can sell my mums home. I did not want to rent the property but had no idea the process would take so long.</p>
<p>I don't think there should be extra charges. Local Government bodies should manage the money they get more wisely.</p>
<p>Council should use powers available to them to ensure properties are kept in good repair and in a liveable condition.</p>
<p>The issue is 'why are the houses empty long term'.</p> <p>Forcing further tax burden on existing taxpayers within the county, making their ability to invest / renovate / make ready to rent or sell, is counter productive in the long term. Those owners will have less to spend in Flintshire overall. Unless it is purely a second home for holiday and vacation purposes from persons living outside of the county.</p>
<p>For properties undergoing renovation: year 1- 0%- during first year renovation year 2- 0%-25% a the officer's discretion whether it's a reasonable delay or not</p>

year 3- 25%-50%

For empty properties where no renovation takes place 75%-100% at officer's discretion e.g. 75% if just inherited and awaiting green light for sale, 100% if it's all ready to proceed with sale and no renovation take place.

This way you will make sure landlords are still interested in renovating properties and they will do it quick. You will also free up much quicker properties being on hold in hand of unexperienced 2nd home owners and encourage them to put it on the market.

I think an increase in second homes will have a negative impact, as a family we have a second home that we share with other couples (Friends and Family) We have had this home for around 20 years plus. We have really grown to know that community, we respect and feel part of it. To increase the premium charged will just mean that we are no longer able to afford it and inevitably be forced to sell. This will not be bought by a local but another richer person that will turn it into another holiday house. It will then go from being occupied by the same group of people that know, love and contribute to the area regularly to either a house that is never occupied or different people each week of the month. It is a con to make more money and a way to penalise good people that want to have some nice holidays.

In respect of the influence on local communities (Q 10 and Q13) I am not sure that there are so many houses, mainly empty properties, that the increased C/T would massively impact the FCC income and as far as the empty houses were concerned again that would have only a slightly positive impact on the local community as if the property was redone and then occupied the place/town would definitely look nicer. Again if there were build HMOs that might resolve the issue for a lot of homeless people but whether it would then have a positive impact on the community I am not so sure

I think it is just another way to profiteer off people and not to increase availability of affordable housing if that was the case then all new housing estates that the council give planning permission on should be 70% of them being affordable housing

Generally increase the premium as much as possible but have clear transparent/advertised rules for discretion .

F.C.C Empty Homes should have powers to intervene as soon as empty homes are becoming derelict, unsafe, creating an eyesore in the village and impacting on neighbouring properties.

Enforcement should be undertaken to seize properties where owners have left property empty long term. Conservation/preservation of historic buildings should be enforced if properties are neglected long-term - this would incentivise bringing them back into good state of repair/preserving the heritage of the area.

There should be no premium whatsoever

I've had to answer : 'do not know' as the question is too complex to give an answer.

My second home was my family home left to me when my parents died. I allow my son to live there giving him a chance on the property ladder. Why should I pay above the rate for council tax. Its not used for financial gain or a holiday let.

The following gives our personal reasons for owning a 2nd home in Flintshire. The term second home does not fully reflect how we view and use our home, we consider it to a on a par with the other home we have. I realise this personal

account will not sway the Council decision but simply shows that people do have strong albeit personal reasons why they might own a 2nd home in the county. I am of Flintshire stock & was born and raised there. All my family & most of my friends still live in the county. Our 2nd home was my mother's home on a small estate near Queensferry where she lived until her death a few years ago. I have always spend a considerable amount of time in Flintshire throughout my entire life but my specialist job meant I had to move away for employment reasons. Until my mother died I spent over 50 % of my time there providing her with help and support. Currently I provide help and support for an elderly relative and also assist a disabled person both living in the locality. The property is still occupied for about 50% of the time by myself or members of my family and I have hopes of returning to live there as a permanent home at some time in the not too distant future. We put money into the local economy (e.g. using shops and local tradespeople).

We accept that in general, second homes can have a detrimental effect but this is primarily (but not exclusively) in areas where a very significant number of properties are 2nd (holiday) homes and where this disproportionate amount of 2nd/holiday homes are in tourist areas in Welsh speaking areas.

We believe our circumstances are completely different. Our modest property is not in a tourist area and, as far as the Welsh language issue is concerned, we have considerably more Welsh (written & spoken) than virtually anyone in the area where our 2nd home is situated. We feel that the current 100% premium is fair. It should not be raised or reduced but wonder why long term empty properties pay less Council Tax than we do.

In principle we agree that long term empty property and second homes should be taxed but when the property has been on the market for some time and the sellers hare trying very hard to sell there should be some help for them.

Common sense should be used. Locals can not afford to buy them due to low wages in Wales. People will sell there property for the highest price they can achieve, often sold by locals to incomers who will and can pay the asking prices. The whole system is a mess. Councils will be happy to take extra taxes for the property's, taxation is not the way to solve this problem, If they are renting then a tax should be applied, is that not covered by income tax on extra earnings or business income. I don't know the answer, however an increase of tax to 300% will lead to selling of properties ,drive down prices that can still not be afforded by locals. Lots of extra income for FCC. An overall loss for tourism revenue in Wales.

If house is empty no council tax should be paid.

I expect the increase in taxation on people who own second homes will help to pay for all the people getting free housing for doing nothing. Very utopian.

Please exempt all families where there are foster children or families with disabilities and where the child receives DLA or PIP if over 16 or child has EHCP or SEND needs as these holidays are essential and going abroad is not affordable. If you put up the council tax we will still have a second home but have less money to spend locally. We have annual family membership for the Greenfield Heritage Centre, membership of North Wales wildlife trust, life members of The Welsh mountain zoo, signed up in North Wales in Talacre with life membership of RSPB get children an annual membership. Also we work with rangers in Talacre maintaining natterjack habitats and do beach clean ups etc.. also my husband gives 2 local churches free PAT tests and one local charity shop. Our children are beginning to pick up spoken Welsh as a second language. 2 of the children were

baptised in our local church of Wales. If we had to pay even more we would have to spend less. Our children during Covid followed weekly online services from the church in Wales. We all have a strong affinity with Flintshire and try to put in more than we take out. A traumatised child will have better MH and educational outcomes with regular holidays and it would not be possible without our Flintshire second home as the children need to have a permanent base because they have SEND needs. Our home is inspected annually too by our foster children's social worker.

Please lower them everyone in Wales is struggling at the moment

If used for visiting relatives or as holiday lets, short term rentals are bringing money into our economy. Due to visiting tourist spots, local shops, restaurants, pubs etc. We should appreciate that. They also do not cost more in terms of council tax costs and this it is not an appropriate charge to increase. If you have an issue with social housing you should look to solve the issues forcing people into social housing to begin with, look to the root causes to reduce this number, not to a hopeful but unrealistic bandage. There is no correlation between the two groups especially for second homes, they are highly unlikely to become let to social tenants or for that population to purchase them. To build language skills you need to invest in education and communities not housing.

I will not invest in Wales again. I will not do up a property again in Wales because I think you punish hard work and successful people, and praise those who do nothing.

I bought an old wrecked cottage to do up. Do you think it fell on my lap? It didn't. I worked my balls off for years. Unlike others who wasted money on Sky, new Mercedes, brand new iPhone or whatever, I didn't. I saved my money and lived off the likes of Asda Essentials baked beans. When I saved up enough, me and a friend bought a cottage to do up, thinking it would be a great idea. I thought it would make money and bring an old property back into use.

It did make money, and it did bring it back into use, but you also punished me for it. You tried to charge me £3,200 per year council tax. The Welsh government charged SDLT and so on. I made money, but the biggest beneficiary in my opinion was FCC and the Welsh government.

Why do you punish hard-working people? Do you not like hard workers? Don't you like investors? Don't you want anyone to be successful? Should they go to live in England?

So you want more properties, but you also want to punish investors? Who will do up your properties now? I don't know, but it won't be me! Many other investors feel the same way. In my opinion, you discourage work with your regulations.

I fear the general attitude is that second homes are owned by avaricious people trying to make money out of properties that could be used by others.

I am a Flintshire woman to my core and have always tried to remain close to my heritage and to spend money to assist the local economy.

I do not think selling my house will assist the problems of young people trying to find homes locally. There are several unsold houses on the estate upon which I live in Caerwys, with more to be built in the next couple of years.

Of the people who have purchased the new houses I am the only one with

connections to Caerwys was hoping to end my days back where I came from but I fear you may make this impossible.

I have always spent most weekends and holidays in Flintshire together with my children so they could be brought up as close to their grandparents as possible. I wanted them to be aware of their heritage.

I feel penalised by the premium tax. I feel it should have stayed at 50 percent extra.

There should be options and guidelines available. At the moment the rules are black or white. This is not helpful.

I think I covered this earlier. I believe that the tax premium I pay is already a little high for the type of property but I do understand the need to bring in funds to the council. However I think that the premium on long term empty properties is about 30% too low.. A large tax increase is clearly designed to bring second homes and empty properties onto the market to increase affordable and social housing availability. In the case of second homes this is not necessarily the outcome, some were just built as tiny holiday homes! You really should look at the property to assess if its sale would improve the situation.

I think that the impact of second home owners on the communities in Flintshire depends on how much the person becomes involved with the community in terms of being a good neighbour and participating in or organising community events. Many second home owners also make an effort to read and speak a little Welsh and, at least, to pronounce place names correctly.

Although, as you are going to the trouble of issuing this questionnaire, I guess that the decision has already been made to make a blanket increase.

Abolish the council tax premium for those whom are embarking upon extensive renovations to their properties.

Retain it for individuals whom are purchasing 'second homes' in order to discourage individuals whom are finding it challenging to purchase properties within an area of which they may have been reared

Council tax bills are increasing every year and already substantially higher, charging a high premium on top of this seems unfair.

Swingeing Council Tax premiums can only produce a negative effect on the availability of property for sale or to let - much of which is funded by private capital. Local authorities should consider why more new homes are not being built in their area, as surely that is the way to solve the housing shortage - not this sticking plaster approach. Unless this is politics of envy!

On the face of it looks simple but I think it is not a one size fits all, consideration should be given to the impact on the community, is it always negative? Are all second homes in areas where housing is needed, where people want to live, are there local services, GPs, schools and facilities etc, Do second homes provide benefits to local businesses and GPs i.e. people pay tax but probably use few services.

What level of tax will force people to sell, would it just be richer people who bought the properties? Does the council have the funds to turn properties into affordable housing?

Although I appreciate this consultation I also query if it is morally defensible to effectively fine people to force them to move?

Long term empty property's in my opinion are more of a problem than second homes. People coming to their second home spend money in the local

community, they use local tradespeople when work is required to be done on the property.

If the rates were raised to a level that made the owners sell their homes, this would just cause an issue with more long term empty properties.

Just for the record here, my home in Flintshire is where I was brought up, I'm a fluent Welsh speaker and still speak to the older generation in the village in Welsh. As far as second homes causing a reduction in the Welsh language, maybe it's due to an influx of people who are not of Welsh heritage moving into the area, these people are probably employed in Cheshire/ Merseyside but property is cheaper in Flintshire.

This is a draconian and unfair tax.

Once second homes are rented out the tax should be decreased, this may already be the case but it's not stated.

It appears that the Flintshire County Council (FCC) is intensely focused on preserving the Welsh language, potentially at the expense of prioritizing affordable housing for local residents.

Flintshire's proximity to England might naturally result in a lower prevalence of Welsh speakers compared to areas like Gwynedd. It's a common belief that second homes reduce the proportion of Welsh speakers; however, the same could be said for the arrival of non-English primary language speakers. Turning away Ukrainian refugees is, of course, not an option, nor is preventing people from purchasing second homes for the Polish community. Therefore, it raises the question: what is the issue with English people desiring to buy holiday homes in Wales?

The objective here seems unclear. If the intention is to increase the Council Tax, then it should be done straightforwardly without justifying it as a means to discourage ownership and prevent the dilution of Welsh speakers and Welsh identity.

Personally, the percentage of the Welsh-speaking community is of no concern. It should not be the council's priority.

Some dwellings become second homes by default , not intent. It is difficult to identify if 12 months will be sufficient for a property renovation and even with the best of intentions the 12 month period can overrun.

It should be noted that people who renovate property in Flintshire are themselves investing their own capital to complete the project and thus improving the housing stock. If the process becomes too onerous this process will become less and less thus reducing badly needed investment for the area.

Tourism brings lots of money into Wales second home tax will reduce this , as I said previously if a home owner wants to leave a property empty they shouldn't be charged a premium that's their choice . There wouldn't be the numbers of people waiting for the council to house them if the rules were stricter people think they are entitled to everything they can get whilst not working a day.

The extra council tax from these properties should be all or in part, given for the benefit of the community in which the property is located.

Don't use this as a means to get more funds to take more asylum seekers who would put a massive further strain on our local community. Our council services are already deteriorating rapidly!

They're a blight and the council should be actively doing something about this
Some property is an eyesore laying empty. Encouraging squatters and drug users. Also many cannabis farms found in empty property. One backed onto me. Neighbours hadn't a clue what was going on. Bedroom lights used to go on 10:30 on a Wednesday and Sunday night for twenty minutes or so, stupidly we thought someone was checking the property.
Please check on the state of empty properties some are left to decay and cause effects on other properties
There are in total 786 properties that we are talking about. I believe there are far too many properties empty but this impacted by elderly in Nursing Homes etc. The second homes are very low. Could there be an incentive to help elderly people rent out there homes if they are unable to go home. I feel it's a very delicate problem because I'm sure lots of elderly would not want to give up their homes
I wonder how you know properties are empty long term. If direct debits are in place and there is money in the bank accounts then payments for direct debits will continue probably.
Empty properties should pay after 3 months not 12.
The sooner this review is concluded, the better. Where opportunities exist to increase income, they should be taken, thus lessening the burden on others.
WILL YOU ACTUALLY READ ANY OF THESE COMMENTS??? There are two questions to consider regarding empty and second homes:- 1. Do these properties use more of the Council Services than a property that is occupied full time? Answer - No!!!! so effectively they are less of a burden. 2. Why is it that Councils are charging this extra Council Tax then? It is suggested, to force those houses to be let, to reduce the Council's housing problem. In all the time that this extra charge has been going on, can the Council honestly that this method has been effect and why are they not trying to sort out their housing problem for themselves instead of putting huge amounts of stress both physically and financially on the Home Owners who are willing and should be allowed to pay the same Council Tax as their neighbours.
Stop thinking on how you can raise extra money to fund your badly run council and take your heads out of the sand. Second homes bring far more benefit to the communities than social housing will ever do. The majority of second homes are too big to service your family housing needs and the running costs of these homes will cost you far more to subsidise a tenant living in them as they will have to claim more benefits. You can't keep on taxing the wealthy to pay for the needy. Allow the building of more appropriate flats/small houses which will be efficient to run for these families rather than increasing a tax to fund a badly run council.
As you have probably gathered I am totally against penalising people who have made an effort in life to then get discriminated against those that think the world owes them a living, council tax as far as I am aware is to fund the services that are available to everyone not a stick to solve the problems associated with the housing shortage in a lot of cases people who have sold houses for holiday lets have actually increased the wealth of locals who have housing in those communities. If the Welsh government is trying to force people not to buy second homes perhaps they should legislate who you can sell your home to not punish the people who legally buy them in good faith.

Premiums will bring in some more money for you (especially if you don't provide any services in return) but I don't think it will help you with your apparent objectives - providing more affordable homes and increasing the use of the Welsh language. In my experience an attractive county like Flintshire is no different to an English one near big cities - the people who move in are commuters and they always end up displacing the locals whatever language they speak.

Regarding long term empty properties, again it should be down to ones circumstances providing there's a plan to renovate or sell.

The holiday homes situation needs a long term plan rather than just hiking up the council tax. Families earning £100,000+ between them won't flinch about paying premiums. Those who do or might be forced to sell will stand to make an incredible amount of money on the sale. Why not tax this too? Perhaps like a capital gains tax with a high percentage which would make tens of thousands of pounds each time. This money could be put towards building more affordable homes.

Get the empty homes scheme working properly

Second homes such as holiday homes bring in people who are spending money in local shops and restaurants

We spend the majority of weekends in our home, we contribute to the local economy, shopping locally using our local pub, supporting local tradespeople, and we do enjoy being there and part of our community. Our neighbours have grown up with us, we feel part of our community. We celebrate our birthdays, special days and Christmas there, including doing our Christmas shopping. We arrived after the war, our property is prefabricated being two wooden chicken sheds joined together in an L shape, one of the last of its kind. Our property has no saleable value, (its only the plot of land it is sat on), could the premium be a sliding scale depending on the property in question? There are 5 generations who love to spend time there. The property isn't worth anything, but to us with our age ranges from 8 months to 86 years its the world. Please be lenient when considering the next few years rate, or consider introducing a sliding scale

OK here's one, if the property's aesthetics fell below that of your stock in looks and maintenance, then a levy could be looked at. If an owner is maintaining and looking after their property in excess of what a tenant does, then that's a positive

we need to see a massive increase in benefits from the council, we already pay far too much and they cant even fill a pot hole. don't get me started on the absolute stupidity of 20mph, they all need sacking, and their pay returned retrospectively,

actually for the sake of public safety the entire council should stop making up new ideas as they have proven to always be wrong until they can prove to us they can actually do anything right.

I don't believe Flintshire is a tourist area with second home problems. Perhaps focus on council buildings and council land to provide starting homes for those on a list. Often the empty or second properties are not suitable, too old or subject to planning restrictions, remote or too large to be useful as home for those on the waiting list. I imagine that if they could be renovated at a profit people would have already done it so it looks like an easy way for the council to get money but not solve a problem. All the houses, old pubs, warehouses etc that are empty have often been left to fall into ruin and most are owned by businesses so I don't see Flintshire in the same category as Abersoch for example. Money and projects to help restore may be more useful? If they were to be sold to the council for example?

I inherited my 3 bedroom childhood home in Hawarden and currently use it as a 2nd home, visiting at least one weekend a month and often more. This enables me to keep in touch with my wider family and enable myself and my own family to maintain our Welsh heritage. Whilst using the home I place little burden on council services, using essentially only waste collection services, yet boost the local economy.

I do not see why any council tax premium should apply to a property that has always been owned by my family and continues to be used as such. Considering that there are only 11 second homes in Hawarden I cannot believe that my not occupying the home on a permanent basis has any negative impact on housing in the area, given that at the time of writing there are 41 three bedroom homes for sale in the Hawarden area. I believe that the imposition of any council tax premium can only be considered to be a tax on perceived wealth and that the fact that only 1.1% of properties fall into this category means that a premium will have very little impact whatsoever on the availability of affordable housing.

It would be interesting to know what impact the introduction and increase of the premium charge has had on the total numbers since its introduction, and that this should have been published as part of this consultation. In addition, given the small number of properties involved I would question whether the cost of administering the premium charge is worth the additional amount collected. In addition, considering there are far more empty properties than 2nd homes, and that these properties are far more likely to be made available for sale I would question why the premium charge for these is less than 2nd homes.

In some areas, such as Lleyn and Ynys Mon, there are many second homes owned by wealthy English families, they may be detrimental to the local communities, and a premium on the council tax may be justified. However this is not the case in this area of Flintshire. Also, many of the second homes are luxury properties, not affordable housing.

Looking at individual cases rather than a blanket approach and assuming that all second home owners are holiday homes or landlords. Some people are struggling in the position they have found themselves in by no fault of their own.

Inheritance Issues: When a property is inherited and co-owners have conflicting interests that prevent timely sale or renovation.

Financial Hardship: When the increased tax burden impedes the owner's ability to fund necessary repairs and improvements.

Active Efforts for Resolution: When the owner is actively seeking solutions, such

as buying out co-owners or selling adjacent land to fund repairs, but faces delays due to external factors like slow planning processes.

Planning Support: Having local planning department support and help to make thing move quicker.

personal circumstance and area should be taken into consideration

Have you done your background research as to what will happen with increasing premiums? From the questions above, you have not. You might end up killing off Flintshire economy as you will not be bringing fresh ideas and wealth into the region. Time do more research into why you are doing this. Build more affordable houses should be your focus because a real effect would be house price drop and that will affect ALL properties.

It is unfair and unjust to penalise and discriminate against a resident who has purchased a slow property in Flintshire and needs to save their funds to make the home habitable. How can we save and make it habitable when the council demand £189 plus 300% per month for tax????

More information is needed to understand why homes are empty long term with support provided to the owner to ensure they are inhabited as soon as possible (either for rent or sold-on).

A better understanding of second home owners is needed. Flintshire cannot be compared to Pembrokeshire or the Llyn Peninsula where second homes have a bigger impact on local communities creating ghost towns out-of-season, and inflating property prices. Flintshire does NOT have high levels of tourism, so levying high council tax premiums would cause a lot of pain for the individual and not provide much additional income for the Council.

In relation to Q11 and the impact on house prices in Flintshire should the premium be increased - I think it has the potential force more housing onto the market but the market value will remain unchanged. It won't necessarily create more affordable housing for local people, only people who can afford deposits will be in a position to buy, although it may provide more opportunity for a circular market through people moving up the property ladder and releasing more affordable housing onto the market.

There should not be a penalty for people who freely wish to buy homes in Wales as either a residential property or a second home.

You are increasing the premiums for your own benefits. Not taking into considerations of the owner of the property.

The Council should focus on building affordable housing and not give planning permission to 5 bedroom homes in locations that are prime for affordable housing. This would increase revenues and build communities, rather than trying to alienate a small percentage of people who own second homes. These people bring revenue streams into the communities and are a reduced burden on the Council's services.

This is our only property in the U.K. it is our home in our hearts, we're from Wales we come back to belong to our communities and care for our families - this legislation is turning our families away from Wales, we'd have to probably sell and put our roots down elsewhere. We are portrayed as money grabbing wealthy second home owners when this just isn't the case, we don't earn an income and in fact help contribute to the community and economy. If you don't want us here we'll leave and find somewhere more welcoming, devastating as that short sighted decision might be.

Maybe the council could offer to buy them and rent out. Or offer some aid/help in each individually case

I really couldn't give an answer to this question
Never owned another property

I see the increase of council tax for long-term empty and second homes as a boon. Rural communities should not be used to serve as housing stock for the nearby towns and cities, but should be a desirable, close-knit community as they were 20-30 years ago.

Once a 'long-term empty property' is placed up for sale, no council tax should be due. No services are being used. House sales are very difficult in the current economic situation.

Charging 1% property owners more for council tax will make no difference to many of the questions you have asked above. You need to look in more detail why certain areas are high (e.g. Llanas a) before forcing changes on all.

What difference has been made to overall numbers since premium charges introduced?

This feels like discrimination against Welsh people who find that they are currently unable to live in Wales. The property encourages our children to visit frequently and experience the Welsh culture rather than spend more time travelling to other countries.

Flintshire is my historical home county and whilst I currently live abroad, I own a second home (via inheritance through my parents) in the county and is used/lived in every five to six months for periods of one or two months at a time when I return. The property is also used by my immediate family members in between therefore has people visiting the property frequently.

Shouldn't be penalised

Don not agree with them. I'm not happy that I have to pay for the people without jobs to live happy live.

The survey is flawed in that it treats empty homes and second homes the same. They are not. Empty homes contribute nothing to the community or economy, whereas second homes do. Consequently questions 10, 11 & 12 will provide inaccurate results and should have been split into separate questions - those for empty homes and those for second homes.

What is the purpose of the premium policy? What is it trying to address?

1. Is it to release more houses into the market housing and private rented housing sector?

An analysis of the table of properties paying the premium shows that overall 1.1% pay; of that 0.86% are empty homes; and 0.23% are second homes.

If (1) is the purpose then the issue seems to be mainly of empty homes as these provide nothing for the local community or economy. So if the premium is to be increased it should be on empty homes in an attempt to bring them back into beneficial use.

Flintshire Local Plan policy STR1 identifies that the Plan will seek to provide 7,870 new homes to meet a housing requirement of 6,950 homes, through the application of a flexibility allowance of over 13%. Consequently, the Council's own

policy provides for the houses that are likely to be needed over the plan period, indeed more so.

As the percentage of second homes is so low compared to the existing housing stock, it is probably appropriate to lower the premium as it achieves little. If that is considered not possible then where the premium is now set for second homes, is probably reasonable. Tackle empty homes as they are the real problem, as they represent 78% of properties paying the premium.

2. Is it to stop holiday & second homes in popular tourist areas adversely affecting local communities?

Is there any evidence that this is happening in Flintshire? It seems the percentages of such homes in most settlements/wards is so low that it probably is not. Furthermore, the recent changes to the planning use classes will prevent this happening, as the Council is able to control changes from market homes to holiday/second homes.

If there is evidence of adverse impact then the premium could be increased, but only for properties in those popular tourist locations - not in the main towns.

3. Is it to raise money to put into the Council pot to be spent on other services such as social care?

If so, this is a very inefficient way to do so. Central Government or the Welsh Government need to do more to help local authorities to meet the challenges of today.

4. Is it to help people looking for affordable social housing? If so it will achieve little. What will address this problem is more Council/Housing Association homes. Conclusion – leave the premium for second homes at current levels (or reduce it) and put it up for empty homes.

My parents bought our home in Hawarden Both our parents have now sadly died and left the family home to my sister and I. We have contributed to your previous consultations on the council tax premium. We are disappointed that Flints council (like other councils in Wales) choose a fairly blanket approach to applying the premium. My sister and I, both Welsh speaking, are choosing, while we can, to keep our much loved family home and to support Hawarden. It is therefore disappointing to see that the longevity of our home ownership and the specific circumstances applying to us do not even merit an exception whereby our council tax contribution could be reduced somewhat. We continue to be baffled as to how applying an ever increasing premium is compatible with the council being able to achieve the stated objectives associated with the premium.

Sort this situation out rather than parroting Welsh Government edicts. I get the problems with long term empty properties as know one wants houses standing empty for any length of time. I've no doubt that FCC has a fair portfolio of empty properties itself, I doubt whether they will be subject to the premium. I can honestly say that the imposition of this premium has made absolutely no difference to the length of time my property will remain empty, all it has done is added cost to the job, money that ironically could have been spent on the renovation that may well have shortened the length of the work! A more carrot than stick approach is

required, rather than a constant look at your bottom line and where you can extract money the most easily.

It is difficult to answer some questions since some apply to long- term empty only and in others they are 'lumped together' with 2nd homes. Please add the following as intro to no 8 : Long - term empty properties are more likely to fall into disrepair whilst 2nd homes are more likely to be well-maintained. The sale of LTE homes, could possibly, if purchased by the council for example, assist in reducing the waiting list. If sold privately however, there is no guarantee. In Hawarden, where my sister and I retain our family home, we note.....

We have had a lot of work done on the bungalow, using local craftsmen, and when we are there, we support local businesses. Whilst we are Welsh speakers, Hawarden is not a Welsh - speaking area and our ownership of a property has no effect .

Since the Welsh senydd brought this ruling in no one has published any figures as to how many empty properties have come onto the market or how many second homes have been sold. But the cost of renting a property has gone up by 30%.

I recommend Flintshire work with the home owner more closely to try and get the property back in to use instead of trying to force action by financial means and burden families

I do not consider that the format of this questionnaire is very helpful. It uses simplistic questions that encourage answers that have no evidential basis.

None

Appendix 4 – 2024/25 Council Tax Premium Rates across Wales for Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties

Local Authority	Second Home Premium Rate (%)	LTE Premium Rate (%)	Explanation/Comments
Flintshire	100	75	
Denbighshire	100	100-150	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-5 years, 150% for 5+ years
Wrexham	50	100-150	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-3 years, 150% for 4+ years
Conwy	100	100	
Gwynedd	150	100	
Isle of Anglesey	100	100	
Powys	75	100	
Ceredigion	100	100-200	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-5 years, 150% for 5-10 years, 200% for 10+ years
Pembrokeshire	200	100-300	LTE premium rate of 100% for 2-3 years, 200% for 3-4 years, 300% for 4+ years
Swansea	100	100	
Cardiff	100	100-300	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-2 years, 200% for 2-3 years, 300% for 3+ years
Monmouthshire	100	100-300	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-2 years, 200% for 2-3 years, 300% for 3+ years
Newport	100	100	
Bridgend	100-200	100-200	Second home and LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-2 years, 200% for 2+ years
Vale of Glamorgan	100	100-150	LTE premium rate of 100% for 1-2 years, 150% for 2+ years
Rhondda Cynon Taff	100	50-100	LTE premium rate of 50% for 1-2 years, 100% for 2+ years
Carmarthenshire	50	50	
Merthyr Tydfil	100	100	
Caerphilly	0	0	No premium scheme in operation for 2024/25
Neath Port Talbot	0	0	No premium scheme in operation for 2024/25
Torfaen	0	0	No premium scheme in operation for 2024/25
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	No premium scheme in operation for 2024/25

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Carbon and Co-benefits Decision Support Tool

Introduction

This Carbon and Co-benefits Decision Support Tool allows users to self-assess the impact of the proposed policies, initiatives, or services against your local authority’s policy frameworks. It provides decision makers with a high-level assessment of how a Decision meets policy goals and can facilitate a process of revising Decisions to more fully meet these goals. Where more detailed assessment is needed, users should consult other tools that lead to a full assessment of specific impact areas as indicated (e.g., Environmental Impact Assessment, Cost Benefit Analysis). Users self-assess against nine impact areas (Equalities, Health, Resilience & Adaptation, Housing, Economy, Mobility & Connectivity, Carbon, Nature & Environment, Consumption and Production and the Net Zero Wales target). Depending on your answers, you may then be directed into a self-reported Carbon Assessment tab, where your paper will be compared to relevant best practice. If your paper impacts on people with ‘protected characteristics’, you will be directed to the Equalities Impact Assessment tab. You will also be required to complete the Welsh Language Impacts Assessment, where relevant.

Note that the Carbon Assessment does not yet assess embodied carbon and the tool does not go into the detail of intersectionality with regard to equality and inclusion impacts. As such, it is important that users take an ‘overview approach’ when using this tool to inform decision-making at your local authority.

Overview information	<i>Please complete all fields</i>
Name of policy / initiative / service to be assessed	Consideration of Variation of Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties
Author(s)	David Barnes - Revenues and Procurement Manager
Date of Assessment	24/07/2024
Document Version	
Corporate objective being addressed	New and revised policies, practices or procedures. Decisions affecting service users, employees or the wider community
Department / function carrying out the assessment	Revenues
Who is responsible for the implementation of the policy / initiative / service? (function head / department manager)	Chief Officer Governance
Brief description of the proposal or decision	When considering whether or not to amend the premium levels, the discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help local authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and •increase the supply of affordable housing; and •enhance the sustainability of local communities.
Value (£)	
Is this a strategy document?	Yes <input type="button" value="v"/>
If this is a strategy document will this strategy have an impact over multiple years?	Yes <input type="button" value="v"/>

1. Impacts Questionnaire

Guide

This questionnaire will provide high level scoring on key impact areas related to your local authority's policy. The results are given a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) result indicating how the proposed Decision fits with the policy related to the impact area.

Definitions

Some questions have a 'red corner' in the cell; this indicates that there are guidance notes available to view in relation to that question. To view these, hover the mouse pointer over one of these cells (you can practice by hovering over this cell). In the cells next to the question there are also links to websites with further supporting information.

Impact areas

Questions for each impact area require a yes/no answer to determine if they are relevant. These are set to YES as default – once you have read through the questions in that impact area, you may select NO if this area is not relevant to your paper.

Different types of papers and confidence in your assessment

It is understood that various types of Decisions are being assessed through this tool. For some papers, for example new strategies, you may not feel able to answer all of the questions with confidence as this will depend on delivery. You should answer on the basis of what the strategy aims to achieve – however, this is an important opportunity to consider where issues at the delivery stage could undermine your aims. You should note these challenges and specify any mitigation measures needed to ensure delivery is in line with the original aspirations on the results page.

Some papers may have a number of projects within them and so the answers between projects could be different. Here we ask you to take a high level ('helicopter') view, assessing across the content of the paper. However, again, where there are particular areas that will have negative impacts or there are risks that the assessed level of positive impact will not be met – specific mitigation measures should be flagged by users on the results page.

Impact categories

The definitions of the possible impacts are as follows:

Yes, with long lasting and/or significant positive impact. The proposal or decision has positive impacts that are long lasting (3 or more years) and/or are significant for large numbers of residents and/or a significant proportion of a particular group or community.

Yes, with short term (3 years or less) or limited positive impact. The proposal or decision has positive impact, but will be limited in its effects or have a short lifespan.

No, the decision or proposal has no discernable positive or negative impact. It will not affect any discernible positive or negative change.

Yes, but with short term (3 years or less) or limited negative impact. The proposal or decision has negative short term or limited impacts.

Yes, but with long lasting (more than 3 years) or severe negative impact. The proposal or decision has negative impacts that are long lasting (3 or more years) and/or are significant for large numbers of residents and/or a significant proportion of a particular group or community.

All Decisions will then be given a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating on applicable Impact areas. The definitions of these are:

All green. The proposal or decision is expected to have **positive impacts overall**, whether long or short term.

Equal number of red and green OR at least one red. The proposal or decision has both positive and negative impacts OR have net neutral impact with equal positive and negative overall outcomes. Careful consideration of trade-offs is recommended.

Mostly red, with at least one green. Careful consideration of trade-offs is necessary.

All red. The proposal or decision is expected result to **negative impacts overall**. It should receive most attention for mitigation or be avoided. Clear and evidenced justification to progress this proposal will be required.

Impacts Questionnaire

1. Equality and Welsh Language

Will this proposal or decision affect individuals or groups (e.g., residents, employees, visitors) in different ways, including for example, social equality and inclusion?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

Page 114

1	Will this proposal or decision disproportionately affect people with one or more protected characteristics ?	More help (web link)	Short term or limited positive ▼
2	Will this proposal or decision affect other people or groups, for example, people with caring responsibilities, or those that are socially and economically disadvantaged ?	More help (web link) More help (web link)	Short term or limited positive ▼
3	Will this proposal or decision affect local people's access to public services (e.g., community centres, transport services, health services)?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
4	Will this proposal support communities in shaping decisions that affect them?		No discernible impact ▼
5	Will this proposal or decision affect community cohesion ?		Short term or limited positive ▼
6	Will this proposal or decision affect opportunities for people to use Welsh Language no less favourably than English language?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
7	Will this proposal or decision affect Welsh culture and Welsh speaking communities?		No discernible impact ▼

RAG Result

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

G	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.
	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.
	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market and increase opportunities for families to stay local in their

2. Health

Will this proposal or decision affect people's physical or mental well-being?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

1	Will this proposal or decision affect the physical health of residents?		No discernible impact ▼
2	Will this proposal or decision affect the mental well-being of residents?		Short term or limited positive ▼
3	Will the proposal or decision affect residents' levels of physical activity?		No discernible impact ▼
4	Will the proposal or decision affect levels of social isolation?		Short term or limited positive ▼
5	Will this proposal or decision affect residents' access to healthcare facilities and services, including other caring services?		No discernible impact ▼
6	Will this proposal affect the lifestyle and/or health of babies, children, and/or adults, for example, through access to and provision of healthy food?		No discernible impact ▼

RAG Result

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

G	
	Bringing properties back into use and increasing local housing stock means that families can continue to live in the communities in which they grew up creating close family networks and a sense of belonging.
	If the premium scheme is maintained or increased there is potential that families could stay local with increased availability of affordable housing meaning family members are not isolated and there is family cohesion

3. Resilience and Adaptation

Will this proposal or decision affect your local authority's social, economic and ecological resilience and capacity to adapt to change?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

1	Will this proposal or decision increase the environmental/climate, disaster, or public safety risks in your local authority?	More help (web link)	Short term or limited positive ▼
2	Will this proposal or decision enable individuals, communities, or businesses to better withstand and recover from disruption more quickly and effectively?		No discernible impact ▼
3	Will this proposal or decision affect current levels of vulnerability both for people and the environment?		No discernible impact ▼
4	Will this proposal or decision make our communities and people feel safer at home and/or in their local area?		Short term or limited positive ▼
5	Does this proposal or decision affect access to and provision of green and blue spaces ?	More help (web link)	No ▼



RAG Result

G

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

If long-term empty properties are incentivised to be brought back into use by maintaining or increasing the premium, this would ensure that properties that require investment are modernised including the fitting of more modern and efficient heating,

If long-term empty properties are incentivised to be brought back into use by maintaining or increasing the premium, this would ensure that properties that are perhaps empty and derelict and causing harm to the environment and visual amenity of an area are brought up to a good standard.

4. Housing

Will this proposal or decision affect housing in your local authority?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

1	Will this proposal or decision affect people who are experiencing or at risk of any form of homelessness , including for example, rough sleeping ?	More help (web link)	Long term or significant positive ▼
2	Will this proposal or decision affect the accessibility or affordability of homes for residents?		Short term or limited positive ▼
3	Will this proposal or decision improve derelict urban land or reuse redundant or underused buildings for local housing?		Long term or significant positive ▼
4	Will this proposal or decision facilitate construction of new-build residential building(s)?		No ▼
5	Will this proposal or decision facilitate maintenance or improvement of existing residential building(s)?		Yes ▼
6	Will this proposal or decision affect mandates or regulations for landlords on building standards?		No ▼



RAG Result

G

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

Maintaining or increasing the premium may encourage landlords to bring uninhabitable properties back into housing stock or for second home owners to sell their properties which may also increase availability of housing to contribute to the reduction of homelessness.

If the Premium were to be increased there is potential that both housing stock availability may increase and also house prices to decrease as a result increasing availability and affordability.

By maintaining or increasing the premium scheme incentivises owners of buildings that are empty and in a poor state or derelict to bring them up to a habitable standard and available as local housing.

By maintaining or increasing the premium scheme incentivises owners of buildings that are empty and in a poor state or derelict to bring them up to a habitable standard and available as local housing.

5. Economy

Will this proposal or decision affect your local authority's economy and its global responsibility?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

1	Will this proposal or decision contribute to improving economic development in your local authority?		Short term or limited positive ▼
2	Will this proposal or decision increase or decrease employment opportunities for local people?		No discernible impact ▼
3	Will this proposal or decision create, retain or attract jobs where people are satisfied?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
4	Will this proposal or decision help local businesses maximise potential economic assets ?		Short term or limited positive ▼
5	Will this proposal contribute to innovation and/or productivity in your local authority?		No discernible impact ▼
6	Will this proposal attract inward investment in our towns and cities?		Short term or limited negative ▼
7	Will this proposal increase opportunities for formal education, vocational training or skills that are 'fit for the future' ?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
8	Does this proposal entail the construction or re-purposing of building(s) for non-residential purposes?		No ▼



RAG Result
A

Comment - please provide succinct statements.
 By addressing the issue of shortage of housing stock, this will ensure Wales and the County are in a strong position to be able to provide suitable housing to residents who wish to live there meaning they do not have to seek alternative solutions outside the
 More available housing and less second homes would increase the supply of labour to local employers
 An increase in premium on long-term empty properties may disincentivise developers from purchasing and developing into habitable properties where they premium is already in place on the property

6. Mobility and Connectivity

Will this proposal or decision affect mobility and connectivity in your local authority through transport and digital infrastructures?

Yes
 No

Proceed to next question ↓

Page 118

1	Does this proposal or decision affect digital connectivity?		<input type="text"/>
2	Does this proposal or decision affect current or future transport services and infrastructure (e.g., low-carbon, accessible, efficient and sustainable transport)?		<input type="text"/>
3	Will this proposal or decision affect access to services for users through physical or digital infrastructure, such as provision of new transport links or online services?		<input type="text"/>
4	Will this proposal or decision affect road congestion?		<input type="text"/>
5	Does this proposal or decision affect affordability of transport or digital services?		<input type="text"/>
6	Does this proposal or decision affect local availability of low carbon shared transport schemes?		<input type="text"/>
7	Does this proposal or decision affect transport connectivity?		<input type="text"/>
8	Does this proposal or decision affect cycling, walking, bus, tram or train availability and/or access?		<input type="text"/>
9	Does the proposal or decision affect roads or parking?		<input type="text"/>
####	Will this proposal or decision procure or lease a new vehicle?		<input type="text"/>
####	Will this proposal or decision restrict petrol/diesel vehicle use in towns and cities?		<input type="text"/>

RAG Result

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

7. Carbon, Nature and Environment

Will this proposal or decision affect the natural environment, ecosystems, carbon emissions and local pollution in your local authority?

Yes
 No

Please complete next part →

Page 119

1	Will this proposal or decision affect local air quality , for example, by changes in public levels of exposure to oxides of nitrogen (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter (PM10 & PM2.5) ?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
2	Will this proposal affect the level of water pollutants in the environment?		No discernible impact ▼
3	Will this proposal affect the level of light pollutants in the environment?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
4	Will this proposal affect the level of noise pollutants in the environment?		No discernible impact ▼
5	Does this proposal or decision affect the amount of natural carbon sinks in your local authority, e.g., through maintaining and enhancing concentration of carbon and organic matter in soils?	More help (web link)	No discernible impact ▼
6	Does this proposal or decision affect the visual amenity of the environment?		Short term or limited positive ▼
7	Will this proposal or decision affect biodiversity , including principal species and their habitats?	More help (web link) More help (web link)	Short term or limited positive ▼
8	Will this proposal affect sustainable agricultural practices in your county?		No discernible impact ▼
9	Will this proposal or decision have a positive or negative effect on efforts to reduce carbon emissions across your local authority?		Short term or limited positive ▼

RAG Result

G

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

Properties that are left empty long-term often fall into disrepair and can be a blight on the attractiveness of an area.

Any decision to maintain or increase the premium would provide a disincentive for a property to be left empty long-term and instead be used as a primary residency. The outside space of a property that is lived in is more likely to be managed in a respectful way to encourage biodiversity.

Properties that are left empty long-term often fall into disrepair and can be a blight on the attractiveness of an area.

It could be reasonably expected that the outcome of the policy would encourage more

8. Consumption and Production

Will this proposal or decision affect waste and recycling within your local authority?

Yes
 No

Proceed to

1	Does this project or decision have an impact on the amount of waste produced, considering all waste streams and their life cycle including food waste?		
2	Will this project or decision affect current or future reuse or recycling rates?		
3	Does this proposal or decision consider resource efficiency and take steps to increase circularity ?	More help (web link)	

RAG Result

Comment - please provide succinct statements.

next question
↓

4	Will this proposal or decision affect levels of waste sent to landfill, including for example, single-use plastics and packaging in your local authority?		<input type="text"/>
5	What impact will this project or decision have on goals to minimise construction waste?		<input type="text"/>
6	Will the proposal support the reduction of emissions in the supply chains of the goods and services purchased by your local authority?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>

9. Climate Change Target

Enter text answer below (include summary of climate change mitigation measures)

How does this proposal or decision contribute to achieving your local authority's carbon/climate change targets? What more could be done to improve this contribution further?

[More help](#)
[\(web link\)](#)

The policy would not impact on the plan for future climate change

2. Simple Carbon Assessment

Guide

The Simple Carbon Assessment tool scores the Decision against best practice for reducing carbon emissions that cause climate change in line with your local authority's targets. You only need to answer the sections indicated - this is determined by answers given in the Impacts Questionnaire.

Some questions require a yes/no response that is scored. Others require a comment that will provide additional context for a reviewer of the decision. If 'Non Applicable' is given as an answer add a brief explanation why this is the case.

All questions need to be answered to score a section.

For any scoring a comment can be added as justification in the 'Comment' column.

Embodied carbon is not specified in the simple assessment - full life cycle assessment is required and advisable to comment on this.

The scoring is colour coded as follows:

Grey	No associated carbon impacts expected for decision.
Green	In the simple assessment the decision meets the highest standard in terms of practice and awareness.
Blue	In the simple assessment the decision meets most of the associated best practice with a good level of awareness.
Brown	In the simple assessment the decision only partially meets associated best practice and/or awareness is lacking, significant room for improvement.
Black	In the simple assessment the decision does not meet best practice and/or there is insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Simple Carbon Assessment

Buildings

✗ You do not need to answer section 1a

Q.1a If the Decision will contribute to the construction of a new residential building(s):

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

State the design energy performance certification (EPC) of the building(s).		Enter text answer in the comment field →		
Does the proposed building fabric exceed required standards of energy efficiency (part L)?		<input type="text"/>		
Does the new building(s) include a natural gas or oil based heating system?		<input type="text"/>		
Are proposed buildings to Passivhaus standard?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>		
Have life cycle (embodied) carbon emissions of building materials been considered and minimised in building design and are steps taken to procure lowest carbon options?		<input type="text"/>		
Estimated additional costs to increase building air tightness and/or swap to low carbon heating.		Enter text answer in the comment field →		
Has a biodiversity impact assessment been completed and is onsite biodiversity net gain over 10%?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>		
Is there suitable pedestrian and cycle access from the new building(s) to all or some of the following amenities - food shopping/other shops/transport hub/health care services?		<input type="text"/>		
Building will include onsite renewable energy (Solar Photovoltaics (PV), Solar Thermal, Ground/Air Source Heat Pump)?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>		

Page 123

✓ Please answer section 1b

Q.1b If the decision will contribute to the renovation or maintenance of a residential building(s):

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

What is the current EPC standard of the building(s) and what will it be following the intervention(s)?		Enter text answer in the comment field →		
If natural gas/oil heating systems are present will they be replaced with a low carbon alternative?		Not Applicable <input type="text"/> Add comment >		
Have life cycle (embodied) carbon emissions of building materials being considered and are steps taken to procure lowest carbon options?		Not Applicable <input type="text"/> Add comment >		
Will the building fabric be upgraded to improve energy efficiency?		Yes <input type="text"/>		
Will a minimum EPC rating of 'C' be attained?		Don't know <input type="text"/>	By encouraging uninhabitable properties to be renovated should increase the EPC ratings	

What additional costs are associated with upgrading building to EnerPhit standard after intervention)?	Help (web link) Help (web link 2)	Enter text answer in the comment field →		
Will onsite renewable energy generation (Solar Photovoltaics or Solar Thermal) be added as part of the renovation/maintenance?	More help (web link)	<input type="text" value="Not Applicable"/>	Add comment >	

✗ You do not need to answer section 1c

Q.1c If the Decision will contribute to the construction of a new non-residential (including public) building:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

State the design Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) or Display Energy Certificate (DEC) of the building.		Enter text answer in the comment field →		
Does the proposed building exceed required standards of energy efficiency (part L)?		<input type="text"/>		
Does the new building(s) include a natural gas or oil based heating system?		<input type="text"/>		
Does the building design include a Building Energy Management system or Building Management System ?		<input type="text"/>		
Estimated additional costs to improve to higher fabric efficiency standard.		Enter text answer in the comment field →		
Have life cycle (embodied) carbon emissions of building materials being considered and are steps taken to procure lowest carbon options?		<input type="text"/>		
Has biodiversity net benefit been incorporated into the project	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>		
Is there suitable pedestrian and cycle access to/from the new building(s) for car free commuting?		<input type="text"/>		
Is there a bus/tram/train stop near (up to a mile) from the building(s) for car free commuting?		<input type="text"/>		
Will the development include multiple electric vehicle charging points?		<input type="text"/>		
Does the development include facilities for cyclists (secure, dry bike storage)?		<input type="text"/>		
Will the building have onsite renewables energy generation (Solar Photovoltaics (PV), Solar Thermal, wind generator)?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>		

Transport

✗ You do not need to answer section 2a

Q.2a If this Decision affects cycling, walking, bus, tram or train availability and/or access:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

Is an existing active travel route being extended/improved?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Is an existing active travel route being removed/reduced?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Is an active travel route being created?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Is access to existing and planned local educational, shopping, leisure and work facilities by public transport being improved?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Is resident access to low carbon transport being enhanced through increased shared mobility options?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Are new public transport facilities being constructed?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Are existing public transport facilities being removed or disrupted?		<input type="text"/>	▼	

✗ You do not need to answer section 2b

Q.2b If the Decision affect roads, parking or vehicle access:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

Will road capacity be increased for vehicles only?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Will access for cyclists or pedestrians be reduced?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Will access for cyclists or pedestrians be improved?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Will the Decision incentivise more personal vehicle travel?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
With the exception of Disabled Parking - will the Decision lead to a net increase in parking spaces in town/city centres?		<input type="text"/>	▼	
Does the Decision increase access to electric vehicle charging points?		<input type="text"/>	▼	

✗ You do not need to answer section 2c

Q.2c If this Decision affect access for residents to amenities:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

Does the development improve access to shops and services for residents by walking/cycling?		<input type="text"/>	
Does the development improve access to shops and services for residents by bus/tram?		<input type="text"/>	
Does the development require access to a car to reach?		<input type="text"/>	

✗ You do not need to answer section 2d

Q.2d If the Decision requires the procurement of a new vehicle:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

What is the vehicle?		Enter text answer in the comment field →	
Is the vehicle fully electric or hydrogen fuelled?		<input type="text"/>	
Were whole-life costs for the vehicle (operation as well as initial purchase) considered?		<input type="text"/>	
If a fully electric or hydrogen option is not being selected state why.		Enter text answer in the comment field →	

Land Use

✗ You do not need to answer section 3a

Q.3a If the Decision changes existing land use:

Comment - please provide succinct statements. Result

Will existing green space /ecologically important habitat be preserved?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>	
Has a biodiversity assessment been completed?		<input type="text"/>	
Will a new natural habitat be created?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>	
Does this proposal impact a principal species ?	More help (web link)	<input type="text"/>	

Overall Rating



3. Equalities Impact Assessment

✔ Based on your Impacts Questionnaire response, you are required to complete this Equalities Impact Assessment.

Guide

This form is a generic template for an Equalities Impact Assessment. **You may prefer to use your local authority's Equalities Impact Assessment proforma** and follow your standard screening and full assessment process.

Some fields have already been answered based on the responses you provided on the Introductory sheet (marked here with an asterisk). If any of these are incorrect, please edit them on the Introductory form.

This section is not scored.

Answer:

If you have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment for this proposal in another form there is no need to complete this form, but please give details of the EIA completed that will be attached with the proposal:	<i>If alternative EIA state here</i>
---	--------------------------------------

An equality impact assessment must be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

[The 'A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties' guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.](#)

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Councils are required in the exercise of their functions to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between those who have a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of the persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

"Relevant protected characteristics" are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

On **Section 2**, please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the people with protected characteristics and/or those who may be socially-disadvantaged. The impacts may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

For **Section 3**, Consultation and Engagement:

The legislation relating to the EqIA process requires you to engage and involve people who represent the interests of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and with those who have an interest in the way you carry out your functions. The socio economic duty also requires us to take into account the voices of those in the community including those with lived experience of socio economic disadvantage. You should undertake engagement with communities of interest or communities of place to understand if they are more affected or disadvantaged by your proposals. This needs to be proportionate to the policy or practice being assessed. Remember that stakeholders can also include our own staff as well as partner organisations.

Guidance on consultation and engagement is available on the Council's Intranet. There is also a list of organisations/groups you can contact to support you reach as many people with protected characteristics and Welsh speakers as possible.

Section 1

Name of policy / initiative / Service to be impact assessed*	Consideration of Variation of Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-
Corporate objective being addressed*	New and revised policies, practices or procedures. Decisions affecting service users,
Department / function carrying out the assessment*	Revenues
Who is responsible for the implementation of the policy / initiative / service? (function head /department manager)*	Chief Officer Governance
Who is involved in the impact assessment?	
What are the aims / objectives of the policy / initiative / service?	When considering whether or not to amend the premium levels, the discretion given to
Who is intended to benefit from the policy?	
What are the main outcomes of the policy (this is key to being able to identify what monitoring is needed)?	
Is the policy for external or internal purposes?	
Are other organisations involved in the delivery?	
If yes please state who:	

What information/ past experience do we have i.e. a similar initiative and what did this information tell us? (info can be demographic data i.e. census findings, research findings, comparisons between similar policies in our Service and other Services, survey data, equality monitoring data, ad hoc data gathering exercises)	
How will information be collected regarding the impact of the policy /initiative /service/ employment policy etc?	
Date of Policy Review*	24/07/2024

Section 2	Impacts identified / Relevant data and evidence	
Age	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
Disability	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
Sex	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to their sex	Neutral
Race	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to race. It would	Neutral
Religion and Belief (including no belief)	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to religious belief.	Neutral
Sexual orientation	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to sexual orientation.	Neutral
Gender reassignment	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to gender	Neutral
Pregnancy and Maternity	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
Marriage and civil partnership	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
People experiencing or at risk of socio-economic disadvantage (including those with lower income or carers)	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
Human rights	If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties	Positive
Others, please state (e.g., Modern Slavery, Safeguarding, Other COVID effects, Carers, Ex-offenders, Veterans, Care Leavers, Substance Abuse, Homeless)	Homeless - If the present Premium Scheme is maintained or increased it is expected that	
What is the impact of this proposal on those who serve or who have served in the Armed Forces, along with their families, as related to housing and education services?		
What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions affecting these groups made by the organisation?		
How does this proposal meet the goals and ways of working specified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?		
Describe any intended negative impact identified and explain why you believe this is justified		
For example, on the grounds of advancing equality of opportunity or fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or because of an objective justification or positive action		
Could any of the negative impacts identified amount to unlawful discrimination but are perceived to be unavoidable (e.g., reduction in funding)?		
If you answered Yes or Not Sure , please state below, which protected group(s) this applies to and explain why (including likely impact or effects of this proposed change)?		
If you answered No , are there any barriers identified which amount to a differential impact for certain groups and what are they?		

Section 3: Consultation & Engagement

Meetings and discussions

Public engagement activities

Include who was involved

Include who was involved

Section 4: Dealing with adverse and unlawful impact

When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?

Please give brief details

What measures or changes will you introduce to the policy or practice in the final draft which could reduce or remove any unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage and/or improve equality of opportunity/introduce positive change; or reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?

Specify the impact and mitigation measures or positive actions taken

Will these measures remove any unlawful impact or disadvantage? *If No*, what actions could you take to achieve the same goal by an alternative means?

Have you put an action plan in place to implement and monitor these mitigation measures? *If yes*, please attach your action plan to this assessment.

Decision to proceed

Using the information you have gathered in Sections 1-4, please state whether you are able to proceed with the policy or practice and if so, on what basis

	Continue with policy or practice in its current form.
	Continue with policy or practice but with amendments for improvement or to remove any areas of adverse impact identified in Section 4.
	Continue with the plan as any detrimental impact can be justified.
	Do not continue with this policy or practice as it is not possible to address the adverse impact. Consider alternative ways of addressing the issues.

4. Welsh Language Impact Assessment

✗ Based on your Impacts Questionnaire response, you are not required to complete this Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Consider the relevant impacts prior to deciding if to vary the premium scheme on long -term empty properties and second homes from April 2025 noting the limited risks highlighted within this Assessment.

Date assessment completed: 27/08/2024

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Welsh Language	G	
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing	G	
Economy	A	There is a risk that charging a premium may disincentivise developers from purchasing and renovating derelict properties to makes them habitable where all exemption have lapsed and the premium may be payable. However, incentives and grants may be available through the Empty Homes scheme to support such developments with financial costs, and the Council considers realistic affordable payment arrangements on a case-by-case basis to reduce the financial burden of the premium or to prevent hardship.
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving your local authority's Net Zero target		
Further Assessment(s):	Carbon Assessment. Equalities Assessment.	
Legend:	G	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.
	A	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.
	R	Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
	RR	Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment

Overall Score		
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance		If the premium was to be varied, it would not necessarily lead to an minimum EPC rating of C being attained on properties, however with their being a legal requirement of a property being E Rating in Wales in order to rent out a property, homes which are in a poor state of repair are likely to have a significant increase on their EPC rating if they are to be rented out to tenants. For those that are purchased to live in it would be reasonable to assume that they would be finished to a high standard and achieve a higher EPC rating than prior to renovations taking place.
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
Land Use		
Land use	N/A	
Legend:		
		No associated carbon impacts expected.
		High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.
		Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.
		Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
		Does not meet best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Consider the relevant impacts prior to deciding if to vary the premium scheme on long -term empty properties and second homes from April 2025 noting the limited risks highlighted within this Assessment.


Date assessment completed: 27/08/2024


Impacts Questionnaire

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Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving your local authority's Net Zero target		
Further Assessment(s):	Carbon Assessment. Equalities Assessment.	
Legend:		
	G	Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.
	A	Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.

R	Mostly negative , with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
RR	Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment

Overall Score 

Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance		If the premium was to be varied, it would not necessarily lead to an minimum EPC rating of C being attained on properties, however with their being a legal requirement of a property being E Rating in Wales in order to rent out a property, homes which are in a poor state of repair are likely to have a significant increase on their EPC rating if they are to be rented out to tenants. For those that are purchased to live in it would be reasonable to assume that they would be finished to a high standard and achieve a higher EPC rating than prior to renovations taking place.
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	






Transport

Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	

Land Use

Land use	N/A	
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Legend:

	No associated carbon impacts expected.
	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.
	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.
	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.
	Does not meet best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 24 th September 2024
Report Subject	Review of Political Balance
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is required under the Political Balance Rules contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 as amended to review the Council's political balance calculations following a number of changes to political group membership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That seats on committees be allocated in accordance with political balance as shown in appendix A.
2	That any changes to nominees be notified to the Democratic Services Manager as soon as possible before the next meeting of each committee.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CALCULATION OF POLITICAL BALANCE
1.01	The Council is required, as soon as practicable, after a change in the composition of political groups to recalculate political balance in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990. Since the last calculation there has been a by election and a number of councillors have moved political group.

1.02	<p>The basis of the statutory requirement is that Committee seats should be allocated to political groups (so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups have to the total membership of the County Council.</p> <p>The allocation of seats on Committees to the political groups must recognise that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) There must be no Committees whereby only one group has all the seats; (ii) Where there is a majority group it is entitled to a majority upon every Committee. (This does not apply where the largest group does not have an overall majority); (iii) The total number of seats allocated to each political group should be (in so far as is practicable) in the same proportion as those groups' strengths upon the full Council; (iv) Each Committee should (so far as is practicable) have the same proportional division between political groups as is represented upon the full Council. <p>Thus if a group holds 25% of the total number of Councillors it should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 25% of the overall number of seats on the Council; and 2) 25% seats on each Committee. <p>These rules are applied in hierarchical order so it is more important to allocate the correct number of seats overall than it is to allocate the correct number of seats on a particular committee. This is important because groups will typically have an entitlement to seats on a committee that isn't a whole number. If every notional entitlement were to be rounded down the group would have too few seats, and conversely it would have too many if every entitlement were rounded up.</p> <p>Allocating seats on each committee is therefore a case of rounding off entitlement (up or down) to the fill all the seats on each committee without giving any group too many or too few seats. Especially with the OSC's it is often the case that a group will be rounded up on some and down on others. The choice of which ones get rounded up/down gives an element of flexibility.</p> <p>NB Under the legislation these rules do not apply to either the Cabinet or the Standards Committee.</p>
1.03	<p>In addition, at Flintshire we have 2 non-statutory conventions that we seek to apply when allocating seats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) we seek to allocate seats to those members who wish to serve on a specific committee. We therefore try to allocate seats, in so far as that is possible, to groups (or individual councillors) based on their expressed wishes; and <p>Whilst we allocate seats to all the groups on each of the "personnel" committees on a politically balanced basis, as these committees meet extremely rarely, we don't take those seats into account when assessing the overall allocation of seats on the principal committees.</p>

1.04	The political balance calculation is attached as Appendix A. This is one possible lawful allocation seats. Due to the choices made when rounding off entitlements on each committee, other possible lawful allocations may exist.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Group leaders and deputies were consulted on the political balance calculation by email.

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

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Political Balance table September 2024.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.

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Political Balance September 2024 Draft

	Labour			Independent			Eagle			Flintshire Peoples' Voice			Liberal Democrat			Conservative			Non Aligned (Cllr Attridge)			Non Aligned			Total Councill	Cross check			
No. of councillors	29			22			6			5			3			1			1			0			67	67			
% of councillors	43.28%			32.84%			8.96%			7.46%			4.48%			1.49%			1.49%			0.00%			Total				
Notional entitlement	58.43			44.33			12.09			10.07			6.04			2.01			2.01			0.00			Seats				
Allocation of seats	59			44			12			10			6			2			2			0			135.00	135.00			
Community, Housing & Assets OSC	6	5.19	0.81	4	3.94	0.06	1	1.07	-0.07	1	0.90	-0.10	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Corporate Resources OSC	5	5.19	-0.19	4	3.94	0.06	1	1.07	-0.07	1	0.90	-0.10	1	0.54	0.46	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Education, Youth & Culture OSC	5	5.19	-0.19	4	3.94	0.06	1	1.07	-0.07	1	0.90	-0.10	1	0.54	0.46	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Environment & Economy OSC	5	5.19	-0.19	4	3.94	0.06	1	1.07	-0.07	1	0.90	-0.10	1	0.54	0.46	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Social & Healthcare OSC	6	5.19	0.81	3	3.94	-0.94	2	1.07	0.93	1	0.90	-0.10	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Planning	8	7.36	0.64	5	5.58	-0.58	1	1.52	-0.52	0	0.00	0.00	1	0.76	0.24	1	0.25	0.75	1	0.25	0.75	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	17	17.00
Licensing	6	5.19	0.81	4	3.94	0.06	1	1.07	-0.07	1	0.90	-0.10	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Governance & Audit	2	2.60	-0.60	2	1.97	0.03	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.45	0.45	1	0.27	0.73	0	0.09	-0.09	1	0.09	0.91	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	6	6.00
Climate Change	5	5.19	-0.19	4	3.94	0.06	2	1.07	0.93	1	0.90	-0.10	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.18	-0.18	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	12	12.00
Constitution and Democratic	7	6.93	0.07	5	5.25	-0.25	2	1.43	0.57	1	1.19	0.19	1	0.72	0.28	0	0.24	-0.24	0	0.24	-0.24	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	16	16.00
Pensions	2	2.16	-0.16	2	1.64	0.36	0	0.45	-0.45	1	0.37	-0.63	0	0.22	-0.22	0	0.07	-0.07	0	0.07	-0.07	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	5	5.00
Joint Pensions	0	0.43	-0.43	0	0.33	-0.33	0	0.09	-0.09	1	0.07	-0.93	0	0.04	-0.04	0	0.01	-0.01	0	0.01	-0.01	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	1	1.00
Fire Authority	2	2.60	-0.60	3	1.97	1.03	0	0.54	-0.54	0	0.45	0.45	0	0.27	-0.27	1	0.09	0.91	0	0.09	-0.09	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	6	6.00
Total to Group	59	58.43		44	44.33		12	12.09		10	8.81		6	6.04		2	2.01		2	2.01		0	0.00		0	0.00		135	135
Grievance	5	5.63	-0.63	5	4.27	0.73	1	1.16	0.16	1	0.97		1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.00		0	0.00		13	13.00
Grievance Appeals	5	5.63	-0.63	5	4.27	0.73	1	1.16	0.16	1	0.97		1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.00		0	0.00		13	13.00
Invest + Disc	5	5.63	-0.63	5	4.27	0.73	1	1.16	0.16	1	0.97		1	0.58	-0.42	1	0.19	0.81	0	0.19	-0.19	0	0.00		0	0.00		13	13.00

If the allocations come to a total that is too high/low then the numbers along the bottom/on the right change colour

TABLE 2

	Labour	Eagle	Independent	FPV	Liberal Democrats	Conservative	Non-Aligned	Non-Aligned
Scrutiny chairs	Add together and round down			Round Up	Round Up	Round Up	All chairs have been allocated	
Collective notional	35/67 seats = 52.24% or 2.61 chairs			1.64	0.37	0.22	0.07	0.07
Actual	2			2	1	0	0	0

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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 24 th September 2024
Report Subject	Recruitment of a Lay Member to the Governance and Audit Committee
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, at least 1/3 of the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee must be lay members. Whilst the current Governance and Audit Committee consists of six elected Councillors and three lay members, the Committee has received the notice of resignation from one of the lay members and therefore appointment to this position is required to ensure the Committee remains quorate.

Council already has approved criteria for the appointment of lay members. It is recommended that a member panel consisting of the Chair of Council, Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee, the Cabinet Member for Finance plus two other members of the Governance and Audit Committee should interview candidates and make a recommendation to Council for appointment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That a lay member be recruited to the Governance and Audit Committee to replace the departing lay member.
2	That the recruitment panel consisting of the Chair of Council, Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee plus the Cabinet Member for Finance makes a recommendation to Council for appointment.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE RECRUITMENT OF A LAY MEMBER
1.01	Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that 1/3 of the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee must be co-opted members. On the Governance and Audit Committee these are called lay members. The Committee currently consists of 6 elected Councillors and 3 lay members. However, the committee has received notice that one lay member intends to resign from their position.

	<p>The Governance and Audit Committee works well because of its relatively compact size, which enables members to develop lines of questioning on complex issues without excluding other members who wish to speak. The Governance and Audit Committee considered its own requirements in 2019 and recommended the current size, and it is suggested that the current membership of nine should therefore be maintained.</p>
1.02	<p>The Act defines a lay person as follows - “lay person” (“lleygwr”) means a person who— (a) is not a member or an officer of any local authority, (b) has not at any time in the period of twelve months ending with the date of that person’s appointment been a member or an officer of any local authority, and (c) is not the spouse or civil partner of a member or an officer of any local authority;”</p> <p>For the purposes of this section “local authority” means a principal Council (i.e. a County or County Borough Council), a Community Council and either a Fire and Rescue or National Park Authority in Wales.</p>
1.03	<p>The Act does not prescribe the skills, qualifications or experience required of a lay person. In 2021, where required Welsh Local Authorities increased their Lay membership to meet the requirements of the Act. WLGA, in consultation with all 22 Local Authorities, set out the following:</p> <p>In addition to satisfying the criteria in 1.02, suitable applicants will need to be non-political with an understanding and commitment to the 7 Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and able to demonstrate the following qualities and characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest and knowledge/experience of financial, risk and performance management, audit, accounting concepts and standards, and the regulatory regime within Wales; • Objective and independent of mind with an unbiased attitude and ability to apply discretion; • Supportive of good governance principles and their practical application towards the achievement of organisational objectives; • Strategic thinker with excellent communication skills; • Ability to understand and weigh up evidence and challenge respectfully. <p>These criteria are entirely compatible with the legislative requirements and should ensure that any candidate is capable of understanding and undertaking the complex technical work of the Committee.</p>
1.04	<p>It is proposed that advertisements be placed in the press (as required by the legislation) but also online and on social media. The applicants will be shortlisted by the s.151 Officer and Monitoring Officer prior to interview by a panel. I would recommend that the panel consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of Council; • The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance; • The Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plus two other Councillors (based on political balance).
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	Statutory guidance to the Local Government Measure 2011 requires that the position of lay person is advertised in the local press. The cost of doing this will be in the order of £6,267.
2.02	The recruitment and selection process can be managed within existing resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
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3.01	None.
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4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
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4.01	Adverts will be placed bilingually in order to attract applications from Welsh speakers, and would be sent to local community groups representing people with disabilities to ensure that no potential candidate is accidentally excluded by the medium through which the vacancies are advertised.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	None.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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7.01	<p>Co-opted Member/Independent Member/Lay Person - the Council consists of a Chairman and 69 Members who are all elected. By contrast, legislation sometimes provides for a person to be appointed to a Committee without being elected through a process called co-option i.e. recruitment and appointment by councillors. Lay persons on the Audit Committee and Independent Members on the Standards Committee are co-opted members.</p>
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FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 24 th September, 2024
Report Subject	Petitions Received at Council
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At County Council, Members are able to submit petitions on behalf of constituents. At the October 2018 meeting, it was agreed to prepare a report showing to which portfolio petitions had been assigned and what actions had been taken as a result of those petitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council notes the report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	PETITIONS RECEIVED AT COUNTY COUNCIL
1.01	<p>At County Council, Members are able to submit petitions on behalf of their constituents. At the October 2018 meeting, it was agreed to prepare a report showing who had submitted petitions, to which portfolio petitions had been assigned and what actions had been taken as a result of those petitions.</p>
1.02	<p>During 2023/24, there have been two petitions presented at Council. The details of the petitions are as follows: -</p> <p><u>23rd January, 2024</u> Councillors submitting petition – Councillor David Coggins-Cogan Issue – on behalf of the residents in his Ward requesting the adoption of an unadopted road</p> <p>Response from portfolio A response to the petition is in the final stages of being concluded and it will then be shared initially with the Local Member. The report includes clarification of the responsibilities for the adoption of the infrastructure, alongside short term and long term costs and the associated risks of adoption.</p> <p><u>26th April, 2024</u> Councillor submitting petition – Councillor Roz Mansell Issue – on behalf of the residents in her Ward: Keep Connah’s Quay Tidy – please provide more litter bins in and around the shopping area</p> <p>Response from portfolio The Streetscene Service Manager; Christopher Goddard attended a site visit with Councillor Mansell and the Area Manger; Ian Bushell on 30th April and established that the area referred to in the petition was not owned or managed by FCC. The land was purchased by a commercial landlord in 2002 however the local Cleansing Team maintains a level of service as a courtesy, emptying the litter bins and picking litter.</p> <p>The obligation to maintain the area and provide additional bins is the responsibility of the land owner, and it was agreed by Councillor Mansell and affected business mangers that they would contact the landlord to acquire more bins. It was also agreed that they would explore the option of grant funding from Parc Adfer to purchase additional bins, should the land owner be unwilling to cooperate.</p> <p>In the interest of collaboration, it was agreed that the local Cleansing Team would continue to visit the area and maintain the existing level of service when the new bins were in place though it was made clear that this was not a service provided to other similar areas within the county and that this would be continued as a courtesy.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Not applicable for this update report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Not applicable

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Not applicable for this update report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Steven Goodrum, Head of Democratic Services Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: steven.goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.

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Notice of Motion : Flintshire Teachers and School Employees to Take Oath to Work with Children

Proposed by : Cllr Gladys Healey

Council acknowledges that, even with Safeguarding Training and the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice established by the Education Workforce Council (EWC) in Wales, there are still cases of child abuse by teaching professionals and cases of teachers forming inappropriate relationships with pupils and students for whom they are responsible.

This has been highlighted by the recent prosecution and imprisonment of a former Gwynedd Head Teacher who had also previously served as an executive member of the National Education Association.

Council deplores the formation of such relationships and actions which abuse children and bring about a loss of their childhood innocence.

Council recommends that, in line with practice in some other non-educational professions, Cabinet formulates an oath which must be taken by all who are engaged in education in Flintshire recognise the need for individuals to make a specific commitment not to engage in inappropriate relationships with those in their charge. The oath is to be taken before an appropriate line manager within the education setting.

Council recommends that the Flintshire Education Workforce Oath should be taken by all currently engaged in working in Flintshire educational settings and all future employees in those settings.

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Notice of Motion : Merchant Navy Roll of Honour

Proposed by Cllr. Alasdair Ibbotson Seconded by Cllr. Ian Hodge

Flintshire County Council notes:

1. That merchant mariners from Flintshire have played a vital role in keeping Britain supplied, including in times of war, and have risked their lives to do so;
2. That their contribution is often not recorded, with merchant mariners killed during wartime not listed on a number of the county's war memorials;
3. That many other local authorities maintain Merchant Navy Rolls of Honour for merchant mariners killed as a permanent memorial within the authority area, and
4. That this council has commemorated Merchant Navy Day.

Flintshire County Council believes:

1. That merchant mariners deserve a permanent memorial in Flintshire, and
2. That a Roll of Honour should fulfil this purpose.

Flintshire County Council resolves:

1. To create a Merchant Navy Roll of Honour, on which merchant mariners born or resident in Flintshire, or with an otherwise strong connection to the county who have perished at sea shall be listed;
2. That "Flintshire" in the section above shall refer to the historic county of Flintshire prior to 1 April 1974, the districts of Delyn and Alyn and Deeside from 1 April 1974 to 1 April 1996, and the modern county of Flintshire from 1 April 1996 onwards;
3. That the role shall be maintained, as far as possible, in chronological order of death, and
4. That the Roll of Honour shall be displayed in a case in a publicly accessible part of the County Council's headquarters, and available for detailed inspection by the public upon appointment.

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Notice of Motion : Winter Fuel Payments

Proposed by Cllr. Carolyn Preece Seconded by Cllr. Sam Swash

Flintshire County Council notes:

1. That the new government has made one of its first acts in office an attempt to remove the Winter Fuel Payment from millions of pensioners across the UK;
2. That this policy is strongly opposed by charities and other organisations that work with older people, and
3. That this policy will see thousands of Flintshire residents left worse off.

Flintshire County Council believes:

1. That as a direct result of this decision, older people in Flintshire will suffer financial hardship;
2. That some older people in Flintshire will heat their home less than would otherwise be the case this Winter, leading to increased risk of illness and death;
3. That this cut is utterly unnecessary and is instead a political choice made to avoid taxing millionaire donors to big political parties, and
4. That residents of Flintshire deserve their council's support in seeking to reverse this uncaring policy.

Flintshire County Council resolves:

1. To instruct the Leader of Flintshire County Council to write to the Prime Minister, copying in the leaders of all political groups expressing the council's strong opposition to this policy, including a copy of this motion, and calling on him to abandon this plan, and
2. To further instruct the Leader of Flintshire County Council to write to both MPs representing communities in Flintshire, copying in the leaders of all political groups expressing the council's strong opposition to this policy, including a copy of this motion, and calling on them to set out their views on this matter in reply.

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Notice of Motion : Three-weekly Bin Collections

Proposed by : Cllr. Alasdair Ibbotson and seconded by Cllr. Gillian Brockley

Flintshire County Council notes:

1. The decision of cabinet to end fortnightly bin collections in Flintshire;
2. The decision of the Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on a 6-6 vote settled by chair's casting vote, not to refer the matter to full council, and
3. The Audit Wales report criticising the council for not taking residents' views into account adequately in setting policy.

Flintshire County Council believes:

1. That the public is strongly against this change;
2. That adequate consultation has not taken place;
3. That burying an ambiguously worded, tangentially related question deep into a long survey does not constitute adequate consultation;
4. That this decision should have been referred to full council, and
5. That the cabinet's decision to end fortnightly bin collections in Flintshire is deeply regrettable.

Flintshire County Council resolves:

1. To ask the new leader of the council to reconsider this decision and cancel the move to three-weekly bin collections

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Questions to Council

Submitted by Cllr Andrew Parkhurst - 24 September 2024

Mold Ornamental Gardens Public Spaces Protection Order

Would the Cabinet member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection please advise members whether he had read the legal advice before informing the meeting of Full Council held on 22nd July 2024 that there was no flaw in the decision to grant the Order to ban dogs completely from the Gardens, and therefore no need to reconsider the Order?

Submitted by Cllr Alasdair Ibbotson - 24 September 2024

School Transport

Will the Cabinet Member for Streetscene commission a redraft of the school transport policy, so as to end the division of contiguous communities by eligibility?

Submitted by Cllr Alasdair Ibbotson - 24 September 2024

Obligations of Cabinet Members

Will the Leader of the Council confirm whether he expects cabinet members to have read and checked papers published with themselves listed as the responsible cabinet member prior to the relevant items being discussed at cabinet or committees?

Submitted by Cllr Sam Swash - 24 September 2024

Question to the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation

Will the Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Transportation publish the new policy and means by which qualifying disabled residents can access household recycling centres in vehicles which would otherwise not be permitted, following the department's acceptance of Flintshire People's Voice's argument that the administration's existing policy is inconsistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010?

Submitted by Cllr Carolyn Preece - 24 September 2024

Music in schools

Will the cabinet member for education make a statement on the withdrawal of music as an option for GCSE or A-level in some of Flintshire's schools, and set out the cabinet's position on this?

Submitted by Cllr Gillian Brockley - 24 September 2024

LDP adoption date

By what date does the Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection presently expect the council's replacement Local Development Plan, for the period after 2030, to be ready for submission to the inspector?