

Public Document Pack

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Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Councillor Dave Hughes (Leader)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Chris Bithell, Helen Brown, Chris Dolphin,
Mared Eastwood, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones, Richard Jones and
Linda Thomas

13 November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING
CABINET
TUESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2024 at 10.00 AM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in the Delyn Committee Room, 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**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Purpose: To receive any declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 **MINUTES** (Pages 7 - 14)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2024.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

STRATEGIC REPORTS

4 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 30 YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN** (Pages 15 - 28)

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

Purpose: To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25 and the HRA Business Plan.

5 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 – 2027/28** (Pages 29 - 60)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager, Chief Executive, Corporate Manager – Capital Programme & Assets - Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets

Purpose: To present the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 for recommendation to Council.

6 **CAPITAL STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2025/26 – 2027/28** (Pages 61 - 80)

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

Purpose: To present the Capital Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28 for recommendation to Council.

7 **INTENSIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION** (Pages 81 - 96)

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

Purpose: To gain consent to engage the above company for the purpose of delivering homeless accommodation services for up to 50 households experiencing homelessness.

OPERATIONAL REPORTS

8 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25 (MONTH 6)** (Pages 97 - 156)

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

Purpose: This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 6, and projects forward to year-end.

9 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2024/25 (MONTH 6)** (Pages 157 - 186)

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

Purpose: To present the Month 6 Capital Programme information for 2024/25.

10 **COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2025/26** (Pages 187 - 194)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

Purpose: To approve the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2025/26 as part of the process of the revenue budget setting and Council Tax setting process for the new year.

11 **RESIDUAL WASTE COLLECTION CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION AND POLICY REVIEW** (Pages 195 - 238)

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

Purpose: To provide an overview of the implementation and communication plan for a transition to a three weekly residual waste collection model and seek approval for the associated updated recycling and waste collections and household recycling centre operational policy.

12 **SELF EVALUATION OF FLINTSHIRE EDUCATION SERVICES** (Pages 239 - 338)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide assurance on the range and quality of provision of education services in Flintshire.

13 **PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2023-24 AND HALF-YEAR COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE 2024-25** (Pages 339 - 362)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Purpose: To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 for Flintshire County Council and an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.

14 **BROMBOROUGH PLASTICS – UPDATE REPORT** (Pages 363 - 366)

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

Purpose: The Report is submitted to Cabinet under the Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) to write off debts to the Commercial Rent debt for Bromborough Plastics Limited.

15 **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS** (Pages 367 - 368)

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

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

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

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

It is not good employment practice or in the public interest for matters the subject of consultation with employees affected and other unions to be discussed in public at this stage of the process.

16 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL (Pages 399 - 448)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To bring a draft proposal for a Flintshire School Improvement Partnership model following the Welsh Government decision to review the delivery of school improvement services which has resulted in the planned cessation of regional school improvement consortia.

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

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

17 PROCUREMENT OF CLIENT INFORMATION SYSTEM – UPDATE (Pages 449 - 460)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the procurement of a replacement client information system and to include proposed implementation dates and costs.

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

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

CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX TO AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 7 (Pages 461 - 474)

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

CABINET
25TH SEPTEMBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday 25th September.

PRESENT: **Councillor Dave Hughes (Chair)**
Councillors: Glyn Banks, Helen Brown, Chris Bithell, Chris Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, Paul Johnson and Linda Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Bernie Attridge, David Coggins Cogan, Andy Hughes, Richard Lloyd, Andrew Parkhurst and Sam Swash attended as observers.

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Christine Jones and Richard Jones.

CONTRIBUTORS: Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Housing and Communities), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Finance Manager, Corporate Manager - People and Organisational Development, Corporate Manager - Capital Programme and Assets, Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning, Senior Manager - Integrated Services, Lead Adults, Housing Programme Services Manager and Strategic Finance Manager.

IN ATTENDANCE: Team Leader – Democratic Services and Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

82. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on [25th September 2024 \(agenda item number 3\)](#) were submitted and confirmed as a correct record.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings be confirmed as a correct record.

83. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Bithell presented the Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring [report \(agenda item number 4\)](#) which had to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG) by 31st October 2024.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the first Annual Monitoring Report is adopted and submitted to Welsh Government prior to the deadline of 31st October 2024.

**84. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
[\(link to recording\)](#)**

Councillor Bithell presented the Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance [report \(agenda item number 5\)](#) which would assist with ensuring guidance was available which would inform the formulation of development proposals as well as their determination by officers or Planning Committee.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the SPGs relating to Extensions and Alterations, New Housing in the Countryside and the Conversion of Rural Buildings be adopted as SPG and made available for inspection on the Council's website.

**85. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF FLINTSHIRE HOMELESSNESS SERVICES
[\(link to recording\)](#)**

Councillor Brown presented the [report \(agenda item number 6\)](#) on the Independent Review of Flintshire Homelessness Services which detailed work that was underway in response to service capacity to meet growing demand.

Following publication of the agenda, the recommendations had been updated and were read out and supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings and recommendations from Neil Morland & Co. be noted and the report be supported to progress through the committee cycle with regular updates to be shared with Members in terms of progress against recommendations;
- (b) That the principle of cost avoidance and spend to save efficiencies to fund additional staffing capacity within the Housing & Prevention Service through diversifying the homeless accommodation portfolio, to maximise opportunity for successfully reducing spend on homeless accommodation be accepted; and
- (c) That the need for shared housing models and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) within the homeless accommodation diversification plans be acknowledged.

86. REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (HAMP) AND HIGHWAY AND CAR PARK INSPECTION POLICY
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Banks introduced the [report \(agenda item number 7\)](#) on the Review of Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and Highway and Car Park Inspection Policy, which provided an update to ensure that Members were informed about the current status and future plans for highway asset management.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) as presented be approved;
- (b) That the revised Highway and Car Park Inspection Policy as a Maintenance Manual be approved;
- (c) That the outlined procedure to provide updates and performance reporting to inform future reviews of both the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and the Maintenance Manual be supported;
- (d) That the content of the report be endorsed and the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and the current arrangements and actions of the portfolio to maintain the highway network be endorsed; and
- (e) That the additional recommendations made by the Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to write to the First Minister about the lack of funding in highway assets and maintenance, along with provision of training on Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members be supported.

87. NEW BRIGHTON – ADOPTION OF A WELSH NAME
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Eastwood introduced the [report \(agenda item number 8\)](#) on New Brighton – Adoption of a Welsh Name, which would support the Council’s Welsh Language Promotion Strategy by increasing the visibility and normalising the use of Welsh.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That “Pentre Cythrel” be adopted as the recognised Welsh form of New Brighton, and that the Welsh Language Commissioner be asked to include it in the standardised list of Welsh place-names.

88. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25 (MONTH 5)
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Johnson presented the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 5) [report \(agenda item number 9\)](#) which provided the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the estimated financial impact on the 2024/25 budget be noted, along with the measures being put in place to improve the financial position by the end of the financial year.

89. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Thomas presented the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2023/24 [\(agenda item number 10\)](#) which was the final report for 2020-24 as a new Strategic Equality Plan was now in place for the period 2024-28.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2023/24 and subsequent publication on the Council's website be endorsed.

90. UPDATE ON THE BUS NETWORK GRANT AND LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN FLINTSHIRE
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Banks introduced the [report \(agenda item number 11\)](#) which provided an update on the bus network grant and local bus services in Flintshire.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals within the report be recognised and supported;
- (b) That Cabinet be made aware that any delays incurred will represent budget pressures for Streetscene and Transportation and the authority in 2025/26; and
- (c) That the requirement to allow 56 days' notice to the Traffic Commission (78 days for services into England) for any changes and/or termination of bus services be noted.

91. **RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT WALES REVIEW “URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE: FLOW OUT OF HOSPITAL – NORTH WALES REGION”**
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Johnson presented the Response to the Audit Wales Review “Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital [report \(agenda item number 12\)](#) which provided details of work undertaken by The Auditor General to examine whole system issues affecting urgent and emergency care services across Wales and the associated demand management.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Wales Audit report and the measures being taken regionally and locally to implement the recommendations made be noted.

92. **PROCUREMENT OF CLIENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Johnson introduced the Procurement of Client Information System [report \(agenda item number 13\)](#) which provided details of the system which underpinned social care processes and functions.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the activity undertaken to date to procure a replacement client information system for the Social Services portfolio be received.

93. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SAFEGUARDING HUB**
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Johnson introduced the [report \(agenda item number 14\)](#) on the Children and Families Safeguarding Hub which provided a robust and proven model for safeguarding vulnerable children.

Since publication of the agenda the recommendation had been amended, which was read out and supported.

RESOLVED:

That the establishment of the Children and Families Safeguarding Hub to facilitate multi-agency information sharing and support efficient, informed and timely decisions to safeguarding children at risk be noted and supported politically.

94. EXPANSION OF SPECIALIST EDUCATION PROVISION
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Eastwood introduced the [report \(agenda item number 15\)](#) on the Expansion of Specialist Education Provision following the outcome from the statutory consultation undertaken to consult on the proposal to expand inhouse specialist education provision at Ysgol Pen Coch primary special school, Flint, to include the management of the centre Canolfan Enfys which was under the management of the Pupil Referral Unit, Plas Derwen.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outcomes from the consultation be noted;
- (b) That Cabinet agrees to support and provide any commentary for the proposed expansion of inhouse specialist education provision at Ysgol Pen Coch primary special school, Flint; and
- (c) That it be approved to proceed to issuing a statutory notice to commence a 18-day period for objections.

95. EXPANSION OF SPECIALIST ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS RESOURCE PROVISION WITHIN THE SECONDARY EDUCATION NETWORK
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Eastwood introduced the [report \(agenda item number 16\)](#) on the Expansion of Specialist Additional Learning Needs Resource Provision Within the Secondary Education Network, which sought approval to the proposed expansion.

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the request to expand the Council's specialist ALN resource provision within the secondary education network be supported; and
- (b) That the issuing of a statutory notice for the introduction of a new ALN resource provision at Flint High School and Hawarden High School be supported.

96. ADDITIONAL LICENSING FOR HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Bithell introduced the [report \(agenda item number 17\)](#) on Additional Licensing for Houses of Multiple Occupation following budget provision being made available for additional staffing to implement a new 'Additional Licensing' regime for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's).

The recommendations in the report were supported.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the commencement of a formal consultation on 'Additional Licensing' for Houses of Multiple Occupation which will be open to the public and stakeholders be approved; and
- (b) That the outcome of the consultation exercise, upon completion, be received.

97. FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2024-25 FOR FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Bithell introduced the Food Service Plan 2024-25 for Flintshire County Council [report \(agenda item number 18\)](#) which provided an overview of the Food and Animal Feed Service in line with The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities April 2010.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the Food Service Plan 2024-25 be approved.

98. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

An information [item \(agenda item number 19\)](#) on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted and noted.

99. OFFICE RATIONALISATION PROGRAMME AND COUNTY HALL CAMPUS
[\(link to recording\)](#)

Councillor Jones introduced the [report \(agenda item number 20\)](#) on Office Rationalisation Programme and County Hall Campus which provided an overview of projected costs associated with the programme of works.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be noted and approval be given to proceed with Phase 1 of the Office Accommodation and County Hall project.

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

RESOLVED:

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

100. OUTSTANDING DEBT – WRITE OFF

Councillors Banks presented the Outstanding Debt – Write Off report following insolvency of a company which had transactions that were deemed to be irrecoverable.

The recommendation in the report was supported.

RESOLVED:

That the write-offs which amounted to £36,787.20 for three outstanding invoices be approved.

101. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the public in attendance.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 11.55 a.m.)

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Chair



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present for consideration the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year Financial Business Plan and the proposed HRA Budget for 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To consider the HRA budget for 2025/26 as set out in the report.
2	To consider the proposed minimum rent increase of 2.7%.
3	To consider a garage rent increase of 2.7%.
4	To consider the increase in service charges to full cost recovery.
5	To consider the pressures and efficiencies set out in Appendix A.
6	To consider the proposed HRA Capital programme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix B.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26 UPDATE														
1.01	<p>Considerations</p> <p>The HRA is required to produce a 30-year business plan.</p> <p>The strategic context for this year’s HRA budget setting includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure affordability for contract holders is at the core of our considerations. • Continued drive to ensure all service costs are efficient and that value for money can be achieved. • Ensure the treasury management strategy continues to meet the Housing Revenue Account’s new and ongoing borrowing requirements. • Setting a balanced budget with a minimum of 3% surplus revenue over expenditure. • Maximisation of revenue efficiencies to minimise the borrowing required to meet Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) • Delivery of new build Council housing and acquisitions of existing properties • Continued drive to ensure homes are Energy Efficient and explore Decarbonisation. • Provision of adequate ongoing capital to maintain WHQS levels. 														
1.02	<p>HRA Funding</p> <p>The HRA is a ring-fenced service and therefore it must be self-financing and not subsidised by the Council.</p> <div> <table border="1"> <caption>HRA Funding 2024/25</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Funding Source</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Net Rental Income</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Borrowing</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grants</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other income</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non Dwelling Rents</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Charges for Services</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Funding Source	Percentage	Net Rental Income	73%	Borrowing	14%	Grants	11%	Other income	1%	Non Dwelling Rents	1%	Charges for Services	0%
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	<p>The graph above indicates that the majority of the HRA funding (73%) comes from the rents charged to its customers and a further 25% of its funding comes from grants, in the form of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), Social Housing Grant (SHG), Transitional Accommodation Capital Funding (TACP) and borrowing. The remaining 2% comes from other sources such as non-dwelling rents and service charges.</p>
1.03	<p>HRA Pressures and Efficiencies</p> <p>Pressures and efficiencies have been identified and are detailed in Appendix A.</p> <p>An additional budget requirement of £0.377m has been identified for 2025/26. Of this, £0.179m relates to uncontrollable pressures such as pay and general inflationary increases and the remaining £0.198m are service pressures.</p> <p>We have also identified £1.062m of efficiencies to offset the pressures, which leaves a net saving of £0.685m in 2025/26.</p>
1.04	<p>Capital Programme</p> <p>The total proposed capital programme for 2025/26 is £28.683m, summarised in Appendix B.</p> <p>WHQS 2023</p> <p>A total of £18.989m has been allocated for ongoing WHQS works.</p> <p>WHQS.2023 works are continuing, the programme of works to deliver the new standard will run until 2033.</p> <p>WHQS.2 proposes to reduce the carbon emissions from social housing and in doing so contribute to the Welsh target of Net Zero Carbon.</p> <p>The standard focuses on affordable warmth with a target energy pathway of EPC 'C'. In support of the target Welsh Government have asked Landlords to advise on how they will meet net zero carbon by 2027. Welsh Government have asked Landlords to assess their stock and produce energy pathways for homes by 2027.</p> <p>The new standard will place significant additional capital pressures on the HRA over the coming years particularly due to the net zero carbon agenda and these additional pressures are not yet reflected in the future business plan.</p> <p>The 2025/26 capital budget increases the energy efficiency programme of works to £5.241m as part of a programme to assess the best way to achieve net carbon zero homes.</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)</p> <p>A total of £1.100m has been allocated for this mandatory service. This service is customer driven and can be volatile dependant on customer demands.</p>

Regeneration

A £4.000m regeneration budget has been allocated in the Capital Programme for 2025/26. The aim is to utilise this allocation to remodel HRA stock where the current stock is no longer fit for purpose. There are several pipeline schemes for consideration including:

- Sheltered Housing Review
- Estate Remodelling
- Assist with reducing Homelessness – acquiring existing properties.

SHARP

£4.594m has been built into 2025/26 for the development of Council housing. The capital programme is currently forecasting the addition of 50 units per annum, 10 buybacks and 40 new builds, for the next 5 years. The costs are based on the Standard Viability Model and assumes receipt of Social Housing Grant (SHG).

Capitalisation of the costs of the development team have now been included in the programme at 6% of the total development budget.

All schemes are required to meet financial hurdle rates set by the Council and should be able to pay back the original investment via rents within 50 years. Buybacks must payback within 40 years.

Asset Investment Budget Breakdown	£m
10 Buy back properties & 40 New Builds	4.594
Total	4.594

Capital Funding

The £28.683m capital programme will be funded by:

WHQS & Asset Investment Funding	£m
Revenue Contribution (CERA)	14.811
Major Repairs Allowance	4.978
Energy Efficiency income (FIT) & ORP Grant	0.300
Prudential Borrowing (Regeneration)	4.000
Prudential Borrowing (SHARP)	4.594
Total	28.683

1.05 Rent Setting

In December 2019, Welsh Government released the revised rent policy for a 5-year period beginning in April 2020/21, this policy has now been extended whilst a new rent policy is being developed.

The policy is designed to ensure that affordability for contract holders is at the core of our considerations and when setting the rent uplift, landlords should consider value for money and the whole cost of living in a property as part of

their rationale for setting rents.

The Rent Policy for Social Housing Rents from 2020/21 sets out the following:

- An annual rent uplift of up to CPI+1%, for 5 years to 2024/25 using the level of CPI from the previous September each year.
- The level of rents for individual contract holders can be frozen or rise by up to an additional £2 over and above CPI+1%, on condition that total rental income collected by the social landlord increases by no more than CPI+1%.

The policy states, however, that should CPI fall outside the range of 0% to 3%, the Minister with responsibility for housing will determine the appropriate change to rent levels to be applied for that year only. CPI as of September 2024 was 1.7%. Our modelling in the current business plan assumes a rent increase of 2.7%.

Setting rent lower than 2.7% will mean the HRA will need to find further efficiencies of circa £0.400m every year for each 1% rent reduction.

Whilst affordability for contract holders should always be an important consideration when setting rents, it is also important to note, setting the rents at WG rent cap levels will enable the Council to utilise these additional funds on WHQS.2 which will reduce social housing utilities costs and improve affordability for contract holders.

1.06 Rent Impact on Contract Holders

We have identified that 64% of all contract holders are eligible for Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) support toward their rent and service charges. The table below shows the impact on those in receipt of HB.

HB eligibility	Average % of rent paid by HB	Average impact on tenants p.w.
Full	100%	£0.00
Partial	34%	£2.47
None	0%	£3.72

Consultation with contract holders will be via a section in the Star Survey to be distributed in October and a meeting with the tenant’s federation has been organised.

1.07 Garage Rents and Service Charges (including impact to contract holders)

The proposed garage rent and garage plot increase is 2.7% for 2025/26, which equates to £0.31 per week for garage rent and takes the rent per week to £11.75 (based on 52 weeks). The proposed garage plot increase is £0.05 per week taking the garage plot rent to £1.85 per week.

The business plan anticipates income levels of £0.305m for garages and garage plots.

The rent and service charges policy were introduced in 2015 and expected all Local Housing Associations (LHA's) to be achieving full cost recovery for service charges, if this had not yet been achieved a clear transition plan should be identified to achieve this.

To achieve full cost recovery, we would be required to increase service charges as follows:

Service Charge	Current charge per week	Full recovery charge per week	cost per week	Increase per week	Impact per week with partial HB (ave. 34%)
Aerials	£1.55	£1.55		£0.00	£0.00
Laundry	£1.13	£1.20		£0.07	£0.05
Cleaning	£5.23	£5.75		£0.52	£0.34
Window Cleaning	£1.05	£1.05		£0.00	£0.00
Alarms	£3.18	£3.53		£0.35	£0.23
Total	£12.14	£13.08		£0.94	£0.62

Not all properties are subject to all service charges. Of all our contract holders, 2.4% are charged for five service charges and 2.5% are charged for four service charges and 9.6% for three.

The increase of the service charges would bring in additional income of £0.014m.

1.08 **Capital Financing**

The deed to terminate the voluntary agreement for the HRA borrowing cap was signed on the 2nd December 2019, it is therefore important that going forward, increased borrowing in the HRA is carefully managed and monitored to ensure that it is sustainable and affordable to the business plan.

Borrowing should only be used for investment expenditure and not day-to-day running costs or maintaining WHQS. The HRA is likely to be required to increase borrowing in the future to fund WHQS.2 as Welsh Government have indicated this will not be fully funded via grant, therefore we need to manage the risk of this future borrowing by keeping current borrowing at prudent levels.

Borrowing undertaken by the HRA is repaid under the Annuity Method which is calculated in line with the useful life of the asset. Our current borrowing levels are shown below:

Total HRA borrowing undertaken to date		£
Prior debt and HRA subsidy buyout		103,108,830
WHQS		21,871,366
SHARP		24,767,993
Regeneration		860,000
Total HRA Borrowing		150,608,189
Less repayments to date		(19,187,108)
Net HRA Borrowing		131,421,081
New Borrowing for 2025/26		£
SHARP		4,594,050
Regeneration		4,000,000
Total New HRA Borrowing		8,594,050
Total Capital Financing at 2025/26		140,015,131

Interest Rates

The HRA is part of the single debt pool for the Council. All borrowing for the Council is managed within one pool and the average borrowing rate for the Council is applied to all new borrowing in the HRA, the rate assumed in the business plan is 4.5% and interest payments for 2025/26 are estimated at £6.068m.

1.09

Reserves

There is a requirement to hold a minimum level of reserves of 3% of expenditure, however, it was agreed as part of the 2024/25 Business Plan, for Flintshire’s HRA to move to reserves to 7% due to the level of financial risk in the HRA rising as a result of increased borrowing levels for new build and increasing costs due to the volatility of the economy.

Reserves should not be used to fund recurring pressures to the Business Plan and levels should be reviewed annually in line with the HRA’s proposed borrowing commitments and budgetary risk factors.

In the current climate it would be prudent to maintain reserve levels at a minimum of 7% of expenditure (£2.922m) as we have ongoing risks to the Business Plan which would have to be funded from reserves if they materialised:

- Pay award could be higher than budgeted.
- Inflation could be higher than the provision in the Business Plan
- Arrears could increase due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Interest rates increasing due to the economic climate.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The HRA is a ring-fenced budget. This proposed HRA budget and Business Plan demonstrates that the council can achieve the ongoing WHQS, can meet service improvement plans and commitments and with prudential borrowing can continue its Council house building programme in 2025/26.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	All households will benefit from the Councils WHQS 2023 programme. The impact of the investment planning and efficiencies is being modelled for various customer groups to ensure that there is no disproportionate impact on any groups with protected characteristics.
3.02	The Business Plan assumes a confirmation of Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2025/26 and beyond, however, Welsh Government have indicated that the purpose of the funding will be reviewed in the future.

3.03	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	Positive – There is a commitment to increase supply to provide the right types of homes in the right location.
	Prevention	Positive – It is our aim to provide support to ensure people live and remain in the right type of home.
	Integration	Positive - Achieving WHQS for all existing council houses and delivering new social housing will contribute to the integration within communities.
	Collaboration	Positive - To deliver in partnership with stakeholders to support positive impacts for all our contract holders.
	Involvement	Positive - Communication with contract holders, Members and other stakeholders.
	Well-being Goals Impact	
	Prosperous Wales	Positive – Existing social homes are WHQS compliant and meet the changing housing needs. Also providing good quality new social homes aiming for low/zero carbon. Maximising local employment and training opportunities for local people.
	Resilient Wales	Positive – Developing low / zero carbon homes through modern methods of construction and technologies. Ensuring that all statutory compliance requirements are adhered to.
	Healthier Wales	Positive – Ensuring all existing homes and new homes are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all people.
	More equal Wales	Positive - Provide good quality homes for the most vulnerable people in society.
Cohesive Wales	Positive – Contributing to attractive, viable and safe communities	
Vibrant Wales	Positive – Ensuring all communities housing needs are supported	
Globally responsible Wales	Positive – The HRA Business Plan will contribute to the improvement of the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.	

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	As part of the 2023/24 rent settlement, the Council gave commitment to WG around engagement with contract holders. The Star Survey will now include questions on rent affordability to inform any decision making on rent setting.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Draft Pressures and Efficiencies 2025/26.
5.02	Appendix B – Draft Capital Programme 2025/26.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

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

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Financial Year: the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April 2025</p> <p>Revenue: a term used to describe the day-to-day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.</p> <p>Capital expenditure: money spent by the organisation on acquiring or maintaining fixed assets, such as land, buildings, and equipment.</p> <p>Budget: a statement expressing the Council’s policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.</p> <p>Treasury Management: the Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice. Treasury Management is conducted in accordance with the Council’s Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Practices which are both reviewed annually. All borrowing and long-term financing is made in accordance with CIPFA’s Prudential Code.</p> <p>Major Repairs Allowance: Welsh Government grant paid to local authorities in Wales who still manage and maintain their council housing.</p>

HRA - SUMMARY OF PRESSURES	£m	Notes
Repairs staff	0.053	Holding 1 post with no budget - risk accepted 1 Planner and 1 Admin currently using agency Streetscene imposing measures on skip sites resulting in additional caretakers required Increase due to regrade of staff Pay at 4% compared to 2% in last years BP
Repairs Support Staff	0.070	
Caretakers	0.075	
CBASS	0.027	
Pay Model/Increase	0.152	
Total	0.377	

HRA - SUMMARY OF EFFICIENCIES	£m	Notes
Concierge Service	(0.107)	Are 6 posts required. 3 posts only No fee from 24.25 but will prices be increasing? Capital Works carpark programme delayed by 5 years Underspent for the last 3 years To be used to offset the extra admin (£24k) 23.24 and (£69k) 24.25 Based on historical spend Based on latest forecast prices No income budget in Not required Not required
Travis Management Fee	(0.070)	
CERA	(0.400)	
Responsive Repairs Subcontractor Budget	(0.150)	
Repairs Mod App	(0.028)	
Reduction in Support Service recharge	(0.045)	
Reduction in BDP?	(0.125)	
Electric prices reducing	(0.090)	
Community Centre Income	(0.012)	
Decoration Vouchers	(0.030)	
Tenant Group Funding	(0.005)	
Total	(1.062)	

Net pressure	(0.685)
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HRA Capital Programme	£'m
WHQS	
Internal Works	3.744
Envelope Works	6.808
Externals	0.970
Renewables / Alternative Technology	5.241
Total WHQS	16.763
Non WHQS	
Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) - Mandatory/ Minor Adaps	1.100
Major Works	-
Fire Risk Assessments Work	1.108
	2.208
Fees	
Capitalised salaries	1.117
Regeneration of stock	
Estate remodelling/ Support homeless strategy	4.000
SHARP Programme	
New Build Programme Spend	3.932
Acquisitions Programme Spend	0.662
Total SHARP Programme	4.594
Total Capital Spend	28.683

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Report Author	Chief Executive Corporate Manager – Capital Programme and Assets Corporate Finance Manager
Report Type	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the proposed Capital Programme for the period 2025/26 – 2027/28 for recommendation to Council.

The Council's Capital Programme covers investment in assets for the long term to enable the delivery of high quality and value for money public services. Assets include buildings (such as schools and care homes), infrastructure (such as highways and ICT networks) and assets not owned by the Council (such as works to improve and adapt private sector homes). The proposed capital investments outlined within this report are closely aligned to portfolio service business plans and the Council Plan.

The Council has limited capital resources from Welsh Government to support Council priorities, needs and liabilities. However, it has the powers to fund capital schemes by borrowing - this is temporary and ultimately, the cost and repayment of any borrowing is charged to the Council's revenue budget. Schemes funded by borrowing are carefully considered due to the long-term impacts on the Council's revenue budget.

The report divides the Council Fund Capital Programme into three sections: -

1. Statutory / Regulatory - allocations to cover regulatory and statutory works.
2. Retained Assets - allocations to fund infrastructure works necessary to ensure service and business continuity.

3. Investment - allocations to fund works necessary to remodel services to deliver efficiencies outlined in portfolio business plans and invest in services as outlined in the Council Plan.

Historically, much of the Council's programme has been funded from capital receipts and grants. The Council's ability to generate significant capital receipts is challenging as the assets the Council has available for disposal diminish. Wherever possible every opportunity to identify assets for sale and other sources of funding such as specific grants and revenue contributions will be explored. However, the Council will need to use prudential borrowing to finance more of the programme going forward. In particular, the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, and other schemes included within the investment programme will need to be funded through prudential borrowing.

The Capital Strategy has been updated and is presented separately on the agenda.

The information in this report refers to the Council Fund (CF) programme only, not the housing programme which is funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and which is reported separately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To approve the allocations and schemes in Table 3 (paragraph 1.09) for the Statutory/Regulatory and Retained Assets sections of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28.
2	To approve the schemes included in Table 4 (paragraph 1.31) for the Investment section of the Council Fund Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28.
3	To note that the shortfall in funding of schemes in 2027/28 in Table 5 (paragraph 1.35) although there are surplus in years prior.
4	To consider and approve the schemes included in Table 6 (paragraph 1.39) for the specifically funded section of the Council Fund Capital Programme which will be funded in part through borrowing.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 – 2027/28
1.01	<p>The Council’s Capital Programme encompasses investing significant resources in assets for the long term to enable the delivery of high quality, value for money public services. Assets include buildings (such as schools and care homes), infrastructure (such as highways and ICT networks), and assets not owned by the Council (such as works to improve and adapt private sector homes). The proposed capital investments outlined within this report are closely aligned to portfolio service business plans and the Council Plan.</p> <p>The Council has limited capital resources from Welsh Government (WG) to support Council priorities, needs and liabilities; however, it has the powers to fund capital schemes by borrowing, but this is temporary and ultimately the cost and repayment of any borrowing is charged to the Council’s revenue budget. Schemes funded by borrowing are carefully considered due to the long-term impacts on the Council’s revenue budget.</p> <p>The first half of this report covers parts of the Capital Programme where the Council invests in local infrastructure, facilities and assets, which will be funded from general capital resources (General Capital Grant, Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing and Capital Receipts). Regional programmes such as the Growth Deal for North Wales which will draw on national funds, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, which is reported separately and includes the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) work programme and Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), supplement the Council funded Capital Programme.</p> <p>The second half of the report covers parts of the Capital Programme which includes specific grants as far as information is available at the time of writing and borrowing. This includes the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivered in partnership between the Council and WG.</p>
1.02	<p>General Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 Update</p> <p>The Council’s Capital Strategy divides the Capital Programme into three parts as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Statutory / Regulatory section – to cover regulatory and statutory works. Examples include providing support to improve and adapt private sector homes (Disabled Facilities Grants), adaptations to schools for children with disabilities and any works required to keep buildings open by meeting Health and Safety requirements.2. Retained Assets section – to ensure service and business continuity. This includes schemes that enhance and improve retained assets and infrastructure to deliver services and meets significant need identified by service plans or through condition surveys etc.

3. **Investment section** – to fund costs incurred when remodelling and investing in services. This includes new schemes arising from portfolio business plans, the Council Plan, other relevant and emerging plans, and other strategies or emerging Council priorities approved through a selection process based on the provision of a business case.

1.03 Table 1 below summarises the updated Council funded Capital Programme for 2024/25 – 2026/27 as reported at Month 6 2024/25:

Table 1

ESTIMATED FUNDING 2024/25 - 2026/27				
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Funding				
Un-hypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB) ¹	4.017	4.017	4.017	12.051
General Capital Grant (GCG) ¹	4.125	4.125	4.125	12.375
Capital Receipts Available	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071
Surplus B/Fwd from 2023/24	5.445	0.000	0.000	5.445
Total Funding	13.658	8.142	8.142	29.942
Expenditure				
Total Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2026/27	11.343	8.988	7.021	27.352
	11.343	8.988	7.021	27.352
Surplus / (Shortfall)	2.315	(0.846)	1.121	2.590
¹ As per 2024/25 Final Settlement				

1.04 Table 1 shows the current position of the Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 as reported at Month 6 to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an overall surplus in funding of £2.590m, with a surplus in 2024/25 of £2.315m.

When the budget was set in December 2023, there was a shortfall in funding of schemes in 2024/25 and 2025/26 and surplus in 2026/27. At that point in the approval process the position was kept flexible and this was explained in the report to Council at that time. Options included a combination of future capital receipts, alternative grants, prudential borrowing, or scheme phasing over several years which would be considered during 2024/25.

1.05 Given the current position in setting the Capital Programme for the next three years 2025/26 – 2027/28, careful consideration has been given to new schemes proposed for inclusion.

1.06

Projected General Funding Available 2025/26 - 2027/28

Table 2 below shows the general capital funding currently projected to be available to fund the Capital Programme over the next three years (2025/26 - 2027/28).

Table 2

ESTIMATED AVAILABLE FUNDING 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Funding (Excluding Specific Funding)				
Un-hypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB) ¹	4.017	4.017	4.017	12.051
General Capital Grant (GCG) ¹	4.125	4.125	4.125	12.375
Surplus B/Fwd from 2024/25	2.315	0.000	0.000	2.315
Total	10.457	8.142	8.142	26.741

¹ As per 2024/25 Settlement

1.07

Table 2 assumes that the Un-hypothecated Supported Borrowing allocation and the General Capital Grant received from WG in the years 2025/26 to 2027/28 remains at the same level as 2024/25. The 2025/26 Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement is expected to be announced on the 11th December 2024.

1.08

The figures in Table 2 relate to the Council Fund (CF) only, with the HRA Capital Programme being reported separately.

General Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28

1.09

Statutory / Regulatory and Retained Asset Allocations – 2025/26 – 2027/28

Table 3 shows the proposed allocations for the period 2025/26 - 2027/28 for the Statutory / Regulatory and Retained Asset sections of the Capital Programme.

Table 3

PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Statutory / Regulatory Section				
Equalities Act - Individual pupils	0.500	0.500	0.500	1.500
Disabled Facilities Grants	1.500	1.500	1.500	4.500
Private Sector Housing Renewal	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.120
School building works	0.500	0.500	0.500	1.500
Corporate property works	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.900
School safeguarding works	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.300
Target Hardening	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.060
Total Statutory / Regulatory	2.970	2.970	2.940	8.880
Retained Assets Section				
School building works	1.000	1.000	1.000	3.000
Corporate property works	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.900
Highways Asset Management Plan	2.000	1.500	1.500	5.000
Play areas	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.600
ICT - Equipment at Datacentres	0.000	0.079	0.000	0.079
ICT - Server Technology Replacements	0.264	0.176	0.212	0.652
ICT - Laptop / PC Replacements	0.268	0.134	0.158	0.560
ICT - Storage Technology Replacement	0.850	0.031	0.000	0.881
ICT - Cyber Security	0.066	0.133	0.000	0.199
Schools WiFi and Networking Infrastructure	1.020	0.000	1.445	2.465
Base Provision for Leisure and Libraries Estate	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.600
Safety Improvements in Cemeteries	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057
Office Rationalisation Programme - Phase 2	0.795	0.000	0.000	0.795
Terrig House Hutments Demolition	0.043	0.000	0.000	0.043
'Headroom'	0.350	0.350	0.350	1.050
Total Retained Assets Section	7.413	4.103	5.365	16.881

1.10 The information in Table 3 in relation to the new and previously approved schemes is explained in more detail in paragraphs 1.11 to 1.30 below.

1.11 Equalities Act – Individual pupils

An annual allocation to adapt and modify schools for children who have disabilities to support and create increasingly inclusive school environments. These works help the Council to meet its obligations under disability legislation, and reduce the potential costs and disruption associated with transporting pupils to alternative sites.

No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.

1.12 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

An annual allocation to improve and adapt private sector homes comprising:

- Disabled Facilities Grants – adaptations enabling residents to continue to live independently in their own homes
- Partnership working with Care and Repair to support vulnerable residents

	<p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.13	<p><u>Private Sector Housing Renewal</u></p> <p>An annual allocation for private sector housing renewal and improvement loan management and administration. This had previously been reported under the DFG section before the services were disaggregated across portfolios.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.14	<p><u>School building works</u></p> <p>An annual allocation to fund the most urgent property works required at schools split across the regulatory / statutory and retained assets sections of the Capital Programme.</p> <p>A programme of toilet upgrades in both primary and secondary schools to ensure compliance with Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and Department for Education and Skills document "Toilets in Schools". There is currently a backlog of such works estimated to be in the region of £1.5m which is often reflected as a Health and Safety issue in Estyn inspections of schools, £0.100m per annum. When building new schools or extending current ones, the Council takes the approach to upgrade to the current standards at that time.</p> <p>Works to upgrade ventilation systems at school kitchens which are failing building regulations and gas safety legislation and are at risk of closure, £0.200m per annum.</p> <p>Fire Inspection Works at schools which are the responsibility of the Local Authority and have been identified during statutory fire risk assessments, £0.200m per annum.</p> <p>A £1m per annum allocation has been included within the retained assets section of the programme to cover all other urgent works required, such as roofing works.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.15	<p><u>Corporate property works</u></p> <p>An annual allocation to fund the most urgent property works required at non-school premises split across the regulatory / statutory and retained assets sections of the Capital Programme, including managing risks from legionella, fire safety, asbestos, accessibility and health and safety.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>

1.16	<p><u>School safeguarding works</u></p> <p>There is a requirement to carry out works/adaptations at schools, to address safeguarding concerns raised about access at main entrances and site. These works are required to ensure both children and adults can attend schools in a safe and secure environment.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.17	<p><u>Target Hardening</u></p> <p>The target hardening budget requires replenishment over the next two year period to prevent unauthorised use of land or buildings within the County.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2026/27.</p>
1.18	<p><u>Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)</u></p> <p>An annual allocation of £1.5m to fund the HAMP which includes resurfacing of the classified Highway Network, replacement programme for street lighting columns and structural maintenance, with £0.100m to be top sliced for 'streetscape' improvements.</p> <p>Whilst the Council has a statutory duty to maintain the Highways Network in a safe condition for travel, how the Council does this is not defined. WG set targets for road condition indices and invested a significant amount of grant funding in the network, however this funding ceased after the 2021/22 financial year. The condition of the highway network will naturally continue to deteriorate each year and without sufficient annual investment the overall condition of the network will decline.</p> <p>See paragraph 1.51 for more detail in regard to the position on the potential development of the HAMP.</p> <p>One off increase of £0.500m proposed in 2025/26 and no changes for 2026/27 to 2027/28.</p>
1.19	<p><u>Play areas</u></p> <p>An annual allocation of £0.200m to fund the most urgent requirements to replace play equipment that has reached the end of its useful life at play areas, as well as upgrades to play areas.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.20	<p><u>ICT - Equipment at Datacentres</u></p> <p>Allocations have previously been approved for the replacement of networking technologies to provide segregation of online systems from internal systems, £0.045m and networking technologies at remote sites replacements, £0.034m. Both allocations have been included in 2026/27.</p>

1.21	<p><u>ICT - Server Technology Replacement</u></p> <p>In 2025/26 and 2026/27 the server infrastructures currently used to deliver business systems through Citrix, will come to the end of their useable life and could lead to a degradation of service if not replaced, at a cost of £0.264m and £0.124m. This has previously been approved in the programme.</p> <p>Further bids have been received for replacement equipment to deliver virtual desktop solutions in 2026/27, £0.052m along with the replacement technologies to ensure there is adequate capacity for the delivery of existing business systems and services used across the whole of the Council in 2027/28, £0.212m.</p>
1.22	<p><u>ICT - Laptop / PC Replacements</u></p> <p>The project will deliver a programme of device replacement based on the “just in time” principle of replacement to ensure the Council maximises the useable life of its laptop assets. It will ensure that the devices used by members of staff are fit for purpose and can deliver the required level of service and can support the latest operating systems and security software.</p> <p>The absence of a replacement budget for replacement devices will result in devices that perform poorly and will not be able to accommodate the operating system and security software require to ensure the required level of performance. The inability to operate up to date security software poses a significant cyber security risk.</p> <p>Capital funding of £0.560m is required over a three year programme.</p>
1.23	<p><u>ICT - Storage Technology Replacement</u></p> <p>The Council uses storage technologies that allow the allocation of storage to systems as and when they need it. It prevents unused storage sitting against systems and is the most efficient and cost-effective way of allocating storage against all systems used by the Council, from business applications to the general file share.</p> <p>Previously approved was the Councils corporate storage technology that requires replacing in 2025/26, £0.850m and the storage system specifically allocated to the Council’s Graphic Designers in 2026/27, £0.031m.</p>
1.24	<p><u>ICT – Cyber Security</u></p> <p>£0.066m has previously been approved in the programme in 2025/26 for the replacement of firewall and email scanning technologies.</p> <p>Another scheme previously approved was for £0.133m in 2026/27 relating to the Council’s main firewalls which are the main and first line of defence from cyber-attack. This ensures the Council’s technology is up to date and current, in order to provide the required level of protection.</p>

1.25	<p><u>Schools WiFi and Networking Infrastructure</u></p> <p>Flintshire, along with all other authorities in Wales were awarded a significant amount of money by WG to replace old and outdated networking infrastructures within all schools. This has provided schools with a sound digital platform to deliver the curriculum for a number of years. The school infrastructures formed part of the Hwb programme (WG programme), and subsequent funding has been directed towards end user devices.</p> <p>A condition of the grant was that Local Authorities put in place sustainability plans to fund replacement infrastructures when they are needed.</p> <p>Funding previously approved was for the wireless equipment which will reach the end of its usable life in 2025/26. £1.445m has been added to the programme for networking equipment replacement in 2027/28.</p> <p>No change is proposed for 2025/26.</p>
1.26	<p><u>Base Provision for Leisure and Libraries Estate</u></p> <p>An annual allocation to fund the most urgent property works required across the Leisure and Libraries estate. The Council recognises its landlord responsibilities for the assets that remain in its ownership, having retained ownership of all buildings.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.27	<p><u>Safety Improvements in Cemeteries</u></p> <p>Funding is required to undertake urgent health & safety improvements within Flintshire cemeteries which will also assist with environmental improvements on the sites.</p> <p>This includes a memorial safety programme to address a backlog of unsafe memorials and kerb-sets within cemeteries. This is along with a transition to battery operated small plant to replace outdated equipment, to be more energy efficient as well as the associated health & safety improvements for the operatives.</p> <p>New schemes included in 2025/26.</p>
1.28	<p><u>Office Rationalisation Programme and County Hall Campus</u></p> <p>The ambitions of the Corporate Asset Management Plan, alongside the shift towards more hybrid working arrangements and the unprecedented financial challenge currently facing the Council, have combined to create factors that now make it desirable to pursue the next stage of the office rationalisation programme and County Hall Campus redevelopment.</p> <p>Phase one of the project has already commenced with the objective to move as many people as possible out of County Hall by the end of February 2025. To enable this to happen, works are required at both Ty Dewi Sant and Flint</p>

	<p>offices. These works are essential to be undertaken as soon as possible under phase one of the project as they are necessary to provide alternative office accommodation for employees moving out of County Hall.</p> <p>Phase two of the project will have three key areas of focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An alternative heating system and utilities supply for the other organisations/assets that remain on the County Hall Campus. (This is currently uncosted). 2. Moving the NEWydd central production kitchen out of County Hall. 3. Complete clear out of County Hall. <p>Phase three of the project will focus on the longer-term redevelopment of the County Hall Campus.</p> <p>New scheme included in 2025/26.</p>
1.29	<p><u>Terrig House Hutments Demolition</u></p> <p>The Terrig House Hutments are currently vacant and in an unlettable condition. The state of repair can only be described as very poor. The walls and windows being constructed of timber and are rotten, exposing the building to the elements and requiring periodical maintenance to remain secure from unauthorised entry. Annual costs each year in business rate and repair and maintenance costs upwards of £0.010m.</p> <p>This proposal would pay back in four years, return a parcel of land and make the site as a whole more attractive for redevelopment.</p> <p>New scheme included in 2025/26.</p>
1.30	<p><u>Funding ‘Headroom’</u></p> <p>‘Headroom’ has been built into the Capital Programme to enable the programme to be more flexible so that funding can be allocated to small schemes as they present in year either as a result of opportunities or unforeseen circumstances (£0.350m per annum). An example would be the need to complete further highways works as a result of an exceptionally severe winter over and above any planned works funded from the annual allocation.</p> <p>No changes are proposed for 2025/26 to 2027/28.</p>
1.31	<p>Investment Section of the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28</p> <p>Table 4 below shows the proposed schemes for the period 2025/26 - 2027/28 for the Investment section of the Capital Programme. Details are provided in paragraphs 1.32 to 1.34.</p>

Table 4

PROPOSED INVESTMENT SCHEMES 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Investment Section				
<u>Previously Approved</u>				
Joint Archive Facility, FCC and DCC	0.000	1.031	1.606	2.637
Re-Fit Framework	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500
Development of Children's Residential Care	0.600	0.400	0.000	1.000
	1.100	1.431	1.606	4.137
<u>New Schemes for Approval</u>				
Development of Children's Residential Care	0.400	0.600	0.000	1.000
	0.400	0.600	0.000	1.000
Total Investment Section	1.500	2.031	1.606	5.137

1.32

Joint Archive Facility, Flintshire and Denbighshire Councils

This scheme recognises and responds to the need and demand of the two Councils' archive services. Both services occupy old buildings, unfit for purpose. They lack suitable public spaces and appropriate storage, are too full to accept new collections and are listed buildings lacking scope for adaptation, requiring expensive maintenance. The proposal is to construct a new building adjacent to Theatr Clwyd, Mold, to house both the physical archives and the new service operations.

In October 2023, Cabinet approved a joint bid with Denbighshire County Council (DCC) to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, seeking a grant of £7.4m towards the construction of a new archive centre in Mold, to house the joint service and the delivery of an engagement programme. This is along with £0.300m from a WG Culture and Leisure grant.

In March this year, the Council was notified that it had been awarded funding for the development phase of the project, which is Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) 1-3. Both Councils are funding RIBA 4 the technical design phase, to progress the project whilst the delivery phase submission is reviewed by NLHF. If the development phase submission is satisfactory and the project is progressing as planned, the NLHF delivery phase grant funding is offered for RIBA 5-7 which is construction, handover and the defects period.

Direct Costs:

- Estimated funding available for the project is £12.9m, with £7.7m from grant funding, £3.079m from FCC and £2.052m from DCC. £0.442m included in a previous programme, which included core funding of £0.197m.
- It has been assumed that borrowing will be required to fund this project. The estimated revenue costs associated with borrowing

	<p>£2.882m over 50 years totals £9.654m. In year 1 revenue debt costs are estimated to be £0.170m, rising to £0.225m in year 50, with an average of £0.193m over 50 years.</p> <p>Direct Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable and improved archive service for Denbighshire and Flintshire via the creation of a single shared service. • The construction of a new purpose built environmentally friendly building adjacent to Theatr Clwyd, Mold, to house both the physical archives and the new service operations. Provide a sustainable archive repository for the region for the foreseeable future from the perspective of storage space and building maintenance and management. • The overall revenue impact is an estimated saving of £11,647 per annum once the new building is open, with a potential further revenue saving once the joint service is running. <p>Indirect Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge and skills between the workforce of both Councils • Sphere of health, education and wellbeing (connectivity, involvement, identity) can be achieved. • The transferrable skills of our volunteers will develop and will contribute to increasing their employability. • Deliver the long-term development of a resilient, relevant service: inspiring communities in North East Wales and enacting the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act; securing historic collections, diversifying audiences, volunteers and depositors. • Cost avoidance of £10,000 per annum additional revenue storage costs, and in excess of £0.718m to address the need for environmental management equipment, compliant storage areas and upgrading public facilities and access.
1.33	<p><u>Re-Fit Framework</u></p> <p>The Re-fit framework is part of Local Partnerships - a joint venture between the Local Government Association, HM Treasury and WG. The partnership works solely for the benefit of the public sector and brings public and private sector experience that provides confidence, capacity, and capability, helping councils achieve and maintain financial resilience.</p> <p>The framework provides a guaranteed 100% of the energy saving or generation (kWh) via a contractual agreement for the payback period of the project. This key feature is helping to remove risk of failure with new developments, plus protecting the client and their investment.</p> <p>Re-fit uses a competitively tendered and OJEU-compliant framework which can be utilised by any public sector organisation in England and Wales and covers the retrofit of buildings and assets to save energy and carbon. This includes a large range of technologies and measures such as: heat networks, lighting, and controls, BMS controls, heat recovery, solar thermal, heat pumps, solar PV, insulation, draught proofing, street</p>

	<p>lighting, etc.</p> <p>Re-fit would also aid in addressing capacity issues, as officers can only procure and implement a given number of projects per year. Through Refit, an energy services company (ESCo) is appointed in order to review the built estate, identify energy and carbon saving opportunities and implement on a wider scale than would likely be possible 'in-house'</p> <p>Direct Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital investment required is £1.5m. Based on preliminary data potential savings have been calculated at £0.230m per annum, with an estimated payback period of 7 years. £1m included in the previous programme. <p>Direct Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Council to accelerate the push towards achieving NZC by 2030 • Provide external support and expertise, supplementing and expanding the works that the Council are currently undertaking • Achieve potential annual CO2 savings of 892 tonnes • Meeting the priorities and objectives set within the Council Plan under 'Green Society and Environment' theme • Contributing towards the achievement of WG targets and obligations under the Climate Change Act, Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and Environment Act • Implementing this project will provide mitigation against future utility price increases
1.34	<p><u>Development of Children's Residential Care</u></p> <p>There is a need to expand our in-house residential care for children. There is a statutory duty to ensure that we have sufficient registered placements to meet the placement needs of looked after children. Traditionally we have commissioned 'out of county' placements for looked after children requiring residential care. However, WG's strategy to 'eliminate profit' from the children's residential care market is likely to lead to a reduction in placement availability and requires local authorities to proactively expand in-house provision at pace to avoid us having to set up services that operate without registration and risk prosecution against the local authority.</p> <p>WG's strategy is to rebalance the market so that the duties on local authorities in relation to looked after children are not contracted out to for-profit companies and remain with public sector or not-for-profit providers. Under the strategy new legislation will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent providers to demonstrate a not-for-profit status, based on a new pre-defined definition of non-profit, by 1 April 2026 • any current "for profit" providers will need to transition to, and register with Care Inspectorate Wales, as not-for-profit by 1 April 2027

If we do not have sufficient placements, we will breach our duty to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children (Section 75) and increase the risk of needing to set up bespoke unregistered services to support looked after children.

The out of county placement revenue budgets continue to have significant pressures, with ongoing high demand for placements where children and young people cannot be supported within in-house provision. Market supply limitation factors and inflationary pressures are leading to higher costs, with current in year projected overspends of £1.372m. Services continue to do everything to manage these risks, with this development of in-house provision helping to mitigate against these pressures.

Direct Costs:

- Capital funding required is £2m, split over two financial years. It has been assumed that borrowing will be required to fund this project. The estimated revenue costs associated with borrowing £2m over 50 years totals £4.7m. In year 1 revenue debt costs are estimated to be £0.118m, rising to £0.156m in year 50, with an average of £0.134m over 50 years.
- A £1m was approved in the previous capital programme, however an additional £1m is required to continue to develop an expansion model. The service is developing a WG bid for revenue and capital funding to reduce the requirement where possible.
- WG have allocated £0.561m in year to support their strategic intent. This money can contribute to the initial phase in the design, consultancy, and support of developments in the financial year.
- Pressures of £0.450m and £0.250m for the associated revenue costs for service provision have been included within the 2025/26 and 2026/27 MTFS position.

Direct Benefits:

- Opportunity for children to maintain local links with appropriate friends, family and support networks
- Opportunity to maintain local education provision and be able to access local partnership support services
- Reunification and step-down plans for children can be managed more effectively
- Significant reduction in out-of-county placement costs, which is a huge pressure on the revenue budget.
- Improved efficiency and control over the quality and availability of care placements
- Local Job Creation: New residential homes will create local employment opportunities
- Aligns to WG's not for profit agenda
- Demonstrate that we have met our duty to ensure market sufficiency enable us to meet the current placement needs of our looked after children

Indirect Benefits:

- Improved Outcomes for Children: Children will benefit from stable, locally-based placements that support their education, health, and social development

- Enhanced community integration for children, maintaining connections with local support networks, schools, and family
- Community Integration: Children in care will remain connected to their communities, fostering better long-term outcomes
- Strategic Flexibility: Enhanced capacity to meet future demand for residential placements, reducing the risk of being unable to fulfil statutory duties

1.35

Summary (Generally funded) Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28

Table 5 below summarises the generally funded Capital Programme and available funding.

Table 5

SUMMARY (GENERALLY FUNDED) CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Statutory / Regulatory Section	2.970	2.970	2.940	8.880
Retained Assets Section	7.413	4.103	5.365	16.881
Investment Section	1.500	2.031	1.606	5.137
Total (All Sections)	11.883	9.104	9.911	30.898
Estimated available general funding ¹	10.457	8.142	8.142	26.741
Total	10.457	8.142	8.142	26.741
Surplus / (Shortfall) - no borrowing	(1.426)	(0.962)	(1.769)	(4.157)
Schemes requiring funding by borrowing:				
Joint Archive Facility, FCC and DCC	0.000	1.031	1.606	2.637
Re-Fit Framework	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500
Development of Children's Residential Care	1.000	1.000	0.000	2.000
Total	1.500	2.031	1.606	5.137
Surplus / (Shortfall) - with borrowing	0.074	1.069	(0.163)	0.980
1 As per 2024/25 Settlement				

1.36

Table 5 shows that before any prudential borrowing is considered there is an overall shortfall in projected funding of £4.157m over the three year period, with an estimated shortfall of £1.426m in 2025/26.

It has previously been approved that the schemes for the Joint Archive Facility, Re-Fit Framework and £1m of the development of Childrens Residential Care be funded from borrowing with the associated costs of borrowing included as revenue pressures within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

1.37	<p>Table 5 shows that after prudential borrowing is considered, there is an overall surplus in projected funding of £0.980m over the three year period, with an estimated surplus of £0.074m in 2025/26.</p> <p>The Council has developed a prudent policy of allocating its own capital receipts to fund capital projects only when receipts are actually received rather than when it is anticipated the receipt will be received, and this position continues to be the case.</p> <p>In recent years, much of the Council's programme has been funded from capital receipts. However, the Council's ability to generate significant capital receipts is getting harder and is almost exhausted. Although the Council will, wherever possible, seek to identify assets for sale (as appropriate) to fund the Capital Programme.</p> <p>Options to fund shortfalls include a combination of future capital receipts, alternative grants, and scheme phasing as the expenditure profile of large complex projects such as those included in the investment section of the programme could change. Every effort will be made to ensure that other sources of funding are utilised to fund the programme.</p> <p>Ultimately, should other sources of funding not materialise the Council will need to use prudential borrowing to finance any shortfalls.</p>
1.38	<p>Specific Grants and Borrowing</p> <p>Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme</p> <p>WG has approved the Council's in principle submission for Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B, with a funding envelope of £85.4m. The programme is to be funded from specific grant from WG at an agreed intervention rate, with the Council's contribution to be funded by prudential borrowing. The WG intervention rate for funding the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B programme has increased from 50% to 65% for schools, 75% for Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision, and 81% for Mutual Investment Models (MIM).</p> <p>Each of the schemes are subject to individual approval to ensure that each meets the Council's continuing priorities and is affordable in the context of the Council's MTFS.</p> <p>Schemes currently in progress are Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint and Drury Primary School. The next scheme for consideration is the Saltney/Broughton area review.</p> <p>For the primary sector, it is recommended to amalgamate Saltney Ferry CP and Saltney Wood Memorial CP to create a new 3-11 primary school for the area.</p> <p>In relation to the secondary sector, there is a significant risk that the Council will not be successful through the business case process to secure the funding from WG to build a new 11-16 secondary school. To maintain a secondary school in the area, it is therefore proposed to seek a local</p>

capital solution for St David's High School to reduce its current capacity by remodelling and refurbishing the existing accommodation.

There is also a growing pressure on the ALN section relating to increased capacity across the special school's network which will need to be monitored and considered within the programme moving forward.

The estimated costs of these schemes are outlined in the table below:

Saltney & Broughton Area	Total Cost	WG funded	Council funded
	£m	£m	£m
Primary Sector	12.00	7.800	4.200
Secondary Sector	7.000	0.000	7.000
Total	19.000	7.800	11.200

The benefits and costs of the school improvement programme scheme are:

Direct Benefits:

- Enabling 65%-81% external investment in schools
- Continuing to raise educational standards
- Reduction in backlog maintenance costs
- Reduction in fixed costs associated with buildings and leadership focuses investment on learners
- Removal of mobile classrooms and increase in permanent capacity to meet local demand
- New build Welsh Medium primary school strategically linked to the Council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- Energy efficiency improvements

Direct Costs:

- Part of bigger development programme in Band B, £85.4m.
- Estimated revenue borrowing costs associated with each scheme (interest and minimum revenue provision) are as follows and are built into the current MTFS:

Saltney & Broughton Area	Year 1	Year 50	Average over 50 years
	£m	£m	£m
Primary Sector	0.243	0.324	0.277
Secondary Sector	0.405	0.540	0.462
Total	0.648	0.864	0.739

Indirect Benefits:

- Improving learner outcomes by ensuring that school buildings are effective in creating the conditions for learners to succeed
- Alignment with the Council's School Modernisation Strategy to ensure schools are fit for purpose
- A more secure school estate
- A school estate with reduced vandalism
- Upgrading ICT provision and enabling new methods of curriculum delivery

- Provision of appropriate capacity of school network
- Economic benefits of local contractor and sub-contractor spend
- Supports with the Councils net zero carbon aims

1.39 Details of schemes funded by specific grant and borrowing is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6

SPECIFICALLY FUNDED SCHEMES 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Specifically Funded Schemes				
Sustainable Communities for Learning	6.952	9.014	5.514	21.480
Total Schemes	6.952	9.014	5.514	21.480
Funding				
Specific Capital Grants	2.243	3.585	3.585	9.413
Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing	4.709	5.429	1.929	12.067
Total Schemes	6.952	9.014	5.514	21.480

1.40 At the time of setting the budget, the details of many capital grants have not been released by WG, and so are not included in Table 6 above. As details become available they will be reported to Members via the quarterly 2025/26 Capital Programme monitoring reports.

1.41 All schemes proposed for inclusion within the Capital Programme invest in assets and / or reconfigure models of service provision. They are pivotal to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities outlined in portfolio business plans and the Council Plan.

1.42 **Summary Total Council Fund Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28**
Table 7 summarises the total proposals for the 2025/26 - 2027/28 Capital Programme.

Table 7

SUMMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2027/28				
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Expenditure				
Statutory / Regulatory Section	2.970	2.970	2.940	8.880
Retained Assets Section	7.413	4.103	5.365	16.881
Investment Section	1.500	2.031	1.606	5.137
Specific Section	6.952	9.014	5.514	21.480
Total Programme (All Sections)	18.835	18.118	15.425	52.378
Funding				
General Funding ¹	10.457	8.142	8.142	26.741
Grant Funding	2.243	3.585	3.585	9.413
Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing	6.209	7.460	3.535	17.204
Total Projected Funding	18.909	19.187	15.262	53.358
Surplus / (Shortfall)	0.074	1.069	(0.163)	0.980
<small>¹ As per 2024/25 Provisional Settlement</small>				

Potential future schemes

1.43

All capital schemes need to be considered in the context of the position of the Council's MTFS. All schemes which require prudential borrowing to fund them add revenue pressures in the form of interest charges and charges to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

1.44

Sustainable Communities for Learning

The WG schools investment programme is expected to continue into a more fluid rolling 'Band C' programme over a longer period up to ten years with the indications from WG officials that intervention rates will remain at the current rates.

The Council's Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) was submitted to WG at the end of March 2024 for consideration in accordance with their timetable. This is essentially the Council's 'statement of intent' for the Band C investment programme. Schemes will be subject to individual approval to ensure that each meets the Council's continuing priorities and is affordable in the context of the Council's MTFS.

WG have introduced additional criteria for Net Zero Carbon (NZC) requirements for schools. Buildings will be required to be NZC in operation, which means producing zero or negative carbon emissions as part of their operational energy. The first generation of schools and colleges under the new rules will also be required to demonstrate a 20% reduction on the amount of embodied carbon, which is the carbon emitted through construction materials and the construction process, with further

	<p>reductions required in future, in line with the WG's broader NZC plans. Industry indications have confirmed this will increase construction costs by up to 20%.</p>
1.45	<p>Llys Gwenffrwd, Holywell – Residential Care Home Review</p> <p>Llys Gwenffrwd is a 31 bed, three storey care home built in the 1970s which was refurbished in early 2000. There are challenges associated with the current building as it is built on a sloping site, as a result there are a number of levels requiring the need for ramps to access many areas both inside and outside. It includes the provision of a single undersized lift to reach the three stories which does not meet DDA requirements and there are a number of living and day spaces which are some distance from the bedroom areas. Outside space is difficult to access because of the site levels and parking can be difficult. The Holywell locality has the fewest number of care home placements available and would benefit from a new build facility on a different more accessible site which requires further consideration. A relocated new build meets the needs of an ageing population in alignment with the strategic service priorities. High level feasibility work has been undertaken to review potential options to develop a business case for the project.</p>
1.46	<p>Residential Care Home Provision – North East Flintshire</p> <p>Consideration has been made as to whether the Council can introduce in-house residential care to the North East region of Flintshire, to support with capacity and future proofing the care market in the area. Currently, a site mapping exercise is being undertaken to understand if there is a site with sufficient space to house a sufficiently sized facility.</p>
1.47	<p>Additional Learning Needs Reform</p> <p>In previous Cabinet reports, the need for specialist Autism and Moderate Learning Difficulties facilities had been highlight as short/medium term ambition. In reviewing the impact of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation, extending existing ALN provision would also be a requirement along with consideration for a Secondary Phase Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties (BESD) Resourced Unit, the County only has primary provision currently. A technical feasibility is currently being undertaken to provide a range of options with high level cost estimates around effective building solutions. For larger value cost options it would be prudent to consider the next phase of the WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Band rolling investment programme, given that the current intervention rate in this programme for ALN provision is 75% WG funded, with the Councils contribution being 25%.</p>
1.48	<p>County Hall Campus</p> <p>The requirement to take forward the redevelopment of the site so to address the future needs of the Council and other public sector partners; to provide a range of options and an integrated approach around the Courts, Theatr Clwyd and joint Archive service together with a wider site</p>

	development. The first phase of relocating staff to Ty Dewi Sant from County Hall is underway and is required by the end of February 2025.
1.49	<p>Register Office, Llwynegrin Hall</p> <p>The long-term proposal is to develop Llwynegrin Hall as a venue for civil marriages/partnerships in Flintshire to include the ceremony and celebrations thereafter. The internal accommodation at Llwynegrin Hall would require an upgrade, to include catering facilities and areas to celebrate. The building has potential to be available as a complete wedding venue package, like that of approved premises e.g. hotels, and has the potential to generate new income. This proposal requires a feasibility study in the first instance.</p>
1.50	<p>Review of Industrial Estates</p> <p>The Council's industrial estates are widely dispersed throughout the County and provide much needed commercial accommodation to many local businesses, preventing them from leaving the County and maintaining local sources of employment. They also bring into the Council significant revenue through rental income but are of an age where they are now likely to require investment.</p> <p>The legislation which was due to increase the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards has not been enacted. It is not known when or if this will be introduced or whether it will be modified. Until this is confirmed we cannot assess any investment that may be required.</p> <p>Work is being undertaken to build on the initial reviews that took place on two of our estates as part of the Levelling Up bid. This work will assess our estates against criteria including regeneration, employment opportunities, sustainability and economic viability, alternative use and land values. Some of this work may determine that existing vacant buildings are demolished which will require funding.</p>
1.51	<p>Highways Asset Management Plan</p> <p>The core Capital Programme includes £1.5m per annum for the HAMP. It has been estimated that the investment required to maintain current network performance is £3.9m per annum, an increase of £2.4m per annum.</p>
1.52	<p>Digital Strategy</p> <p>A planned programme of projects required to increase the number and range of services available digitally are under consideration. The projects have an impact across a range of services, rather than in a single specific service e.g., web payment portal that will be used for all payments to the Council. These will be used to enhance the ability of customers to interact with the Council on line.</p> <p>The capital costs of purchasing new software will be calculated on a project by project basis at the time each project is ready to proceed in order to</p>

	<p>accurately capture not only the technical requirements for the software but also the costs prevailing at the time.</p> <p>The range of cross cutting projects under consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generic web booking system to allow customers to make appointments for services online • Integration of webchat and email into the Customer Relationship Manager application • A generic facility for customers to upload and store commonly needed documents e.g., proof of entitlement to benefits • Software to link information held in separate databases so that we can update them all at once in a single contact with the customer
1.53	<p>Deeside Leisure Centre</p> <p>Deeside Leisure Centre (DLC) is 50+ years old and reaching the end of its economic useful life. It is the largest sports facility in the County at 15,000m² and is of strategic importance in terms of sports participation and health and wellbeing. It is an ageing building occupying too large a footprint with inefficient energy systems. The building is not sustainable beyond the medium term.</p> <p>The Council has undertaken a feasibility study and business case of options for the leisure centre going forward and will review the impact this may have on the Capital Programme and any future potential revenue savings.</p>
1.54	<p>Homelessness – Young Persons Hub</p> <p>Responding to the needs of young people and particularly those who may be at a risk of homelessness is a key focus for the Council. Consideration needs to be given to not only accommodation needs but also support to assist young people with the key life skills needed to live independently and reduce risks of homelessness. When looking at best practice in this area of work, there are a number of examples of positive practice which seek to not only provide accommodation, but also co-ordinate support and service delivery.</p> <p>The Housing & Communities Portfolio is considering opportunities for the development of a Young Persons Hub which will seek to provide a number of units of self-contained accommodation with support onsite. This could potentially extend to provision of housing and homelessness advice and support and facilities for co-location of young person focussed services within a “housing hub”. A feasibility study will be considered to inform this approach once a site is identified, which may consider the provision of office and community space to ensure a joined-up approach within a multi-disciplinary team model.</p> <p>Subject to the outcome of feasibility works, capital funding may be required to deliver on this agenda. External funding streams will also be considered in order to maximise opportunities to develop the Young Persons Hub. This activity is referenced within the Councils Housing Prospectus.</p>

	<p>The service is currently revisiting and refining the details of the brief and developing a revised specification with youth justice, homelessness, youth services and social services colleague for a “Hub” and arranging visits to existing hubs in other authorities to understand the best designs and service configurations.</p>
<p>1.55</p>	<p>Homelessness – Emergency Bed Provision</p> <p>In late 2019, the Council undertook work to develop an Emergency Bed provision for people who are homeless and may otherwise face the prospect of sleeping rough. Significant works were completed within the Glanrafon Resource Centre in Queensferry to transform the building into a Night Shelter offering up to 12 Emergency Beds. The Council, as the owner of the building, completed refurbishment works and then partnered with The Wallich, to deliver the support required to safely operate the Night Shelter.</p> <p>At present there are 23 individual accommodation units on site offering self-contained accommodation but this is not of a standard we wish to sustain and need to develop a purpose built provision offering high quality self-contained accommodation. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, further guidance has been issued by WG regarding the future direction of homelessness service. In the guidance there is a clear steer towards offering high quality self-contained accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>The Glanrafon Homeless Hub was always considered a short to medium term solution for rough sleeping in Flintshire but the pandemic prolonged the need for the provision and the model has developed significantly since then. The next iteration of the Homeless Hub is identified as a priority activity within the Councils Housing Prospectus and Social Housing Grant can be prioritised in order to deliver on this activity. Sites are presently being considered and feasibility work for supported homeless provision underway. We are currently in discussion with the WG technical and social housing grant teams over a potential provision of homeless supported provision for between 10-14 unit scheme.</p>
<p>1.56</p>	<p>Greenfield Business Park</p> <p>Most of the remaining units in the Council ownership at Greenfield Business Park are at the end of their serviceable life and can't, in most cases, be upgraded further. Their size and condition would make them very unlikely to be lettable in the future as they no longer meet modern business needs. There will be a need to consider the future of the site with options including a) demolition with no further units being constructed, b) demolition for future Council development or private sale, c) wholesale redevelopment and construction of new business units. Capital funds may be required to cover some of these costs including acting as match funding should external capital funding become available.</p>

1.57	<p>Connah's Quay Docks</p> <p>There is an externally funded programme of improvement underway to the security and appearance at Connah's Quay Docks to help address anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and crime in this locality. This programme does not extend to major capital investment however. The two Council-owned docks in Connah's Quay are expected to require significant investment in the medium-term to prevent further deterioration in their condition and risks thereby arising to the public, businesses, wildlife, and heritage assets.</p>
1.58	<p>Town Centre Regeneration</p> <p>The strategic approach to town centre regeneration approved by Cabinet includes the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify potential future development sites and develop options for their future assembly and redevelopment; • diversify land uses to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres including the acquisition of properties; • develop potential projects for future capital funding opportunities; • start, subject to the availability of capital resources and detailed investigation into commercial viability, to acquire key sites for redevelopment; <p>Limited capital funds are available from WG to support these priorities but they require either repayment loans or a minimum of 30% match funding to be available from grants. Both would represent a future call on the capital programme if projects are to be proposed to WG for funding.</p> <p>The Council is developing Place Plans to steer investment in each town and capital projects are expected to arise from this process.</p>
1.59	<p>Net Zero Carbon Aims</p> <p>WG has set out its legal commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and work towards a net zero public sector in Wales by 2030. One of the Council's key priorities within the Council Plan is to become a NZC Council by 2030 and to support wider decarbonisation actions across the County. The capital works programme plays a vital role in accelerating the shift towards achieving the NZC target. The Council has been investing in low carbon and renewable energy systems and energy efficiency for over 10 years which has led to a 51% reduction in scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions against a 2007/08 baseline year.</p> <p>Inclusion of this priority within the programme reinforces our commitment to tackling climate change and acknowledges that we have a significant role to play in further reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions. This commitment values energy efficiency, low carbon and smart technologies as a fundamental requirement of reaching net zero for across a multitude of Council services, acting as an important contributing factor towards decarbonisation.</p>

	<p>In most cases carbon action is integrated within specific projects – for example, school modernisation programme designed and built to NZCio. These projects are not explicitly labelled ‘Carbon’ or ‘Climate Change’ but are part of the Council wide programme to decarbonise its assets and services.</p> <p>Work continues to further understand the cost implications of carbon action for inclusion in the MTFS, in line with the Council’s Net Zero Carbon by 2030 goal.</p>
1.60	<p>Investment Zone</p> <p>Following the announcement by UK Government of a potential Investment Zone for Flintshire and Wrexham in 2023 the Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee and a wide range of stakeholders are developing proposals to grow the advanced manufacturing sector. Flintshire and Wrexham are home to a nationally important cluster of businesses in the sector, employing an estimated 31,000 people, and the Investment Zone would increase the scale of this sector, support the transition to advanced digital technologies and low carbon and improve skill levels and wages. On top of the £160m of investment from UK and Welsh Governments, the Investment Zone could also secure up to £1bn in private sector investment and create 5-6,000 new jobs.</p> <p>The Investment Zone funding also provides an opportunity for the Council to invest in projects that support the advanced manufacturing sector and improve the Council’s commercial estate and infrastructure. It is too early in the Investment Zone development process to quantify this. The Investment Zone is expected to operate from 2025 until 2035 and is therefore highlighted in the Capital Programme as future Council projects may need to demonstrate the availability of capital match funding.</p>
1.61	<p>Re-Fit 2</p> <p>Following the completion for the first phase of the Re-Fit programme, there could be further opportunity to invest in a second phase of energy efficiency and renewable schemes on more of the Councils building including public buildings, schools and visitor centres.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Financial consequences for capital resources are as set out within the report.
2.02	As previously stated, there are revenue consequences of borrowing in interest costs and revenue provision for debt repayment which will bear on the MTFS as pressures. The borrowing costs of previously approved schemes are reflected in the MTFS

An additional £1m for development of children’s residential care has been included in this programme, the costs of which are broken down as follows:

	Pressure in Year 1	Pressure in Year 50	Average Annual Pressure
	£m	£m	£m
Development of Children’s Residential Care	0.059	0.078	0.067
Total	0.059	0.078	0.067

These costs are reflected in the current MTFS forecast.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT	
3.01	Any decisions made which involve the Council’s assets and its Capital Programme often have very large and long-term financial implications. As it seeks approval for its Capital Programme, the Council is required to produce indicators assessing the affordability, prudence and sustainability of the capital plans. These are called the Prudential Indicators and are included in the Capital Strategy report.	
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
	Long-term	<p>The development a new facility Joint Archive Facility will provide a sustainable archive repository for the region along with providing annual revenue savings once the service is running.</p> <p>Improve the current carbon footprint of existing cemeteries and the associated interments within those sites.</p> <p>Capital funding assists in securing the future of schools in their local communities.</p>
	Prevention	<p>Target Hardening budget prevents unauthorised use of land or buildings within the County.</p> <p>Significant reduction in out-of-county placements.</p> <p>Memorial Safety Programme will prevent future accidents associated with dilapidated infrastructure and existing practices from occurring.</p>
	Integration	The investment on the Highway Network is required to enable maintenance of good

		<p>transportation infrastructure to support the local economy and public transport links for commuters. This includes school pupils attending schools where the Council is also investing in order to improve the quality of education being delivered. Investment in IT infrastructure supports the Council to deliver these changes along with school digital connectivity and broadband improvements.</p>
	Collaboration	<p>The Joint Archive Facility identifies collaboration between both Flintshire County Council and Denbighshire County Council to meet the need and demand of the two local Councils archive services. This will allow a sustainable and improved service via the creation of a single shared service and it will improve knowledge and skill sharing between both.</p> <p>The highway asset management plan helps with collaboration by enabling the local authority to working with other public bodies, private contractors, community groups and stakeholders to deliver highway maintenance services in a coordinated and efficient way.</p> <p>Engaging with users, customers and residents to understand their needs, expectations and feedback on the highway services.</p>
	Involvement	<p>The Joint Archive Facility will deliver a revolutionary archive offer to the public, which will deliver long-term development of a resilient, relevant service, inspiring communities in North East Wales. The facility will secure historic collections, diversify audiences, volunteers and depositors.</p> <p>The proposed schools projects will help promote greater community integration/use/involvement.</p>
Well-being Goals Impact		
	Prosperous Wales	<p>Investment in schools will improve learner outcomes by ensuring that school buildings are effective in creating the</p>

		<p>conditions for learners to succeed which develops a skilled and well-educated population in the economy.</p> <p>Capital investment directly benefits local supply chain/economy. A percentage of local expenditure is a requirement of the grant funding for school investment.</p>
	Resilient Wales	Use of sustainable and recycled materials during construction, more energy efficient, potential reduction in carbon emissions.
	Healthier Wales	Improved physical infrastructure and facilities at schools will positively impact on the wellbeing of the school and its community.
	More equal Wales	<p>Educational opportunities will enabling people to develop the skills and knowledge to be fulfilled.</p> <p>Reduces social inequalities by ensuring that the highway assets are maintained to a safe and serviceable condition, that the needs and preferences of different user groups are considered, and that the benefits and costs of highway maintenance are distributed fairly.</p>
	Cohesive Wales	<p>Allocation to the Highways Network includes resurfacing, street lighting improvements and structural maintenance which allows residents in the County to travel in safe conditions.</p> <p>Placing our looked after children locally will provide increased opportunity for children to maintain local links.</p>
	Vibrant Wales	<p>Investment in Welsh Medium schools that supports the Council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and enables continued support and potential growth for Welsh Medium provision.</p> <p>Target Hardening will ensure that facilities are available for Community.</p> <p>Enhancing the historic and natural features of the highway network and promoting the use of Welsh language in the</p>

		communication and signage of highway maintenance.
	Globally responsible Wales	<p>Construction of net zero carbon schools to support WG commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>Schools capital investment, delivers a more sustainable product, local spend and added benefits for apprenticeships, work experience in construction.</p> <p>Retrofit of buildings and assets to save energy and carbon.</p>
	<p>The impacts above include a range across several of the schemes the Council are looking at investing in over the next three years. The main body of the report breaks down the benefit for each scheme separately.</p>	
3.03	<p>Integrated Impact Assessments</p> <p>An integrated impact assessment is not required for statutory / regulatory and retained assets elements of the capital programme, as this investment is required to meet specific obligations (for example improvements and adaptations to private sector homes (Disabled Facilities Grants), adaptations to schools for children with disabilities and works required to keep buildings open by meeting Health and Safety standards) and to ensure business continuity.</p> <p>Individual integrated impact assessments have not been completed for each investment scheme as these programmes of works will be brought back to Cabinet for approval and the integrated impact assessments will be completed as part of the scheme specific reports.</p>	

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	The proposed Capital Programme will be referred to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment at its meeting on 14 th November 2024, with their comments being fed back to Cabinet verbally before being discussed at County Council in December 2024.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Business Case forms completed by Portfolios.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Chris Taylor, Strategic Finance Manager Telephone: 01352 703309 E-mail: christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Asset Management Plan - A plan maintained by an authority of the condition and suitability of its assets, updated regularly and utilised to assess future capital needs</p> <p>Capital Expenditure - Expenditure on the acquisition of Non-current Assets or expenditure that extends the life or value of an existing asset</p> <p>Capital Programme - The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme</p> <p>Capital Receipt - Receipts (in excess of £10,000) from the disposal of an asset</p> <p>Capital Scheme - An individual capital project which is monitored and managed in isolation. The aggregate of all schemes comprises the Capital Programme</p> <p>Capital Strategy - A corporate document providing clear strategic guidance about an authority's objectives, priorities and spending plans, demonstrating the link to key corporate and service objectives. May be combined with the Asset Management Plan (AMP) to form a single document</p> <p>Council Fund - The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged</p> <p>Disposal - The decommissioning or transfer of an asset to another party</p> <p>Non-current Asset - A resource controlled (but not necessarily owned) by the Council, from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the Council for more than 12 months</p> <p>Prudential Code - The Code of Practice drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to underpin the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 in respect of an authority's duty to determine the affordability, prudence and sustainability of its capital investment needs</p>

Prudential Indicators - Required by the **Prudential Code**, these take the form of limits, estimates or actual figures used to support the local decision making process for capital investment

Unsupported Prudential Borrowing - Borrowing administered under the **Prudential Code**, whereby authorities can set their own policies on acceptable levels and types of borrowing. The Prudential Framework allows authorities to take out loans in response to overall cash flow forecasts and other factors provided they can show that the borrowing is to meet planned capital expenditure in the current year or the next three years



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Capital Strategy Including Prudential Indicators 2025/26 to 2027/28
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Report Author	Corporate Finance Manager
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates the Council's Capital Strategy and seeks Cabinet's recommendation to Council.

The report explains the need for the Strategy, its key aims, and the content of each of its sections.

Under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code), authorities are required to set a range of Prudential Indicators (PI's). The Capital Strategy includes details of the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 – 2027/28.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approves and recommends the Capital Strategy to County Council.
2	<p>Cabinet approve and recommends to Council:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 - 2027/28 as detailed within Tables 1, and 4 – 8 of the Capital Strategy. • Delegated authority for the Corporate Finance Manager to effect movements between the separately agreed limits within the authorised limit for external debt and the operational boundary for external debt (Table 6 of the Capital Strategy).

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025 – 2028
1.01	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the Code), requires that the Council has in place a Capital Strategy (the Strategy). The guidance to the Code defines the specific requirements of the Strategy. This report updates the Strategy for Council’s consideration.
1.02	The key aims of the Strategy are to explain the ways in which the capital programme is developed and funded, the potential impact it has on the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the way in which it relates to the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy. The Strategy is an overarching document and refers to other documents such as the Capital Programme, the Treasury Management Strategy, and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy. The Strategy is split into a number of sections as described below. The Strategy is enclosed as Appendix 1.
1.03	Capital Expenditure This section defines capital expenditure. There is some limited local discretion in the definition as reflected in the Council’s accounting policies.
1.04	Resources This section explains the way in which the Capital Programme is funded. The Council has a number of funding sources, but these sources are limited and in some cases, particularly capital receipts, diminishing. Some of those sources, particularly prudential borrowing, add pressure to the Council’s MTFS.
1.05	Prioritisation of Capital Expenditure This section explains the way in which the Capital Programme is divided into three sections and how decisions are made as to which schemes to include in each section in each year.
1.06	Governance This section explains the governance arrangements in place in the development and monitoring of the capital programme.
1.07	Capital Expenditure Plans This section refers to the Council’s capital expenditure plans as agreed in its Capital Programme. It covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital expenditure plans• The way in which those plans are expected to be financed• Minimum Revenue Provision• Estimates of the Capital Financing Requirement, a measure of unfinanced expenditure

1.08	<p>Treasury Management</p> <p>This section covers the way in which the Strategy relates to the Council's treasury management activity. It covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Borrowing Strategy • The relationship between the Council's debt portfolio and its Capital Financing Requirement • The Authorised Limit and Operational Debt Limits for borrowing, ensuring the limits on the Council's exposure to debt are set • The Council's Investment Strategy • Treasury management governance.
1.09	<p>Commercial activities</p> <p>This section reports that the Council has limited commercial activity, having a limited portfolio of investment properties (agricultural properties and industrial units). The Council does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return.</p>
1.10	<p>Liabilities</p> <p>This section explains the liabilities which the Council has, in particular the deficit on its pension fund, and links with the Council's Statement of Accounts.</p>
1.11	<p>Revenue budget implications</p> <p>This section shows the impact of the capital financing costs on the revenue stream of the Council's budget.</p>
1.12	<p>Knowledge and skills</p> <p>This section details the skills of officers involved in developing and managing the capital programme and treasury management activity, and explains that the Council makes use of external advisers to assist with this activity.</p>
1.13	<p>Prudential Indicators</p> <p>The Council is required by the Code to develop and monitor Prudential Indicators. These are contained within the various sections of the Strategy, and are indicated as such.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Financial consequences for capital resources are as set out within the report and in Appendix 1.
2.02	Financial consequences for revenue resources are as set out within the report and in Appendix 1.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT								
3.01	Decisions made which involve the Council's assets and its Capital Programme often have very large and long-term financial implications. The purpose of the Capital Strategy includes setting a clear framework within which such decisions can be made, therefore mitigating the risks involved.								
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact								
	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Long-term</td></tr> <tr><td>Prevention</td></tr> <tr><td>Integration</td></tr> <tr><td>Collaboration</td></tr> <tr><td>Involvement</td></tr> </table>	Long-term	Prevention	Integration	Collaboration	Involvement	The impacts upon sustainable development principles of the Capital Programme which influences the Capital Strategy are listed in the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 report included elsewhere on this agenda.		
Long-term									
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	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Prosperous Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>Resilient Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>Healthier Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>More equal Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>Cohesive Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>Vibrant Wales</td></tr> <tr><td>Globally responsible Wales</td></tr> </table>	Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Cohesive Wales	Vibrant Wales	Globally responsible Wales	The impacts upon the well-being goals of the Capital Programme which influences the Capital Strategy are listed in the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 report included elsewhere on this agenda.
Prosperous Wales									
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3.04	Integrated Impact Assessments								
	The integrated impact assessment of the Capital Programme which influences the Capital Strategy are discussed in the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 report included elsewhere on this agenda.								

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT	
4.01	The Capital Strategy and the proposed Capital Programme will be referred to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for comment at its meeting on 14 th November 2024, with their comments being fed back to Cabinet verbally before being discussed at County Council in December 2024.	

5.00	APPENDICES	
5.01	Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28	

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Chris Taylor, Strategic Finance Manager Telephone: 01352 703309 E-mail: christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Capital Expenditure - Expenditure on the acquisition of Non-current Assets or expenditure that extends the life or value of an existing asset</p> <p>Capital Programme - The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme</p> <p>Capital Receipt - Receipts (in excess of £10,000) from the disposal of an asset</p> <p>Capital Scheme - An individual capital project which is monitored and managed in isolation. The aggregate of all schemes comprises the Capital Programme</p> <p>Capital Strategy - A corporate document providing clear strategic guidance about an authority's objectives, priorities and spending plans, demonstrating the link to key corporate and service objectives</p> <p>Council Fund - The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged</p> <p>Disposal - The decommissioning or transfer of an asset to another party</p> <p>Non-current Asset - A resource controlled (but not necessarily owned) by the Council, from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the Council for more than 12 months</p> <p>Prudential Code - The Code of Practice drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to underpin the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 in respect of an authority's duty to determine the affordability, prudence and sustainability of its capital investment needs</p> <p>Prudential Indicators - Required by the Prudential Code, these take the form of limits, estimates or actual figures used to support the local decision making process for capital investment</p>

<p>Unsupported Prudential Borrowing - Borrowing administered under the Prudential Code, whereby authorities can set their own policies on acceptable levels and types of borrowing. The Prudential Framework allows authorities to take out loans in response to overall cash flow forecasts and other factors provided they can show that the borrowing is to meet planned capital expenditure in the current year or the next three years</p>

CAPITAL STRATEGY
2025/26 TO 2027/28

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
2	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
3	RESOURCES
4	PRIORITISATION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
5	GOVERNANCE
6	TREASURY MANAGEMENT
7	COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES
8	LIABILITIES
9	REVENUE BUDGET IMPLICATIONS
10	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

CAPITAL STRATEGY REPORT 2025/26

1. INTRODUCTION

The creation and approval of a capital strategy is now a requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code).

The Code requires the Council to set Prudential Indicators in relation to its Capital Programme. This document includes those Prudential Indicators in tables 1 and, 4 - 8.

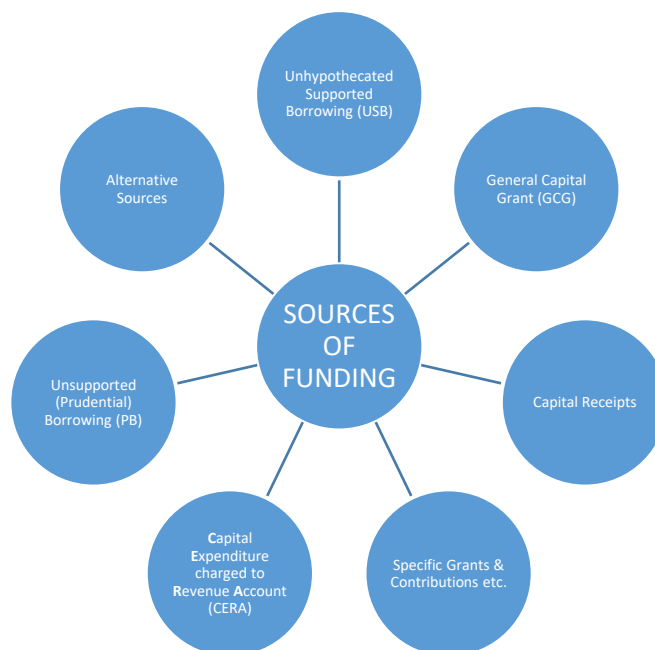
This document updates the capital strategy approved by Council in December 2023. It gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital expenditure occurs when the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

3. RESOURCES

The sources of funding available to the Council are described below:



Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB), commonly referred to as Supported Borrowing

Each year Welsh Government provides councils with a Supported Borrowing capital allocation. Councils can then borrow to fund capital expenditure up to that annual allocation, and Welsh Government will include funding to cover the revenue costs associated with that level of borrowing in future years within the Revenue Support Grant. The Council decides how this funding is spent.

General Capital Grant (GCG)

This is the annual capital grant from Welsh Government. The Council decides how this funding is spent.

Supported borrowing and general capital grant will be used to fund capital schemes which:

- invest in, or maintain the life of, existing assets which will be retained for future service delivery
- are statutory / regulatory in nature

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) equivalent is known as the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA).

Capital Receipts

These are funds raised from the sale of council assets, usually, but not restricted to, land and buildings. Other examples include repayments of loans for capital purposes and release of restrictive covenants.

Capital finance regulations dictate that capital receipts can only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt. In the past, regulations required a proportion of all receipts be set aside to repay debt, but this requirement was removed some time ago for the Council Fund and was removed for the HRA with the introduction of self-financing. The Council's policy is to use capital receipts to fund capital expenditure rather than voluntarily set aside to repay debt. The Council sets a Minimum Revenue Provision policy each year which sets out our prudent methods for repayment of debt.

The current policy of pooling all capital receipts to allocate to capital schemes in accordance with the Council's strategic aims and priorities will continue. Capital receipts will not be 'ring-fenced' to fund schemes in the same service or geographical areas (with the exception of the HRA). Capital receipts represent a finite funding source based on a planned approach to asset disposals in support of the Council's priorities. They will be used to fund new capital investment schemes.

Generation of capital receipts depends on our ability to identify assets that are surplus to requirements, and to sell them at an appropriate time which will be subject to local economic factors. In recent years this has been challenging, and will continue to be so. Careful and prudent planning around the timing of capital receipts is needed to ensure schemes funded by capital receipts don't begin until we have received the receipt.

Capital receipts will be generated by continuing with our agricultural disposal policy, our policy to reduce the number of assets that we have and the review of the commercial estate.

Our assets are also supporting the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) in innovative ways. We have identified surplus Council owned sites which will be used to develop new housing. This input will need to continue throughout the life of the programme. The impact of this on the generation of capital receipts will need to be carefully mapped and reflected within the wider Capital Programme.

Specific Grants and Contributions etc.

Specific Grants

These are grant allocations received from a range of sponsoring bodies including Welsh Government, Lottery, etc. for associated specific programmes and projects, with limited local discretion on how the funding is spent. Often the terms and conditions of such funding will require unused funding to be returned, and can require the Council to match fund. In times where capital resources are declining the Council will seek to maximise such funding streams, subject to the initiative/scheme reflecting both the third party's agenda and the Council's priorities.

Specific Contributions

These are contributions from developers towards the provision of public assets or facilities. Sometimes these are to mitigate the impact of their development on communities and are often referred to as Section 106 contributions. Contributions are earmarked for specific purposes in planning agreements and often relate to infrastructure projects including play areas, open spaces, and schools, but also including affordable housing. Developers also contribute to highways infrastructure developments through Section 38 and 278 agreements.

Specific Capital Loans

Increasingly, as Welsh Government's funding comes under pressure, capital funding that was previously issued as a specific capital grant is converted into a repayable loan, examples include the Home Improvement Loans fund, and Town Centre Loans funding. Grant funding will always be preferable to loan funding as it does not require repayment, however, loan funding does have benefits. Its use to date has been to provide recyclable loan funding for regeneration purposes. The benefit is that rather than being used to fund a single project, the funding can be recycled and used to fund a number of projects over the term of the loan.

Capital Loans are also available, and have been used, from other sources such as Salix in relation to energy saving projects.

As with grants, the Council will seek to maximise such developments that are in line with its priorities, whilst carefully considering the additional administrative burden in issuing and collecting loans, and the risk it carries from loan defaults.

Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI)

In recent years, as Welsh Government funding has been under pressure, schemes that would have been funded by capital grant have been funded by LGBI. Welsh Government provides the revenue support for borrowing costs incurred by the Council in borrowing to fund capital schemes (the difference with supported borrowing being that it's for a specific purpose aligned to Welsh Government priorities). LGBI has been used for highways maintenance and used to part fund the Welsh Government element of the Sustainable Communities for Learning – 'Band A'.

Capital Expenditure charged to Revenue Account (CERA)

Capital expenditure can be funded via a direct contribution from revenue funding (note: capital financing regulations mean it is not possible to use capital funding to fund revenue expenditure). This method of funding is extensively used by the HRA and will continue to be in the future. Its use for Council Fund activity is generally quite limited as this would add pressure to the revenue budget as forecast in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Unsupported Prudential Borrowing (commonly referred to as Prudential Borrowing)

The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities supports local authorities in determining their programmes for capital investment in assets (we are required by regulation to follow its requirements). The Prudential Code gives councils discretion to undertake borrowing to fund capital projects with the full cost of borrowing funded from future council revenue resources subject to the Council demonstrating, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. A range of prudential indicators must be produced and approved demonstrating the impact of the programme. This option for funding additional capital developments is one which is funded from within existing revenue budgets or from generating additional and ongoing income streams, there is no support from any external funding which is a major constraint on its use as any scheme funded by prudential borrowing will add to the forecast budget deficit in the MTFS.

To date, limited use has been made of the option following cautious and prudent consideration of long-term impacts. This approach will continue to be used with schemes that have a clear financial benefit such as 'invest to save', 'spend to earn', and those that generate returns over and above the costs of debt. The focus will be to fund schemes that are the Council's priorities, attract third party funding and generate revenue benefits in future financial years in the form of revenue savings, income generation or increasing Council Tax yield. In addition, prudential borrowing will be used to fund the Council element of Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and the HRA SHARP schemes.

Alternative Sources

There are a number of other alternative sources of capital funding which the Council could make use of, depending on circumstances and cost:-

- Finance Leases - Leases that transfers (to the lessee) substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset, even though ownership may not be transferred. This method was used for the equipment at Deeside Leisure Centre and the Jade Jones Pavilion, Flint.
- Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) - This is a broad term for various arrangements in which the Council has a longer and more intensive relationship with a private sector supplier than it does under a traditional contract. It includes:-
 - PFI contracts;
 - Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs);
 - Strategic partnering;
 - Sale and Lease back;
 - Joint Ventures;
 - Deferred Purchase, and
 - Mutual Investment Model (MIM)

To date, the Council has made very limited use of alternative funding options listed above. In future all options, along with any new initiatives, will be explored and used carefully. Capital schemes funded from alternative sources are likely to increase the Council's debt liability, therefore use will be restricted and considered in the same way as prudential borrowing.

4. PRIORITISATION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The purpose of the Capital Programme is to optimise the Council’s use of capital resources by allocation to those areas identified as representing the strategic priorities of the Council. The Programme is split into 3 sections;

- Statutory / Regulatory Programme consisting of an annual allocation to fund schemes of a statutory / regulatory nature. Examples include providing financial support to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes, and adapting schools for disabled children. Service areas will be required to submit plans for approval before the start of each financial year.
- Retained Asset Programme consisting of an annual allocation to fund schemes that maintain, improve or lengthen the economic life of the assets that we retain to use in delivering services where there is already a significant amount of capital work needed, identified by service plans / condition surveys etc. Service areas identified are: schools, highways, and corporate office accommodation. Service areas are required to submit plans for approval before the start of each financial year.
- Investment Programme consisting of allocations to fund new schemes arising from Portfolio Business Plans. Such schemes will be necessary to achieve revenue efficiencies included within Portfolio Business Plans, the MTFS and our strategic priorities as included in the Council Plan. Approval of such schemes will be through the submission of a full business case identifying the source of capital funding and the asset’s lifetime costs going forward.

Funding of schemes will be allocated as shown below:

Statutory / Regulatory Programme	Retained Asset Programme	Investment Programme	
General Capital Grant	Supported Borrowing	Capital Receipts	Debt and Alternative Sources of Funding

Capital Programmes will be set every year covering a timeframe of the next 3 financial years on a rolling basis, reflecting that capital schemes don’t match financial years and span more than 1 financial year. Schemes starting in that first financial year will be approved along with any costs and funding required in the subsequent 2 financial years. Schemes starting later than the first financial year will be given indicative support to enable services to plan, but will ultimately require formal approval through the process of approving the subsequent years’ Capital Programme.

Sufficient ‘headroom’ will be built into the Capital Programme to facilitate more flexibility, thus allowing smaller schemes to be presented, considered and approved by Cabinet in year. Such schemes arise in year due to, for example, grants that require an element of match funding or unforeseen events such as regulatory works etc.

The development of the Capital Programme will be considered in the context of its impact on the Council’s MTFS and in particular the added pressure the Capital Programme may bring to the revenue budget.

5. GOVERNANCE

Planning for the Capital Programme is determined in parallel with service and revenue budget planning process within the framework of the MTFS.

New investment capital schemes will be rigorously appraised through submission of full business cases which will include schemes funded by grants or contributions from 3rd parties. Large schemes which are programmes in their own right will be subject to gateway reviews at stages during the programme, for example Sustainable Communities for Learning and SHARP. This ensures that the evidence and the case for change when the scheme was initially approved is still valid, and that lessons learned from early stages can be applied to future stages.

Those portfolios with core allocations will submit annual plans for assessment and challenge by the Capital and Assets Programme Board to ensure compliance with the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan.

The Capital Programme, where possible, will be set for each coming financial year before the annual budget, and will include indicative figures spanning the same time frame as the MTFS.

Monitoring of the annual Capital Programme will be undertaken at a Portfolio level by the Capital and Technical Accounting Team, with progress updates given to the Capital and Assets Programme Board. Reporting to Members will take place quarterly to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee including:

- New schemes or additions to existing schemes
- Removal of or reductions to schemes
- Slippage on schemes, and impact on future years capital programme
- Funding virements between schemes
- Other necessary revisions to the scheme

The Capital and Assets Programme Board will develop processes for monitoring the outcomes of capital schemes and measures to monitor the performance of assets.

Capital expenditure plans

The Council's planned capital expenditure for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 is summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2025/26 Estimate *	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Council Fund	26.435	25.418	22.625
Housing Revenue Account	28.683	23.987	24.058
Total	55.118	49.405	46.683

*£7.6m of capital expenditure in 2025/26 arises from a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure.

The Council's Capital Programme is due to be approved by Council in December 2024, and details can be found on the Council's website.

The Council is planning a number of significant investments during the period of this strategy. In particular, it is investing substantially in its schools in conjunction with Welsh Government through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme; development of children’s residential care to expand our in-house provision; has plans, and in conjunction with its partners, to create a new archive building to deliver a single archive service for North East Wales. More detail is available in the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 report.

The HRA is a ‘ring-fenced’ account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised by, other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately. The Council has plans to invest significantly in housing assets over the period of the strategy, including the building of new homes as part of the SHARP, as well as maintaining its stock in line with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

In addition, part of SHARP is to build new homes for rent at intermediate rent levels (between social housing rents and market rents). This is achieved by making capital loans to the Council’s wholly owned subsidiary, North East Wales Homes Ltd (NEW Homes) to build affordable homes.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing etc.). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows, broken down into the sources detailed above:

Table 2: Capital Financing in £ millions

	2025/26 Estimate *	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Council Fund			
<u>External Sources</u>			
USB	4.017	4.017	4.017
GCG	4.125	4.125	4.125
Specific Grants/Contrib's/Loans	9.843	10.885	10.785
<u>Own Resources</u>			
Capital Receipts	2.315	0.000	0.000
<u>Debt</u>			
Prudential Borrowing	6.135	6.391	3.698
Sub Total - Council Fund	26.435	25.418	22.625

Housing Revenue Account			
<u>External Sources</u>			
MRA	4.978	4.978	4.978
Specific Grants/Contrib's/Loans	0.300	0.300	0.300
<u>Own Resources</u>			
CERA	14.811	14.115	14.186
<u>Debt</u>			
Prudential Borrowing	8.594	4.594	4.594
Sub Total - HRA	28.683	23.987	24.058
TOTAL	55.118	49.405	46.683

*£7.6m of capital expenditure in 2025/26 arises from a change in the accounting for leases and does not represent cash expenditure.

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, as any loans or leases must be repaid. Local authorities are required each year under regulations, to set aside some of their revenue resources as provision for the repayment of debt. The annual charge to the revenue account for repaying debt is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Planned MRP is as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of prior years' debt finance in £ millions

	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Council Fund	3.892	4.204	4.568
Housing Revenue Account	1.781	1.918	2.011

Local authorities are required to set a policy for MRP each financial year. The Council sets its annual MRP policy in February each year and this is available on its website.

Alternatively, capital receipts may be used to repay debt by applying capital receipts to the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of capital expenditure financed by debt is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and any capital receipts used to repay debt. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	2025/26 Estimate *	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Council Fund	323.482	337.463	349.285
Housing Revenue Account	139.734	142.410	144.993
Total	463.216	479.873	494.278

*£75m of the CFR increase in 2025/26 arises from a change in the accounting for leases.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Treasury Management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs as they fall due, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

Due mainly to decisions taken in the past, the Council currently (30th September 2024) has £316m long-term borrowing at an average interest rate of 4.49%, and short-term borrowing of £10m at an average interest rate of 4.63%. It also has £24.9m treasury investments at an average interest rate of 5.03%.

Borrowing strategy: The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which the funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans, should the Council's long-term plans change, is a secondary objective. Short-term loans are currently available at around 5% and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher are currently 5.11% to 5.52%.

The Council does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing and leases) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 5: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt & the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Debt (Incl Leases)	432.854	451.870	461.594
Capital Financing Requirement	463.216	479.873	494.278

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the Capital Financing Requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from Table 5, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 6: Prudential Indicators: Authorised Limit & Operational Boundary for external debt in £m

	2025/26 Limit	2026/27 Limit	2027/28 Limit
Authorised Limit - Borrowing	483	500	514
Authorised Limit - Other long term liabilities	35	35	35
Authorised Limit - Total External Debt	518	535	549
Operational Boundary - Borrowing	408	427	443
Operational Boundary - Other long term liabilities	75	73	71
Operational Boundary - Total External Debt	483	500	514

Treasury Investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Council’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Corporate Finance Manager and the Treasury Management team, who must act in line with the Treasury Management Strategy approved annually by the Council in February. Quarterly reports on treasury management activity are presented to the Governance and Audit Committee. The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

The Council sets a Treasury Management Policy Statement, an annual Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Schedules and Practices which contain further details on the Council’s borrowing strategy, investment strategy and treasury management governance which are available on its website.

7. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Council has a portfolio of investment properties, in the form of agricultural property and industrial units. Although these are classified as investment properties, they are legacy assets and the Council is managing down its agricultural portfolio and is reviewing its position in regard to industrial units. The Council does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return.

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Net Income from Commercial and Service Investments to Net Revenue Stream

	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Total net income from service and commercial investment	1.673	1.673	1.673
Proportion of net revenue stream	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%

8. LIABILITIES

In addition to debt of £316m detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover any required pension fund deficit (valued at £18m, March 2024). It has also set aside £1.1m to cover the risks associated with the aftercare of former landfill sites, and £3.5m as a provision against bad debts.

The Council is also at risk of having to pay for any additional works necessary at landfill sites, payments in respect of historic insurance, abuse and housing disrepair claims, costs involved in some employment tribunal cases, and has given pension guarantees on behalf of various alternative service delivery models. The Council has not set aside any funds because of a lack of certainty in estimating the size and timing of these liabilities.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by Chief Officers in consultation with the Corporate Finance Manager. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by corporate finance and reported as required to Cabinet.

Further details on liabilities and guarantees are in the contingent liability section in Note 34 of the Council's 2023/24 Statement of Accounts available on its website.

9. REVENUE BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Revenue Support Grant, Council Tax and business rates (NNDR) for the Council Fund, and the HRA equivalent is the amount to be met from Welsh Government grants and rent payers.

Table 8: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate
Council Fund	4.24%	4.47%	4.60%
HRA	18.25%	18.60%	18.58%

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Corporate Finance Manager is satisfied that the proposed Capital Programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable because the impact of the existing Capital Programme on the MTFS has been considered, and the revenue implications of future capital schemes are included when considering the approval of the capital budget.

Other revenue implications of capital expenditure are included in business cases and are factored into the MTFS.

10. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Corporate Finance Manager is a qualified accountant with significant experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications, including CIPFA and AAT.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisors. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.



CABINET

Date of Meeting	19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Intensive Housing Management Solutions for Homeless Accommodation
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Report Author	Chief Officer, Housing and Communities
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Expenditure on homeless accommodation is a high-risk area for the Council and costs have increased significantly in recent years as demand has grown and covid related hardship grants from Welsh government have reduced.

Area	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Temporary Accommodation	352,790	694,594	450,634	565,813
Emergency Accommodation	20,706	511,284	1,501,611	4,575,510
Homeless Hub	191,994	249,803	193,785	229,634
Totals	565,490	1,455,681	2,146,030	5,370,957

A specific challenge for the Council is the over reliance on holiday accommodation such as hotels, Bed and Breakfast (B&B's), caravans and other forms of holiday accommodation when fulfilling homeless accommodation duties. This is costly and not a good housing solution. Expenditure on hotels, B&Bs and other forms of holiday accommodation is outlined in the table above and is recorded as emergency accommodation.

The percentage of placements in hotels, B&Bs and other forms of holiday accommodation is significantly higher for Flintshire than the average elsewhere in Wales. As of February 2024, 58% of individuals in homeless accommodation provided by the Council were housed in B&Bs compared to 33% for Wales.

Developing other homeless accommodation solutions is a priority task for the Housing and Prevention Service and options are actively being explored to reduce financial pressures associated with fulfilling statutory homeless duties. Following

consultation with other Welsh Authority Homeless Leads, D2 PropCo have been identified as a potential provider of homeless accommodation.

This report outlines the model of intensive housing management services provided by D2 PropCo for homeless accommodation and the cost benefits of engaging a partner for these services.

D2 PropCo currently provide housing management services for 10 Councils in Wales. They provide homeless accommodation for single people (small scale house shares – up to 5 people sharing) and families in self-contained accommodation as an alternative to hotels, B&Bs and other forms of holiday accommodation. They also provide accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

Initial discussions with D2 PropCo to better understand their service and to inform cost benefit analysis, has established the accommodation of 40 single people and 10 families could offer significant savings. The savings are estimated at £1,095,000 per year when compared to the potential cost of accommodating those 50 households in hotels. If the Council were to engage D2 PropCo the potential savings could be £3,285,000 over a three-year contract period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Note the work undertaken to identify potential providers of an intensive housing management service for homeless accommodation.
2	Note the outcome of the Prior Information Notice (PIN) by way of testing the market.
3	Approve the direct award to D2 PropCo to engage them as a partner to provide an intensive housing management solution for homeless accommodation.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING INTENSIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT FOR HOMELESS SERVICES MODEL - D2 PROPCO
1.01	<p>D2 PropCo specialises in purchasing and renovating properties to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households, offering a vital alternative to Bed and Breakfast (B&B) placements and efficiencies for local authorities. More information about D2 PropCo can be found on their website HERE.</p> <p>D2 PropCo currently operates in South Wales and is highly regarded by Council partners for reducing reliance on costly B&Bs and delivering high quality housing solutions and property management services. They offer residents low-level support and comprehensive housing management, ensuring a secure and structured environment for residents.</p> <p>Several Welsh authorities, including Caerphilly and Torfaen Councils, have successfully partnered with D2 PropCo using tender exemptions,</p>

recognising that no other provider delivers this type of service or cost efficiency.

During our due diligence processes we approached several South Wales Councils for references. Caerphilly Council reports that D2's model is over 50% cheaper than hotel placements, while Torfaen Council highlighted their high standards of property management and extensive support services, all for a fixed fee and at significant benefit.

Financial background checks on D2 PropCo have also been carried out using the Dun & Bradstreet framework which considers financial viability. The report highlighted no concerns and provided reassurance on the organisations financial standing.

The Council urgently needs to reduce the high costs and resource strain caused by B&B placements. Unfortunately, most B&B placements allocated to homeless clients are out of County due to there not being enough available options in Flintshire. This in turn then places households further away from the authority / support options, which may impact on the client's situation and cause added trauma to already vulnerable people.

In light of the challenges around out of county placements, those residents within neighbouring areas of Chester and Denbighshire will be targeted for relocation into properties acquired by D2 PropCo.

The approach used by D2 PropCo to providing housing solutions is to buy property on open market and then invest in the properties to bring them up to a standard comparable to the social housing Welsh Housing Quality Standard. For house shares, CCTV is also installed within communal spaces for residents' safety and welfare monitoring.

Representatives from D2 PropCo attended the Ending Homelessness Board to present the model and Board Members were impressed by the potential for efficiencies, but also the standard of accommodation and operational management practices. Appendix 1 is the presentation provided to the Ending Homelessness Board.

Board members asked D2 PropCo if there was opportunity to target long term empty homes as a route to, not only increasing supply for homeless needs, but also to address the challenge of long-term empty homes in Flintshire, which can cause a blight on the local landscape. This is feasible and discussions with local auction houses and the Council's Empty Homes Officer are underway.

Full contract price and maximisation of potential efficiencies would only be realised upon all 40 bed spaces and 10 family homes being available for occupation.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Detailed below are the cost implications associated with the delivery of this model in Flintshire:</p> <p>Revenue: Appendix 2 outlines the savings that could be achieved over a 5-year period for housing up to 40 single people and 10 families by using D2 PropCo instead of hotels and B&Bs. Homeless accommodation is Council Fund expenditure so the successful delivery of the contract would present significant potential for savings to the Council Fund.</p> <p>Monitoring and reviewing the contract can be delivered through the Housing and Prevention Service's commissioning and reviewing functions which are already well established and resourced.</p> <p>Focussing this housing solution on residents presently housed out of county, will not only relieve tensions with neighbouring Councils, who have their own homelessness pressures, but will also save staff time and fuel costs for support and housing management services outside of Flintshire area.</p> <p>Capital: There are no capital funding implications for the Council. The business model for D2 PropCo is supported by external financiers and D2 PropCo are currently in discussions with the Development Bank of Wales for growth plans. They have funding in place for work within Flintshire already but are also exploring options for delivery in other parts of North Wales.</p> <p>Human Resources: All staff managing the properties will be employed by D2 PropCo. For vulnerable residents who require more than the low-level support offered by D2 PropCo, additional support can be provided through existing Housing Support Grant funded services.</p> <p>Residents housed by D2 PropCo, will continue to be owed homeless duties under Housing Wales Act 2024 and as a result will remain open to the Homeless Team until they exit homelessness. Rent and service charges will be collected by the Homefinder Team and any breaches of occupation conditions will be addressed by Homefinder Officers.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Risk: Potential legal challenge if choosing not to follow the full tendering process exposes the Council to risk around procurement processes</p> <p>Mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal advice sought through Weightmans Solicitors (Appendix 3) • In an effort to satisfy ourselves that there are no other providers who can deliver such a service, a Prior Information Notice was posted on Sell2Wales to try and identify any other potential providers. This notice was to inform the market of the upcoming commissioning intentions and to ascertain any other interest for this contract. No other interest was received. Therefore, we feel a tendering exercise

would not be beneficial as it is likely that only D2 PropCo would bid for the contract.

Risk: Entering a full tender process could delay cost savings by up to six months, worsening the current situation and placing further strain on the Council Fund.

Mitigation:

- After receiving external legal advice and consulting with FCC's Legal Department, a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was put on Sell2Wales for provision of intensive homeless accommodation management services. This notice was to inform the market of the upcoming commissioning intentions and to ascertain any other interest for this contract. As noted above no other interest was received. Therefore, we feel a tendering exercise would not be beneficial as it is likely that only D2 PropCo would bid for the contract.
- Support the exception process following recent outcome of the PIN period if no other providers come forward.

Risk: Renovating properties to provide suitable temporary accommodation can be time-consuming. Delays in the renovation process could result in a shortage of available accommodations, prolonging reliance on costly B&B placements.

Mitigation:

- Implement robust project management practices with clear timelines and milestones for D2 PropCo property renovation projects.
- Ensure regular progress reports and reviews of contract delivery to ensure adherence to schedules.

Risk: an intensive housing management partner for homeless accommodation is engaged but they are only able to secure accommodation without HMO status and this dilutes the potential cost benefit and scale of efficiencies.

Mitigation:

- Develop a range of briefings for elected members and Planning Committee to outline the D2 PropCo model and offer reassurance over robust housing management practices.
- Commit to small scale HMOs to reduce density within homes used for shared housing (max 4 or 5 people sharing).

Risk: Local communities may resist the establishment of temporary accommodations in their areas due to misconceptions about the impact on neighbourhood safety, property values, or local services.

Mitigation:

- Conduct proactive community engagement and communication campaigns to educate the public on the benefits of the D2 PropCo model, addressing concerns and demonstrating how the project will positively impact the community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully select sites for temporary accommodations to minimise disruption and address community concerns. Work with local stakeholders to identify the most suitable locations. Establish channels for ongoing community feedback and ensure that any issues are addressed promptly and transparently. 										
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of people’s needs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive – Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all.	Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of people’s needs.	Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations.	Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services, partner organisations and service users.	Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred.
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Cohesive Wales	No Impact										

	Vibrant Wales	No impact
	Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	After receiving external legal advice and consulting with FCC's Legal Department, a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was put on Sell2Wales for provision of intensive homeless accommodation management services. This notice was to inform the market of the upcoming intentions of Flintshire and to ascertain any other interest for this contract. No other interest was received.
4.02	Consultations have been held with other Local Authorities that are utilising D2 PropCo in the same way to ensure that what has been promised is being delivered as part of our due diligence.
4.03	Advice has been sought from our internal procurement and external legal advice about potential for direct award. Their comments are detailed within the Exceptions Report attached as Appendix 3.
4.04	<p>It will be important to inform local ward members of the service delivery model so Councillors can have confidence in the model. In areas where D2 PropCo already provide homeless accommodation services, it is standard practice for local elected members to be invited to view the properties and meet the D2 PropCo team to offer reassurance over property standards and housing management practices.</p> <p>D2 PropCo and Housing and Prevention Service would be happy to host a Member briefing session to showcase the operating practices for intensive housing management service solutions for homeless accommodation.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Presentation to the Ending Homelessness Board – July 2024</p> <p>Appendix 2 – FCC value for money modelling for D2 PropCo</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Exemption Report - Procurement and Legal advice</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	NA

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Martin Cooil – Housing & Prevention Service Manager Telephone: 07880 423234 E-mail: martin.cooil@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Housing Support Grant This is an early intervention housing related support programme targeted at people in housing need and at increased risk of homelessness. The HSG programme brings the historic funding streams for Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales grants into 1 single funding stream.</p>
8.02	<p>Welsh Housing Quality Standard The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) was introduced by the Welsh Government in 2002 to raise the physical standard and condition of social housing in Wales. It applies to housing associations and local authorities with social rented housing, ensuring that all dwellings are of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.</p>
8.03	<p>Houses of Multiple Occupation House in Multiple Occupation often abbreviated to HMO is a technical term to signify that people of multiple households (i.e. not a single family unit) are living in the same building. Typically, each resident has their own rental contract for the period of occupation.</p>
8.04	<p>Prior Information Notice Prior Information Notices (PIN) are preliminary announcements issued by public sector organization as part of procurement activities. These notices signal upcoming procurement opportunities, acting as an early alert for potential suppliers about future tenders or contracts.</p>
8.05	<p>Dun & Bradstreet Report A Dun & Bradstreet Business Credit Report (D&B) is a report that collects data to determine a company's creditworthiness and financial standing. D&B collects public and private information to produce a comprehensive credit profile. D&B also provides business credit scores called PAYDEX ratings that range from 1 – 100.</p>



“Housing vulnerable people, families and young adults since 2017”

About D2 Propco

D2 is a Welsh-based company that has the primary goal of providing vulnerable adults, young people and those who have encountered hardships a safe, quiet & clean place to live. We purchase and renovate properties to council requirements and implement our supported management service.

At D2 we pride ourselves on being adaptive, proactive, caring and professional. We've been pioneering the way temporary accommodation should be run since 2017, this is why currently 10 Welsh local authorities utilise, respect and value the service we provide.



Example of one of our 5-bedroom temporary accommodation properties



Issues faced by local authorities

Cost

Issue

The costs of temporary accommodation can quickly spiral out of control, the most commonly-faced problem being the high cost and fluctuation of local B&B pricing.

Solution

D2's solution is fixed nightly rates, unlike bed and breakfasts and hotels, our rates remain the same regardless.

Our residents are also secure in residency regardless of social or seasonal events.

Suitability

Issue

Bed and breakfast is no way suitable as temporary accommodation for anyone, especially families, mainly due to the distinct lack of services, facilities and safety.

This is commonly highlighted in the media and local and central government.

Solution

D2 provide "homes" specifically furnished and equipped to ensure our residents are as comfortable as possible during their stay, no matter the length of time.

Maintenance & Management

Issue

Common issues reported in other types of accommodation are ignored for long periods of time, often until the problem worsens.

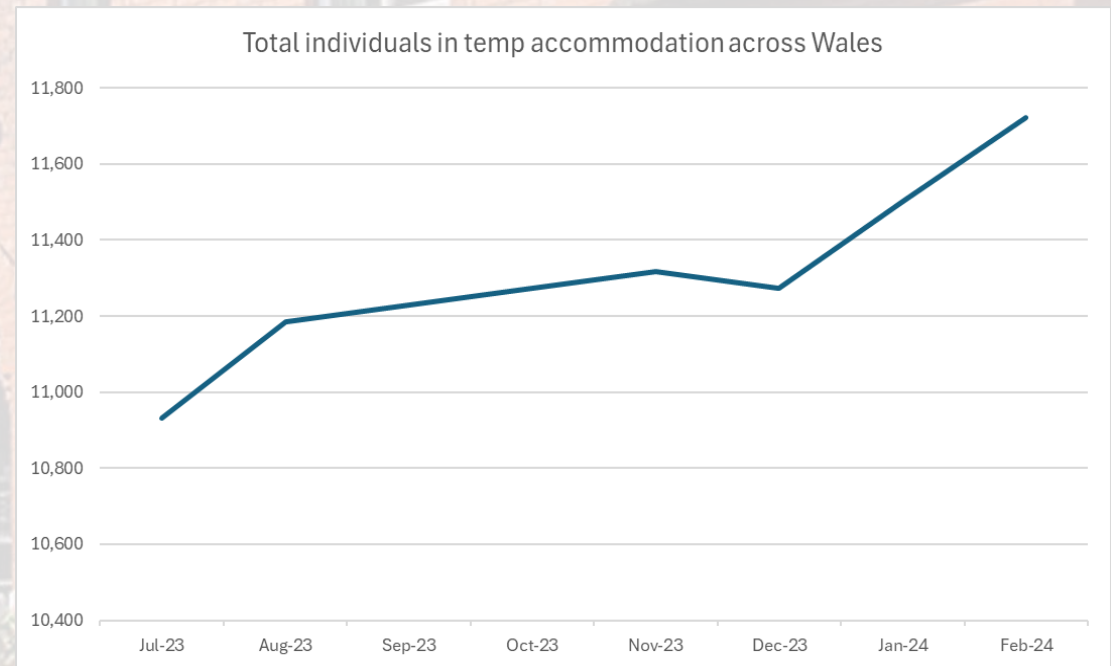
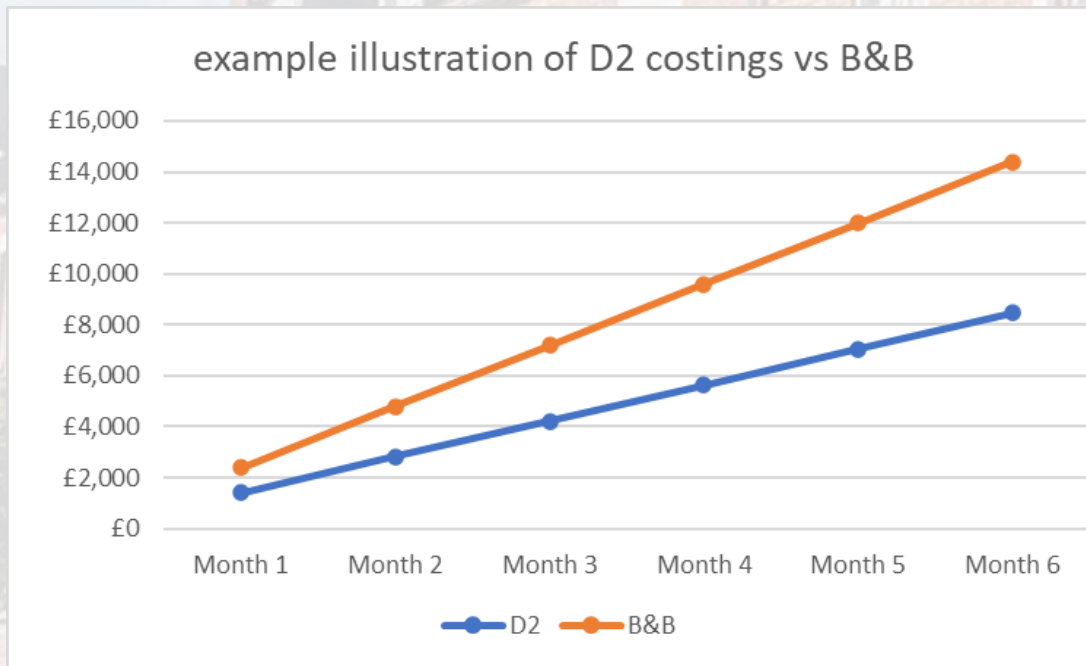
Solution

D2 employ full time property managers and a maintenance team.

We aim to rectify issues within 24 hours, or faster if an emergency repair was needed.

Cost savings

- The average length of occupancy for D2 across the 10 authorities we currently support, for single adults is 20 weeks.
- With an approximate average cost of B&B's being **£80.00** a night, that's **£11,200** per individual.
- With D2 having an average price per night of **£47.00**, that's already a saving of **£4,620 per person** over a 20 week stay, with of course all the other benefits we offer over the alternatives.



Benefits and Testimonial

	D2	B&B & Hotel
Daily property Inspections & tenant welfare checks	✓	✗
Full time property maintenance team	✓	✗
Cost effective & fixed price	✓	✗
24 hour on call trained staff	✓	✗
Emailed daily reports for local authority	✓	✗
Local authority references	✓	✗
Weekly food packs	✓	✗

"Torfaen County Borough Council has been working with D2 for some years now in delivering shared accommodation for the purposes for temporary accommodation under the Housing Wales Act 2014. We have a number of properties with them, all of which are maintained to a high standard, the team are very professional and support residents throughout their stay. The work we do with D2 is a true representation of partnership working."

Lesley Groves

Housing Strategy Manager, Torfaen Council



***D2 service model covers 4 service users – Singles, Male & Female houses, Families (2-8 family members), UASC (18+ move on and 16+ supported living)**





House managers



Maintenance team



Example property



Example property



Appendix 3: D2 PropCo Vfm

Purchasing Enhanced Temporary Housing On Block Booking Arrangement

OVERVIEW

We are currently in discussions with a company based in South Wales but looking to work in North Wales. The company delivers temporary accommodation services for 11 Welsh LAs already.

The model is an intensive housing solution for homeless people and households and offers a 24/7 management and support service.

Contract and procurement advice is being undertaken for a 5 year contract period and due diligence has proven that the company and service comes highly recommended by Welsh Council peers.

The company buy up and refurbish properties and will target areas at request and also focus on long term empty homes to bring them back into use.

There are approx 100 households placed in out of county hotels and the focus of this housing solution will be on bringing people back in county

	Year 1	Inflation estimate	Year 2	Inflation estimate	Year 3	Inflation estimate	Year 4	Inflation estimate	Year 5	Over 5 year lease
40 X Single bed accommodation										
Annual Charge - £50 pn x 40 Single units	730,000	3.0%	751,900	3.0%	774,457	3.0%	797,691	3.0%	821,621	3,875,669
Annual Charge - £100 pn x 5 x 2 bed House	182,500	3.0%	187,975	3.0%	193,614	3.0%	199,423	3.0%	205,405	968,917
Annual Charge - £100 pn x 3 x 3 bed House	109,500	3.0%	112,785	3.0%	116,169	3.0%	119,654	3.0%	123,243	581,350
Annual Charge - £100 pn x 2 x 4 bed House	73,000	3.0%	75,190	3.0%	77,446	3.0%	79,769	3.0%	82,162	387,567
	1,095,000		1,127,850		1,161,686		1,196,536		1,232,432	5,813,504
HB Income - Assumed 70% collection rate	- 120,816		- 120,816		- 120,816		- 120,816		- 120,816	- 604,080
Net Cost to FCC	974,184		1,007,034		1,040,869		1,075,720		1,111,616	5,209,424
Net Cost to Council	1,825,000	5.0%	1,916,250	5.0%	2,012,063	5.0%	2,112,666	5.0%	2,218,299	10,084,277
Potential Saving to Council	- 850,816		- 909,216		- 971,193		- 1,036,946		- 1,106,683	- 4,874,853

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 19th November, 2024
Report Subject	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2024/25 (Month 6)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Report Author	Corporate Finance Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This monthly report provides the latest detailed overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account and presents the position, based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 6.

The projected year end position is as follows:

Council Fund

- An operating deficit of £5.809m (this reduces to £2.809m with the utilisation of the budget risk reserve of £3m agreed when setting the budget) which is a favourable movement of £0.153m from the deficit figure reported at Month 5.
- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31 March 2025 of £1.349m (after taking account of previously approved allocations including those approved as part of the 2024/25 Budget and a contribution of £1.026m from Earmarked Reserves).

This significant projected overspend (and impact on our available reserves) continues to be of major concern and needs to continue to be addressed urgently in an attempt to bring expenditure back in line with the approved budget. Based on current projections the council still has a low level of contingency reserve which it uses to deal with any significant in-year unforeseen events. It should also be noted that there are still a number of risks identified in the report that could further worsen the Council's financial position.

As required by Financial Procedure Rules - Action Plans have been compiled by Social Services, Streetscene and Transportation and Housing and Communities which detail the measures being put in place to improve the position by the end of the financial year. These are attached as Appendix 6.

Our ability to mitigate pressures and risks during the financial year will again predominantly centre on review and challenge of non-essential spend and maximising income streams and grant funding. The moratorium on non-contractually committed spend and vacancy management process put in place during 2023/24 continues throughout 2024/25 and is being applied with rigour. Appendix 2 details the split of the moratorium savings to date.

In addition to the above a review of our Earmarked Reserves has been undertaken to identify any un-committed areas that can be released to improve our overall position. As part of the further work completed on this, it has resulted in a further £0.859m being identified to release to the contingency reserve, which is in addition to the £0.167m identified at Month 5 (para 1.23 refers).

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in-year revenue expenditure is forecast to be £0.222m lower than budget.
- A projected closing balance as of 31 March, 2025 of £4.674m

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.00	To note 1) the report and the estimated financial impact on the 2024/25 budget and 2) the measures being considered for inclusion towards improving the financial position by the end of the financial year.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25
1.01	<p>This monthly report provides the latest detailed overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2024/25 financial year for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account and presents the position, based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 6.</p> <p>The projected year end position is as follows:</p> <p>Council Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An operating deficit of £5.809m (this reduces to £2.809m with the utilisation of the budget risk reserve of £3m agreed when setting the budget) which is a favourable movement of £0.153m from the deficit figure reported at Month 5.

- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31 March 2025 of £1.349m (after taking account of previously approved allocations including those approved as part of the 2024/25 Budget and a contribution of £1.026m from Earmarked Reserves).

Housing Revenue Account

- Net in-year revenue expenditure is forecast to be £0.222m lower than budget.
- A projected closing balance as of 31 March, 2025 of £4.674m

1.02

Table 1. Projected Position by Portfolio

The table below shows the projected position by portfolio:

Portfolio/Service Area	Approved Budget	Projected Outturn	In-Year Over / (Under) spend
	£m	£m	£m
Social Services	92.047	95.657	3.610
Out of County Placements	19.299	20.717	1.418
Education & Youth (Non Schools)	10.148	10.297	0.149
Schools	117.302	117.136	(0.166)
Streetscene & Transportation	42.695	44.548	1.853
Planning Env & Economy	7.682	7.727	0.045
People & Resources	4.290	4.191	(0.099)
Governance	12.066	11.753	(0.313)
Assets	11.403	11.414	0.010
Housing & Communities	18.161	20.606	2.445
Chief Executive	1.641	1.625	(0.016)
Central & Corporate Finance	31.372	28.246	(3.126)
Total	368.106	373.915	5.809
Utilisation of Budget Risk Reserve			(3.000)
Total – Revised Overspend			2.809

1.03

Appendix 1 shows all monthly movements of £0.025m since Month 5 with relevant narratives. In addition, the reasons for the projected variances are summarised within Appendix 2 and shows the detail of all variances over £0.050m and a summary of minor variances for each portfolio.

	Significant Movements at Month 6
1.04	<p>Social Services £0.908m</p> <p><u>Older Peoples Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localities – £0.562m. Demand levels on older people care services are leading to increased costs. This includes pressures from ensuring safe hospital discharges, this pressure will likely increase during winter. The residential care service cost has increased by £0.305m and the domiciliary service increased by £0.248m. Minor variances account for the balance. <p><u>Adults of Working Age</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and Regulated Services £0.063m. This is due to the net increase to PDSI and Learning Disabilities care packages. Children to Adult Transition Services £0.036m. This is from an increase to care packages for young people transferring from Childrens Services to Adult Social Care. Residential Placements (£0.085m). This is from a reduction in the care package costs for clients with mental ill health. <p><u>Children’s Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential Placements £0.152m. A new cohort of Flintshire employed care staff posts have been recruited. Agency costs have not decreased as much as hoped as some cover delivered through care agencies is still currently required to meet care needs. Professional Support £0.232m. New social worker agency requirements in the First Contact and Permanency teams are costing an additional £0.100m. Seven additional unaccompanied asylum-seeking children have reached, or very soon will reach, the age of 18. There will be an additional cost of £0.160m due to this. Some minor cost reductions have netted against these costs. <p><u>Safeguarding and Commissioning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Systems and Financial Assessments (£0.027m). Some software costs have transferred to the Performance and Information team. Charging Policy Income (£0.050m). This is an increase in the anticipated income received through contributions to care. Safeguarding Unit (£0.034m). This is due to additional grant income. Performance and Information £0.029m. This is due to software costs transferred across from the Business Systems and Financial Assessments team. <p>There is a net £0.030m in minor movement across the portfolio.</p>
1.05	Out of County Placements £0.047m

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services (£0.030m) – Various new and ending placements, plus rate adjustments to projected expenditure based on actual data. • Education & Youth £0.077m – A number of new Education Day placements have been added to the caseload causing an adverse movement.
1.06	<p>Streetscene & Transportation (£0.171m)</p> <p>The positive movement is as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation £0.054m – additional transport requests in School Transport and Social Services Transport. • Regulatory Services (£0.227m) – Improved tendering process and vacancy savings. <p>Minor movements across the Portfolio account for the remainder of £0.002m.</p>
1.07	<p>Housing and Communities – (£0.117m)</p> <p>Housing Solutions - A positive movement of (£0.117m) as a result of a reduction in the number of placements in Temporary Housing Accommodation in September.</p>
1.08	<p>Central and Corporate Finance (£0.870m)</p> <p>The projection on the Central Loans and Investment Account (CLIA) for the 2024/25 indicates a further underspend of (£0.100m) as the trend from previous years continues with reduced short-term borrowing costs and income from investments in line with current bank interest rates. The 2024 Pay Award has now been agreed which has resulted in costs being £0.765m less than budgeted for in 2024/25.</p>
1.09	<p>Cumulative minor variances across the Council of £0.050m account for the remainder of the total monthly movement.</p>
1.10	<p>Tracking of In-Year Risks and Emerging Issues</p> <p>Members were made aware when setting the budget that there were a number of open risks that would need to be kept under close review. An update on these is provided below.</p>
1.11	<p>Council Tax Income</p> <p>Council Tax collections are stable and on track. As at the end of September, in-year collections were 56.61%, compared to 56.60% in the previous financial year.</p>
1.12	<p>Pay Awards (Teacher and Non-Teacher)</p> <p><u>Teachers Pay</u></p>

	<p>The 2024/25 budget provides additional funding for a 5% pay award from September 2024. The Independent Wales Pay Review Body (IWPRB) had recommended a 4.3% increase, but Welsh Government increased this to 5.5% due to the “no detriment” principle, which means that teacher pay rises in Wales keep pace with those in England. In September 2024, the First Minister accepted the recommendations of the Independent Pay Review bodies for 2024-25.</p> <p>It is anticipated that additional funding will be received from Welsh Government to meet the in-year shortfall, but this is yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>Confirmation is still awaited on funding for additional Teacher Pay employer pension costs and negotiations are ongoing between UK Government and Welsh Government – no provision was included in the budget. There is a risk that the costs may not be met in full.</p> <p><u>NJC (Green Book)</u></p> <p>The pay offer for NJC (Green Book) employees for the current year (2024/25) was agreed nationally on 22 October 2024 covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>The pay award comprises £1,290 (pro-rata for part-time employees) on all NJC points 2 to 43 inclusive and 2.50% on all pay points above the maximum of the national pay spine (in Flintshire this relates to SCP 45-61).</p> <p>As a result, there is an in-year benefit to the budget of £0.765m and the Pay Award will be disseminated across service pay budgets in Month 7.</p> <p><u>Pay Modelling</u></p> <p>No figures are currently included for any impact of the pay modelling review which is intended to help address the problems being encountered by the Council in the recruitment and retention of staff.</p>
1.13	<p>Out of County Placements</p> <p>As in previous years there is potential for significant numbers of new placements. The service areas within this pooled budget continue to do everything possible to manage these risks and additional investment has already been made to further develop in-house provision to help to mitigate against such financial pressures.</p>
1.14	<p>Waste Recycling Infraction Charge</p> <p>The Council did not meet the statutory minimum target, (64%) in 2021/22, for the percentage of municipal waste which must be recycled, prepared for re-use and composted, as specified in Section 3 of the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010. Welsh Government (WG) can therefore take steps to impose a penalty on the Council by way of an infraction fine. A potential penalty of up to £0.663m has previously been confirmed.</p>

	<p>The statutory recycling targets were also not achieved in 2022/23 and 2023/24, which means that further infraction fines of £0.356m and £0.184m respectively could be levied. Therefore, the financial risk across all 3 financial years currently totals £1.203m.</p> <p>WG officials have now provided their advice for the Minister on the 2021/22 Infraction Charges. We are hopeful we will know the outcome of this in the coming weeks. However, they are yet to start considering the 2022/23 or 2023/24 Infraction Charges so further updates will be provided as further details become available.</p>
1.15	<p>Homelessness</p> <p>There is a significant and growing demand within the Homelessness service. The Council has a statutory duty to provide suitable temporary accommodation for Homeless persons and families who meet the Welsh Government eligibility criteria which are less stringent than in England. The growth in demand commenced in the second half of 2022/23 and has accelerated markedly since the start of 2023.</p> <p>The Council will continue to lobby Welsh Government via the WLGA in conjunction with other Welsh LA's who are experiencing these pressures to seek additional financial support.</p> <p>WG are currently providing support via the No One Left Out grant for which the 2024/25 allocation is currently £0.423m and a grant for £0.112m to assist with the early release of prisoners. One favourable impact of the increase in costs and demand is the ability to recover additional Housing Benefit income over and above the amount budgeted which is currently helping to offset the projected overspend by £0.573m.</p>
1.16	<p>Storm Ashley</p> <p>The County was hit by severe flooding in October, together with storm damage from high winds. The response and subsequent clean-up from this are currently being assessed and any financial implications will be reported in future reports.</p>
1.17	<p>Other Tracked Risks</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of risks being tracked which may be subject to change and these are summarised below.</p>
1.18	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Impact</p> <p>Cabinet considered the latest projection for the MTFS in September which showed a revised budget requirement of £38.420m.</p> <p>Options for solutions to meet the budget requirement are currently being considered and a further update is scheduled for December. The Council</p>

	<p>is expecting to be advised of its Welsh Local Government Provisional Settlement on 11 December.</p> <p>All Portfolios consider their financial position, the risks within their service and the impacts on the Medium Term on a monthly basis as part of their Portfolio Management Team meetings.</p>
1.19	<p>Benefits</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) – Based on current demand, costs are currently projected to be £0.767m over budget, although this will be monitored closely throughout the year due to the potential for growth. There is continued high demand across the whole of the Benefits service which is expected to remain the case for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Other pressures within the service such as meeting income targets for recovery of overpayments and related bad debt provision increases are also expected to remain. The £0.767m can be fully mitigated by use of the Reserve previously set aside.</p>
1.20	<p>Harpur Trust vs Brazel Case</p> <p>The potential financial impacts are still being determined in response to the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) decision in the case of Harpur Trust v Brazel. The Supreme Court upheld the EAT judgment in the Brazel case in July 2022 which impacts on the calculation of holiday pay entitlements for staff who work for part of the year (i.e., term time). An approved carry forward from 2022/23 for £0.254m has provided some funding towards these costs. There are currently 319 live employment tribunal claims in respect of this. We are awaiting feedback from the preliminary hearing that was scheduled for 18th October 2024. It is hopeful that we will get to a position where we could seek to settle on ‘without prejudice basis’.</p>
1.21	<p>Achievement of Planned In-Year Efficiencies</p> <p>The 2024/25 budget contains £14.921m of specific efficiencies which are tracked and monitored throughout the year. The Council aims to achieve a 95% rate in 2024/25 as reflected in the MTFS KPI’s and fully achieved all efficiencies in the previous financial year.</p> <p>It is projected that 96% of efficiencies will be achieved in 2024/25 and further details can be seen in Appendix 3.</p>
1.22	<p>Unearmarked Reserves</p> <p>The final level of Council Fund Contingency Reserve brought forward into 2024/25 was £2.972m as detailed in the 2023/24 outturn report (subject to audit) elsewhere on this agenda.</p> <p>The Base Level Reserves have been increased to £8.985m by using the remaining balance of £3.216m of the COVID-19 Hardship Fund Reserve from 2023/24.</p>

Taking the current projected final outturn and Earmarked Reserves review into account, the contingency reserve available is £1.349m.

As required by Financial Procedure Rules all Portfolios will be expected to identify solutions in-year to mitigate the risks and potential overspends identified in the report.

1.23

Earmarked Reserves

The initial review of earmarked reserves undertaken at Month 5 identified an amount of £0.167m for release to the Contingency Reserve.

Further work during Month 6 included a detailed review of service balances has resulted in an additional £0.859m being identified for release. The overall total therefore being released to the Contingency Reserve is £1.026m.

The table below provides a summary of earmarked reserves as at 1 April 2024 and an estimate of projected balances as at the end of the current financial year.

Reserve Type	Balance as at 01/04/24	Balance as at Month 6	Release to General Reserve	Estimated Balance as at 31/03/25
Service Balances	3,326,381	3,116,381	467,247	697,449
Workforce Costs	843,190	455,045	0	455,045
Investment in Organisational Change	972,142	972,142	0	571,086
County Elections	374,693	374,693	0	0
Warm Homes Admin Fee	294,835	294,835	0	192,156
Design Fees	238,684	238,684	38,684	0
Severe Weather	250,000	250,000	0	0
Car Parking	88,059	88,059	0	0
Insurance Reserves	2,382,509	2,382,509	0	2,575,000
School HWB ICT Replacement	789,670	789,670	0	1,052,893
Flintshire Trainees	321,614	321,614	0	321,614
Rent Income Shortfall	131,118	131,118	0	131,118
Plas Derwen Wave 4	5,339	5,339	0	7,119
Customer Service Strategy	7,468	7,468	0	0
Supervision Fees	48,798	48,798	48,798	0
IT COVID Enquiry	142,301	142,301	100,000	42,301
IT Infrastructure HWB	139,442	139,442	55,310	0
Schools Intervention Reserve	51,251	45,008	0	212,490
Organisational Change/ADM	600,560	810,560	0	360,000
NWEAB	690,685	690,685	0	0
Solar Farms	180,192	180,192	0	0

Employment Claims	109,846	109,846	0	0
Community Benefit Fund NWRWTP	913,925	913,925	0	863,925
Total Balances	9,576,321	9,391,933	242,792	6,784,747
Schools Balances	3,336,011	3,336,011	0	-2,052,149
Grants & Contributions	6,768,522	3,897,899	315,576	1,486,956
TOTAL	23,007,236	19,742,224	1,025,615	6,917,003

Based on latest information school balances are projected to move into an overall net deficit position. However, this will be subject to change and dependent on a number of factors in the remainder of the year.

1.24

Summary and Conclusion

The significant projected overspend (and impact on our available reserves) continues to be of major concern and needs to be addressed urgently in an attempt to bring expenditure back in line with the approved budget. Based on current projections the Council still only has a contingency reserve of £1.349m available to deal with any significant in-year unforeseen events. It should also be noted that there are also still a number of risks identified in the report that could further worsen the Council's financial position.

As required by Financial Procedure Rules - Action Plans have been compiled by Social Services, Streetscene and Transportation and Housing and Communities which detail the measures being put in place to improve the position by the end of the financial year (Appendix 6).

Our ability to mitigate pressures and risks during the financial year will again predominantly centre on review and challenge of non-essential spend and maximising income streams and grant funding. The moratorium on non-contractually committed spend and vacancy management process put in place during 2023/24 will continue throughout 2024/25 and needs to be applied with rigour.

1.25

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The 2023/24 Outturn Report to Cabinet on 23rd July 2024 showed an un-earmarked closing balance at the end of 2023/24 of £3.512m and a closing balance of earmarked reserves of £2.471m.

1.26

The 2024/25 budget for the HRA is £42.166m which includes a movement of (£0.193m) from reserves.

1.27

The projected outturn for the HRA shows an in-year revenue expenditure (£0.222m) lower than budget with a closing un-earmarked balance as at 31st March, 2025 of £4.674m.

The favourable movement of (£0.111m) from Month 5 is as follows:

- Income (£0.030m) movement on the Bad Debt Provision and movement on Voids
- Estate Management (£0.058m) movement in salaries and agency costs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord Service Costs (£0.035m) movement in salaries and minor variances <p>Minor variances account for the remainder £0.012m.</p>
1.28	The budget contribution towards capital expenditure (CERA) is £14.467m.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	As set out within the report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The financial impacts of the emergency as set out in the report are a combination of actual costs and losses to date and estimates of costs and losses for the future. There is the possibility that the estimates will change over time. The budget will be monitored closely, and mitigation actions taken wherever possible.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None specific.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1: Council Fund – Movement in Variances from Month 5</p> <p>Appendix 2: Council Fund – Budget Variances</p> <p>Appendix 3: Council Fund – Programme of Efficiencies</p> <p>Appendix 4: Council Fund – Movement on Un-earmarked Reserves</p> <p>Appendix 5: Housing Revenue Account Variances</p> <p>Appendix 6: Portfolio Action Plans</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Various budget records.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Dave Ledsham Strategic Finance Manager</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704503</p> <p>E-mail: dave.ledsham@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Budget: a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.</p> <p>Council Fund: the fund to which all the Council's revenue expenditure is charged.</p> <p>Financial Year: the period of twelve months commencing on 1 April.</p> <p>Housing Revenue Account: The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a local authority account showing current income and expenditure on housing services related to its own housing stock. The account is separate from the Council Fund and trading accounts and is funded primarily from rents and government subsidy.</p> <p>Projected Outturn: projection of the expenditure to the end of the financial year, made on the basis of actual expenditure incurred to date.</p> <p>Regional Integration Fund (RIF): Funding provided by Welsh Government to encourage integrated working between local authorities, health and housing.</p> <p>Reserves: these are balances in hand that have accumulated over previous years and are held for defined (earmarked reserves) and general (general reserves) purposes. Councils are required to regularly review the level and purpose of their reserves and to take account of the advice of the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>Revenue: a term used to describe the day-to-day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.</p> <p>Variance: difference between latest budget and actual income or expenditure. Can be to date if reflecting the current or most up to date position or projected, for example projected to the end of the month or financial year.</p> <p>Virement: the transfer of budget provision from one budget head to another. Virement decisions apply to both revenue and capital expenditure heads, and between expenditure and income, and may include transfers from contingency provisions. Virements may not however be approved between capital and revenue budget heads.</p>

Budget Monitoring Report
Council Fund Variances

MONTH 6 - SUMMARY

Service	Movement between Periods (£m)	Narrative for Movement between Periods greater than £0.025m
Social Services		
Older People		
Localities	0.562	Demands on older peoples services are leading to increased costs. This includes pressures from ensuring safe hospital discharges and this pressure will likely increase during winter. The residential care service has increased by £0.305m and the domiciliary service increased by £0.248m.
Minor Variances	0.035	
Adults of Working Age		
Resources & Regulated Services	0.063	This is due to the net increase to PDSI and Learning Disabilities care packages
Children to Adult Transition Services	0.036	This is from increase to care packages for young people transferring from Childrens Services to Adult Social Care.
Residential Placements	-0.085	This is from a reduction in care package costs for people with mental ill health.
Minor Variances	-0.010	
Children's Services		
Residential Placements	0.152	A new cohort of Flintshire employed care workers has been recruited. Agency costs have not decreased as much as hoped as some cover delivered through care agencies is still currently required.
Professional Support	0.232	New social worker agency requirements in the First Contact and Permanency teams are costing an additional £0.100m. Seven additional unaccompanied asylum seeking children have reached, or very soon will reach, the age of 18. There will be an additional cost of £0.160m due to this. Some minor cost reductions have netted against these costs.
Minor Variances	-0.008	
Safeguarding & Commissioning		
Business Systems & Financial Assessments	-0.027	Some software costs have transferred to the Performance and Information team.
Charging Policy income	-0.050	This is an increase to the anticipated income recieved through contributions to care.
Safeguarding Unit	-0.034	This is due to additional grant income.
Performance and Information	0.029	This is due to software costs transferred across from the Business Systems and Financial Assessments team.
Minor Variances	0.012	
Total Social Services (excl Out of County)	0.908	
Out of County		
Children's Services	-0.031	Various new and ending placements, rate adjustments and other adjustments to projected expenditure based on actual data has caused a £0.031m favourable movement in comparison to Month 5.
Education & Youth	0.077	A number of new Education Day placements have been added to the caseload, causing a £0.077m adverse movement in comparison to Month 5.
Total Out of County	0.047	
Education & Youth		
Minor Variances	0.012	
Total Education & Youth	0.012	
Schools	0.016	
Streetscene & Transportation		
Transportation	0.054	Additional request in School Transport and Social Services Transport.
Regulatory Services	-0.227	Improved tendering process and vacancy savings.
Other Minor Variances	0.002	
Total Streetscene & Transportation	-0.171	
Planning, Environment & Economy		
Minor Variances	0.004	
Total Planning & Environment	0.004	
People & Resources		
HR & OD	0.011	
Corporate Finance	-0.010	
Total People & Resources	0.001	

Service	Movement between Periods (£m)	Narrative for Movement between Periods greater than £0.025m
Governance		
Procurement	0.026	Movement relates to a potential extra £25k for recruitment. This is likely to increase further but wont know until September
Minor Variances	-0.021	
Total Governance	0.006	
Assets		
Minor Variances	0.011	
Total Assets	0.011	
Housing and Community		
Housing Solutions	-0.117	A positive movement of (£0.117m) as a result of a reduction in the number of placements in Temporary Housing Accommodation in September
Total Housing and Community	-0.117	
Chief Executive's	0.000	
Central & Corporate Finance	-0.870	At Month 6 a further review of the CLIA account results in a further £0.100m favourable movement. The 2024 Pay Award has now been agreed at a level that has resulted in a favourable movement of £0.765m compared to what was originally budgeted for.
Grand Total	-0.153	

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Social Services							
Older People							
Localities	23.879	25.499	1.619	1.057		Residential care costs for older people are projecting an overspend of £0.908m due to demands for this service. This amount is net of client income from property recharges and reimbursements for deputyships and assets held in trust. Homecare is £0.639m overspent and due to the high demand. Locality workforce and professional support budgets are overspent by £0.054m and day care is overspent by £0.019m. There is a significant risk that costs will continue to escalate as pressure to minimise stays in hospitals continues. This risk will increase over the winter period.	To mitigate expected escalating costs a number of policies are being reviewed and amended to maximise financial benefit and reduce costs.
Resources & Regulated Services	9.999	9.909	-0.091	-0.110		In-house residential care is projecting an overspend by £0.338m due to employee and running costs. Homecare is predicted to underspend by £0.444m, although demand is high it cannot be met due to recruitment challenges. The Extra Care budget is expected to overspend by £0.126m from employee costs and day care will underspend by £0.111m.	
Minor Variances	1.511	1.529	0.018	0.002			
Adults of Working Age							
Resources & Regulated Services	36.005	36.173	0.167	0.105		The PDSI (physical disability and sensory impaired) budget is reporting a £0.080m underspend due to costs of care packages. The in-house supported living service is £0.394m overspent due to care hours and agency costs. The care package costs for independently provided care for learning disability services is £0.033m underspent. The learning disability day and work provision service is £0.114m underspent.	Any requests for increases to care packages are reviewed by a panel. Current care packages are being reviewed to ensure the right level of care is provided.
Children to Adult Transition Services	0.848	1.057	0.209	0.173		This is the costs of care packages for young adults transferring from Childrens Services to Adult Social Care services. Care packages are usually new within the financial year and initial estimates are made around the costs. When care packages are agreed there can be variances against the initial estimate. This year some confirmed care packages have already been confirmed as higher than the initial estimate.	
Professional and Administrative Support	0.458	0.358	-0.100	-0.089	-0.089	The underspend is due to in-year staff vacancies.	
Supporting People	-0.386	-0.487	-0.101	-0.101	-0.100	Additional Supporting People funding is expected this year.	
Minor Variances	7.012	6.906	-0.106	-0.022		Positive movement of -£0.085m in Residential Placements at Month 6. A reduction in care package costs for people with mental ill health.	
Children's Services							
Family Support	0.412	0.461	0.050	0.050		This is a demand led service and demand is currently high	

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Legal & Third Party	0.283	0.744	0.460	0.471		Legal costs are overspent by £0.234m due to the number of cases going through the courts and some use of external professionals. Client support and Section 17 costs are overspent by £0.143m and Direct Payment are overspent by £0.083m.	
Professional Support	6.228	7.715	1.487	1.255		To support adequate levels of child protection the established structure needs to be at a sufficient level to meet mandatory safeguarding standards. Vacancies try to be minimised where possible and temporary posts are sometimes required to be able to continue meeting the challenges and demands of Childrens Services. Two managed agency teams were contracted to support the service, one of these teams has ceased and the other is planned to finish later this year. The associated costs are £0.939m. This is being partially mitigated from underspends, mostly vacancies, of £0.211m. The Leaving Care budget which supports young people who are Looked After Children, is overspending by £0.563m due to increased care leavers which includes unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). The costs of some external contracts are £0.074m overspent due to inflationary pressures. Costs of Direct Payments to provide support to children with disabilities are £0.122m overspent due to demand.	Alternative accomodation for UASC is being explored and cheaper rates have been negotiated with a current accomodation provider.
Minor Variances	5.721	5.762	0.040	-0.115			
Safeguarding & Commissioning							
Charging Policy income	-2.650	-2.790	-0.140	-0.090		This is income from service users who financially contribute to their care.	
Vacancy Management	-0.893	-0.828	0.066	0.046		This budget holds in-year portfolio efficiencies achieved through vacancy savings and grant maximisation. There is a target set for these efficiencies, this target will currently not be achieved this financial year.	
Minor Variances	3.619	3.650	0.031	0.071			
Total Social Services (excl Out of County)	92.047	95.657	3.610	2.702	-0.189		
Out of County							
Children's Services	13.795	15.035	1.240	1.270		Detailed projections show a significant overspend within the Out of County pooled budget as a result of the following:- an increase in the number of new placements agreed in-year and fees incurred to external providers. The overspend includes no further contingency and is projected based on current caseload only.	
Education & Youth	5.504	5.682	0.178	0.101			
Total Out of County	19.299	20.717	1.418	1.372			
Education & Youth							

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Inclusion & Progression	5.650	5.907	0.257	0.260		Variance due to an in year pressure of £0.152m against the Home Tuition service due to an increase in pupil numbers accessing Creative In Excellence (an external education provider) We have used £0.100m from the ALN grant to mitigate some of this pressure - previously £0.252m. The remaining variance of £0.106m relates to Canolfan Enfys. This is due to an increase in staff as a response to an increase in pupil numbers. There has also been a reliance on agency staff due to long term sickness.	
Integrated Youth Provision	0.918	0.859	-0.059	-0.053	-0.055	Recruitment delays, enabling grant utilisation against trainee costs. Income generation increases on room hire.	
School Planning & Provision	0.625	0.550	-0.075	-0.060	-0.075	Reduction in expenditure from transition budget due to delayed Capital Projects and reduction in the number of mobile classrooms	
Minor Variances	2.956	2.982	0.026	-0.010	-0.010		
Total Education & Youth	10.148	10.297	0.149	0.137	-0.140		
Schools	117.302	117.136	-0.166	-0.182		The variance primarily relates to the following:- Free School Meals (FSM) budget - (£0.098m) underspend, due to meal take up and levels of eligible FSM children. The Unallocated budget containing Added Years and Copyright Licenses indicates a (£0.124m) underspend. The above underspends are offset by a number of insignificant adverse variances within Primary and Secondary non-delegated, totalling £0.055m.	
Streetscene & Transportation							
Service Delivery	8.617	9.617	1.000	1.000		Significant variance of £0.400m in highways maintenance costs, £0.200m Alltami depot running costs increased. Method Statements have been submitted for both budget pressures above. Budget efficiency pressure of £0.400m in total related to HRCs (charging and trade waste) implementation date later than initially planned. Income from Workplace Recycling Regs legislative changes lower than anticipated.	
Highways Network	11.624	12.093	0.470	0.467		Winter Maintenance costs of £0.300m are anticipated to escalate for the provision of equipment, labour and salt, which have seen significant year-on-year inflation, plus fleet hire costs for gritters are higher than the previous purchased model. We continue to investigate options to reduce procurement costs and ensure appropriate income/funding in preparation for the start of the season. Street-lighting energy cost of £0.100m forecasts continue to rise, and this has been accommodated in budget monitoring.	A report was presented to Cabinet in September 2024, which approved the delivery of efficiencies relating to decision making for marginal forecasts for Winter Maintenance.

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Transportation	11.023	11.237	0.214	0.161	-0.120	School Transport significant variances due to transport contractor costs increasing driven by inflation and cost of living (fuel, energy, insurance, wages). Additional routes for increased demand for ALN transport is also having an impact. Social Services Transport costs increased due to recent procurement and additional adult social services and childrens services requests for transport, which has been raised with the client portfolio. Bereavement Services reporting a pressure of £0.057m, plus public health burials increasing year on year.	
Regulatory Services	11.432	11.601	0.169	0.396	-0.052	The overspend variance is mainly due to increasing volumes of residual waste being collected along with gate fee indexation inflation, increased tipping and gate fees for some recyclable waste, together with the reduction in income levels for both recyclable materials and electricity generation from gas and solar at the former landfill sites.	
Total Streetscene & Transportation	42.695	44.548	1.853	2.024	-0.172		
Planning, Environment & Economy							
Business	2.327	2.153	-0.175	-0.171	-0.171	Part year vacancy savings, the recruitment process has commenced	
Development	-0.200	0.008	0.208	0.209		Fee income estimated shortfall in Building Control, Land Charges and Planning	
Access	1.591	1.720	0.129	0.127		Commitment for the cost Ash Die Back tree works £0.120m projected to March, 2025	
Management & Strategy	1.897	1.799	-0.098	-0.096	-0.096	Part year vacancy savings	
Minor Variances	2.066	2.047	-0.020	-0.028	-0.015		
Total Planning & Environment	7.682	7.727	0.045	0.040	-0.282		
People & Resources							
HR & OD	2.211	2.276	0.065	0.054		Historic Business Efficiency for DBS Checks unrealised together with additional legal fees paid.	
Corporate Finance	2.080	1.915	-0.164	-0.154	-0.104	Part year vacancy savings	
Total People & Resources	4.290	4.191	-0.099	-0.100	-0.104		
Governance							
Customer Services	0.985	0.869	-0.116	-0.116	-0.030	Part year vacancy savings and fee income over recovery in Registrars	
Revenues	0.371	0.212	-0.159	-0.159		Potential Surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund	
Minor Variances	10.710	10.672	-0.039	-0.045	-0.040		
Total Governance	12.066	11.753	-0.313	-0.319	-0.070		
Assets							
Minor Variances	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000			
Total Assets	11.403	11.414	0.010	-0.000			
Housing and Community							

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Housing Solutions	4.309	6.755	2.446	2.563		Anticipated £2.446m overspend for the service. Temporary accommodation costs anticipated to be £3.288m overspent, offset with an increase in the HB Income collected (£0.573m) and NOLO Grant of (£0.423m).	
Minor Variances	13.852	13.851	-0.002	-0.002			
Total Housing and Community	18.161	20.606	2.445	2.562			
Chief Executive's	1.641	1.625	-0.016	-0.016	-0.016		
Central & Corporate Finance	31.372	28.246	-3.126	-2.257		The initial projection on the Central Loans and Investment Account (CLIA) for the 2024/25 indicates an underspend of (£0.250m) as the trend from previous years continues with reduced short term borrowing costs and income from investments in line with current bank interest rates. This is mitigated by potential shortfalls in Corporate windfall income targets based on actual receipts to date. As a result of the refinancing of Enfinium Group Ltd into Enfinium Parc Adfer Ltd, there is a gainshare benefit to all partner authorities within the North Wales Residual Waste Partnership. Flintshires estimated gainshare from this undertaking is £2.108m, net of fees. A commitment has been included to fund the on-going clean-up from the impact of fly tipping at land adjacent to the Riverside Site, Queensferry at a current cost of £0.091m that includes the machine hire, transport and manpower related to the necessary works. At Month 5 following a review on the CLIA a further £0.120m favourable variance has been identified. At Month 6 a further £0.100m favourable variance has been identified. The 2024 Pay Award has now been agreed at a level that has resulted in a favourable movement of £0.765m compared to what was originally budgeted for.	
Grand Total	368.106	373.915	5.809	5.963	-0.973		

2024/25 Efficiencies Outturn Tracker - Month 6

Efficiency Description		Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
			2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m				
Portfolio							R		
Corporate							A		
Actuarial Review	Portfolio budget reductions	Gary Ferguson	4.000	4.000	0.000	C	G		
Central Loans and Investment Account	Increased income/reduced borrowing	Chris Taylor	1.000	1.000	0.000	C	G		
Additional Income from Fastrack Project	Portfolios	Debbie Griffiths	0.018	0.018	0.000	O	G		
Total Corporate Services			5.018	5.018	0.000				
Assets									
Strategic Funding		Damian Hughes	0.028	0.028	0.000	O	G		
Rent Review - Commercial Assets		Damian Hughes	0.021	0.021	0.000	O	G		
Valuation & Estates	Restructure	Damian Hughes	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G		
Assets - ADMs			0.059	0.059	0.000				
ADM Budget	Reduction in ADM Budget	Rachael Corbelli	0.065	0.065	0.000	O	G		
Review of External Partners		Rachael Corbelli	0.087	0.087	0.000	O	G		
Total Assets - ADMs			0.152	0.152	0.000				
Chief Executives									
Executive Office	Reduction in Promotions Budget	Joanne Pierce	0.010	0.010	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Chief Executive's element	Joanne Pierce	0.001	0.001	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total Chief Executives			0.011	0.011	0.000				
People & Resources									
Corporate Finance	Reduction in Staffing	Gary Ferguson	0.104	0.104	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Feasibility Study budget	Reduction in Budget	Gary Ferguson	0.050	0.050	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
HR & OD	Reduction in TU facilities budget	Sharon Carney	0.030	0.030	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Flintshire Trainees	Recruitment Freeze 2024/25	Sharon Carney	0.138	0.138	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total People & Resources			0.322	0.322	0.000				
Governance									
RSA Tags	Governance element	Gareth Owen	0.003	0.003	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Registration Services	Increased income from 2023 Review	Gareth Owen	0.002	0.002	0.000	C	G	Fee Income expected to meet target	
Discretionary Rate Relief		Gareth Owen	0.004	0.004	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Internal Audit	Removal of Vacant Posts	Gareth Owen	0.104	0.104	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Equipment reduction in requirements		Gareth Owen	0.018	0.018	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Governance element	Gareth Owen	0.015	0.015	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Contact Centre	Reduction in budget	Gareth Owen	0.010	0.010	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Single Person Discount Review 24/25		Gareth Owen	0.250	0.250	0.000	C	G	Achieved	
Procurement	Reduction in contribution	Gareth Owen	0.009	0.009	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
HRA Recharging	Management Costs Apportionment	Gareth Owen	0.027	0.027	0.000	C	G	Recharge at increased rate agreed with HRA	
Granicus	GovDelivery	Gareth Owen	0.025	0.025	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Registration Services		Gareth Owen	0.040	0.040	0.000	C	G	Fee Income expected to meet target	
Graphic Design		Gareth Owen	0.039	0.039	0.000	C	G	Removal of posts Sept 2024	
Total Governance			0.546	0.546	0.000				
Planning, Environment & Economy									
Fees & Charges Review 2023	Increased income from 2023 Review	Andrew Farrow	0.050	0.050	0.000	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
Fees & Charges Review 2024	Increased income from 2024 Review	Andrew Farrow	0.017	0.017	0.000	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	PE&E element	Andrew Farrow	0.008	0.008	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Planning Fee Income	Fee Income Target Increase	Andrew Farrow	0.295	0.251	(0.044)	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
Ambition North Wales Contribution	Budget Saving	Andrew Farrow	0.035	0.035	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Wales Rally GB	Budget Saving	Andrew Farrow	0.030	0.030	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total Planning, Environment & Economy			0.435	0.391	(0.044)				
Streetscene & Transportation									
Cash in Transit - reduced costs	Part of transition to Card and App payments at car parks	Katie Wilby	0.012	0.012	0.000	O	G	Efficiency originated by Revenues but operated by S&T	
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Green Waste	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.099	0.099	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Car Parking	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.063	0.063	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Bersavement Services	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.033	0.033	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2024 - Bersavement Services	Increased income from 2024 Review	Katie Wilby	0.012	0.012	0.000	O	G		
IT - Mobile Phone contract	S&T element	Katie Wilby	0.011	0.011	0.000	C	G		
Part time opening of HWRC's		Katie Wilby	0.250	0.225	(0.025)	O	A	HWRC sites open over part of the week rather than the full 7 days e.g. Friday to Monday. Savings would come from labour. Security of sites could become an issue when they are closed, which could incur additional costs. Fly tipping could increase as a result of the part-time closure (as happened during the pandemic) and there may be an impact on residual waste tonnages as residents seek to divert the waste to other collection methods. Started on 6th May hence £25k shortfall of Efficiency pressure.	Implementation Date 6th May
Review/reduce service standards	Grass cutting etc.	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Range of grass cutting and grounds maintenance operations in place, which vary from external contracted services on highway verges, roundabouts and central reservations, weed spraying, tenant gardens and school grounds to our own in-house service delivery for amenity areas and public open spaces, such as car parks, cemeteries, leisure centres, libraries, Council offices and housing estates, town centres, sheltered housing, bus stops and play areas and playing fields, nature conservation areas. This proposal would see all grass cutting operations externalised through a contract.	

Efficiency Description	Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
		2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m		R A		
Portfolio								
Review/reduce service standards	Cemetery maintenance Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Discretionary service - savings would come from reduction in labour, plant and materials. Likely to generate complaints from members of the public. Previously considered transferring responsibility to Town/Community Councils, but no appetite or capacity to take this on.	
Introduce Night Working	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Streetscene introduced an evening shift in 2012. A small number of people work through the night (365 days a year) dealing with emergencies and small amounts of planned works. The proposal will see this level of work increase with operations such as gully emptying, town centre sweeping etc. carried out during the evening and overnight period. The saving will be generated by a reduction in plant and equipment. Impact on communities due to evening and night working. Workforce/Trade Union support will be required. There was a lack of appetite to continue when previously introduced and unable to recruit or maintain staff on a night time shift, due to the unsociable hours	
Reduce cleansing standards and enforce zero balance for littering	Katie Wilby	0.030	0.030	0.000	O	G	Potential consequential impact on littering and fly tipping, which would require additional resources for enforcement.	
In-house services e.g. weed spraying, traffic management	Katie Wilby	0.035	0.035	0.000	O	G	Cost-benefit assessment to be undertaken to assess whether in-house provision would be more cost efficient than a contracted service	
Full cost recovery for supporting community events	Katie Wilby	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	Introduce a charge for providing support for community events for road closures, such as fairs, festivals, street parties etc. Currently, costs are approx. £25k per annum. The charge would help to mitigate the cost.	
Reduce non essential services on Bank Holidays (x5)	Katie Wilby	0.077	0.077	0.000	O	G	Stand 85% of Grounds, Highways, Streetlighting, Cleansing on 5 Bank Holidays per year. Currently, operations for these services continue on public holidays. Savings would come from the reduction in overtime.	
Charging for DIY Waste streams at HWRC's	Katie Wilby	0.300	0.075	(0.225)	O	A	A number of local authorities charge for DIY waste streams, such as soil, rubble, plasterboard and waste wood, as these waste streams are costly to treat and dispose, which is no longer sustainable or affordable. Charging would ensure cost recovery of these non-household waste streams.	August Implementation Date - Further delayed
Remove vacancies for Schools Crossing Patrols	Katie Wilby	0.084	0.084	0.000	O	G	The portfolio currently has vacancies for crossing patrol officers within the road safety team, which could be given up.	
Remove Officer vacancies across the Portfolio	Katie Wilby	0.294	0.294	0.000	O	G	2 x Transport Strategy Officers; 1 x Road Safety Officer; 1 x Business Manager; 1 x Support Services Officer; 1 x Enforcement Officer; 1 x Waste Disposal Manager.	
Charge for Trade Waste at one HRC site	Katie Wilby	0.200	0.050	(0.150)	O	A	A number of local authorities currently provide a facility for commercial traders and businesses to dispose of their waste through a chargeable service. There is the potential to designate one of the Council's HRC sites for trade waste only for the receipt of other chargeable recyclable materials (wood, soil, rubble, green waste etc) from businesses.	August Implementation Date - Further delayed
Increase fees for Bulky Waste	Katie Wilby	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	Currently charge for bulky waste collections. The fee could be increased in line with inflation (by £5 per collection).	
Reduce SmartClient for Technical Support	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	ground surveys. Reduce budget available.	
Winter Maintenance Review of Weather Stations for 2024/25	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Review is already underway for the use of route-based forecasting or domain-based forecasting instead of the current approach	
Total Streetscene & Transportation		1.644	1.244	(0.400)				
Social Services								
Fees & Charges Review 2023	Increased income from 2023 Review	Craig Macleod	0.063	0.063	0.000	O	G	
Fees & Charges Review 2024	Increased income from 2024 Review	Craig Macleod	0.021	0.021	0.000	O	G	
RSA Tags	Social Services element	Craig Macleod	0.002	0.002	0.000	O	G	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Social Services element	Craig Macleod	0.046	0.011	(0.035)	O	A	The efficiency is a high proportion of the total cost of mobile units in 2023/24 and unlikely it will be achieved in full
Newydd Cleaning Contracts	Reduction to contract with Newydd	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.000	(0.100)	C	R	Negotiations with Newydd have not yielded any efficiencies and therefore will not lead to cost reductions in 2024/25.
Reduce Regional Contribution	Reduction to in-year contribution to Regional Team	Craig Macleod	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	
Extra BCUHB contribution to Marleyfield	Additional income from BCUHB for hospital discharge beds	Craig Macleod	0.040	0.040	0.000	O	G	
Service Review	Reduction in posts		0.075	0.035	(0.040)	O	A	This is dependent on natural wastage of posts which can then be deleted. This will occur within the financial year and so the efficiency will not likely be achieved in full this financial year.
Vacancy Management	In-year vacancy savings	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G	
Increase to Income budget	Older People Commissioning	Craig Macleod	0.050	0.050	0.000	O	G	
Disability Day Service	Reduced budget	Craig Macleod	0.040	0.040	0.000	O	G	
Appointeeship service charging	Increased income	Craig Macleod	0.050	0.025	(0.025)	O	A	There will be a requirement for a consultation with stakeholders meaning the efficiency will be unable to be implemented at the start of the financial year and will likely be towards the midway point.
Additional Contributions for residential care from BCUHB	Additional income from BCUHB for hospital discharge beds	Craig Macleod	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Efficiencies to Planned Contracts with Third Sector	Reduced expenditure	Craig Macleod	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G	
Grant Maximisation		Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G	
Reduced NEWCES contribution	Reduced expenditure	Craig Macleod	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Grant funding for Adult Social Services	2024/25 only	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G	
Disability services	Charging for college placements pending financial assessments	Craig Macleod	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G	
Total Social Services			0.872	0.672	(0.200)			
Housing & Communities								
RSA Tags	Housing & Communities element	Vicky Clark	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G	

Efficiency Description	Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
Portfolio		2024/25	2024/25	2024/25		R		
		£m	£m	£m		A		
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Housing & Communities element	Vicky Clark	0.009	0.009	0.000	C	G	Use of the Reserve in 2024/25 instead of base budget pressure
CTRS Reduction	Budget Reduction	Vicky Clark	0.254	0.254	0.000	O	G	
Total Housing & Communities			0.264	0.264	0.000			
Education & Youth								
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Integrated Youth Service	Increased income from 2023 Review	Claire Homard	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G	
Fees & Charges Review 2024 - Integrated Youth Service	Increased income from 2024 Review	Claire Homard	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G	
RSA Tags	Education & Youth element	Claire Homard	0.007	0.007	0.000	O	G	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Education & Youth element	Claire Homard	0.005	0.005	0.000	C	G	
GWE - Reduction in Contribution	Education & Youth element	Claire Homard	0.099	0.099	0.000	O	G	
Early Entitlement	Reduced numbers accessing Early Entitlement	Claire Homard	0.075	0.075	0.000	O	G	
Adult Community Learning	Income generation	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Youth Services	Buildings Asset transfer of some buildings	Claire Homard	0.032	0.032	0.000	O	G	
Business Support Review		Claire Homard	0.032	0.032	0.000	O	G	
School Planning & Provision	Mobile Classrooms	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
School Planning & Provision	Transition Funding	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Inclusion & Progression	Contribution towards PEP Caseworker	Claire Homard	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G	
Total Education & Youth			0.302	0.302	0.000			
Schools								
Utility Costs		Claire Homard	0.600	0.600	0.000	O	G	
School Demography		Claire Homard	0.675	0.675	0.000	O	G	
3% Reduction in Delegated Funding		Claire Homard	3.273	3.273	0.000	O	G	
Remove Schools Deficit Subsidy for 1 year		Claire Homard	0.750	0.750	0.000	C	G	
Total Schools			5.298	5.298	0.000			
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies			14.921	14.278	(0.644)			

	%	£
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies	100	14.921
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	-4	(0.644)
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	96	14.278
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies (Less Previously agreed Decisions)	100	0.000
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	0	0.000
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	0	0.000

Movements on Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves

	£m	£m
Total Reserves as at 1 April 2024	15.271	
Less - Base Level	(8.985)	
Total Reserves above base level available for delegation to Cabinet		6.286
Less - Children's Services Legal Costs		(0.142)
Less - Approved "Budget Risk" Reserve 2024/25		(3.000)
Less - Approved Time Limited Pressures 2024/25		(0.172)
Add - Transfer to Reserve Budget 2024/25		0.437
Add - Reimbursement from Aura Leisure and Libraries		0.200
Less - Cambrian Aquatics approved funding		(0.200)
Less - Provision of Free School Meals payment to eligible children during the summer school holidays		(0.277)
Add- Review of Earmarked Reserves at Month 5		0.167
Add- Review of Earmarked Reserves at Month 6		0.859
Less - Month 6 projected outturn		(2.809)
Total Contingency Reserve available for use		1.349

Budget Monitoring Report
Housing Revenue Account Variances

MONTH 6 - SUMMARY

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Housing Revenue Account						
Income	(42.166)	(42.040)	0.126	0.155	There is a net pressure relating to void properties of £0.158m. This relates to costs such as void rent loss, council tax charges and service charges and is net of additional income relating to new build properties and voids moving to target rent. We are anticipating a variance of approximately £0.001m on garage rents. We are forecasting a reduction in the requirement to top up the Bad Debt Provision of £(0.025)m. Other minor variances of (£0.006m).	
Capital Financing - Loan Charges	6.845	6.845				
Estate Management	3.206	3.007	(0.199)	(0.141)	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.179m) which is being offset by agency costs of £0.100m. Additional allocation of Housing Support Grant (£0.125m). Other minor variances of £0.005m.	
Landlord Service Costs	1.798	1.798	0.000	0.035	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.174m) which is being offset by agency costs of £0.110m. Material increased costs of £0.033. Other minor variances of £0.031m.	
Repairs & Maintenance	12.741	12.725	(0.017)	(0.006)	Minor Variances	
Management & Support Services	2.787	2.655	(0.132)	(0.155)	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.080m). Reduction in Support Recharge - (£.068m). Other minor variances of £0.028	
Capital Expenditure From Revenue (CERA)	14.467	14.467				
HRA Projects	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000		
Contribution To / (From) Reserves	0.193	0.193				
Total Housing Revenue Account	0.000	(0.222)	(0.222)	(0.111)		

Social Services – In Year action plan 2024/2025				
No	Maximise income			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
1	Use the classification of 'temporary care' for people moving to D2RA beds instead of treating step down care as 'Short Term Care'. People will then be financially assessed and charged under the Residential charging framework instead of the domiciliary framework which is capped at £100 a week.	Older people	Domiciliary cap is £100. Residential cap is £762.01 On average there are 622 people supported a year in short term care arrangements (up to 8 weeks). Income will be based on individual financial assessment	Red Public & Health
2	Complete a financial review of people currently assessed as 'Nil Payers' to establish if their finances have changed and they can now make a financial contribution to their care	All adults except mental health	Any contributions will be aligned to individual financial assessment	Green
3	Introduce Charging for AMHP Assessment for other local authorities	Mental Health	Very small numbers and saving will be modest <£1k	Green
4	Review of CHC and CC processes across all services	All Groups	This is unlikely to deliver quick saving given processes involved in making claims/ resolving disputes	Green
5	Review Charging Policy to maximise income	All Groups	Opportunity to review further approaches, unlikely to deliver significant in years savings	Amber

No	Support people to access their own resources			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
6	Review our service offer in line with the SSW(W)Act introducing a 'Framework of Support' which has a clear focus on access personal, family and community resources	All	Development and implementation of more defined and tighter eligibility, reducing additional service demand	Amber
7	Revised offer to be applied to all new referrals	All		Amber
8	Introduce the 'Framework of Support' into refocused review and reassessment processes	All	Review and where appropriate reducing existing service provision	Red
9	Raise awareness of small aids available for private purchase	Disabled adults and children Older People	Cost avoidance through demand management	Amber
10	Review delivery model for low value equipment	Disabled adults and children Older People	Cost avoidance through demand management	Amber
11	Retain a core meal and snack provision in our 3 Residential Homes with additional snacks such as chocolate bars and crisps being available through a resident and visitor 'tuck shop'	Older People	If implemented from January 2025 could save £15k	Red
12	Invite Education colleagues to attend the daily Safeguarding Hub	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
13	Review the Exit From Care Strategy to step children down from statutory services where safe and appropriate	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
14	Review back office and authorisation processes for expenditure to support people through pre-paid cards	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
No	Right size care packages			

	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
15	Work with Dom Care Providers to identify where care and support can be appropriately decreased	Adults	Reductions based on assessed need	Green
16	Review and where appropriate reduce Double Handed Dom Care Packages	Adults	Reductions based on assessed need	Amber
17	Rightsizing review of LD Supported Living care packages	Learning Disability	Reductions based on assessed need	Amber
18	Review and reduce respite offer where appropriate aligned to need	Learning Disability	Reductions based on assessed need	Red
19	Increase use of Telecare Equipment and Technology	All Groups	Cost avoidance	Green
20	Review back office processes around Direct Payments	All Groups	Cost avoidance	Green
21	Reduce direct payment funding from 6 week to 4 week credits	All Groups	One off saving of moving from a 6 week top a 4 week permissible allowance	Green
22	Evaluate the D2RA Model operating at Marleyfield House Care Home and identify potential savings	Older People	Cost avoidance	Amber
No	Efficient commissioning			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
23	Review process for using Block Booked Beds (BBB)	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
24	Ensure all Dom Care Package Retainers cease after 2 weeks	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
25	Broker representation at Top-Up Panel to challenge and ensure consistency of approach	Older people	Cost avoidance	Green
26	Review the pathways from hospital to home	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
27	Review the Hospital Discharge Process for independent providers	Adults	Cost avoidance	Green

28	Review of OP and Disability Panel Process	Older people and disabled adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
29	Support use of CareCubed across all services for High Cost/Low Volume placements initially, as well as other high cost placements	All groups	Cost avoidance and reduction in care packages	Red
30	Refine governance processes for accessing legal advice	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green
31	Review all UASC post 18 individuals and reduce support in line with need	UASC	Cost saving of £100 pw for 22 UASC's - saving of £44k	Green
32	Return all unused or no longer required IT equipment and Mobile Phones to reduce costs	None	Cost avoidance	Green
No	Exit strategy for agency staff			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
33	Review team structures	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green
34	Review of all cases	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green

Streetscene & Transportation – In Year action plan 2024/2025					
No	Description	Category	Notes	Cost reduction £m	Impact Assessment (RAG)
Service Delivery					
1	Revise security arrangements for Alltami depot, HRC sites and Brookhill landfill to a monitored CCTV with reactive keyholder service instead of nightly security guard/dog handler patrols	Cost avoidance	Reduced. Annual saving of £75k	£0.075	Green. Already actioned and deliverable in-year
2	Maximise income / cost recovery from in-house construction service	Maximise income	Income target required	£0.120	Amber. Dependent upon grant funding and work being awarded in-house
3	Maximise NMWTRA income and cost recovery	Maximise income	Income target required	£0.100	Amber. Dependent upon NMWTRA funding
4	Review of additional hours, overtime through HFX rostering system	Cost avoidance	Underway.	£0.100	1% reduction in sickness absence (agency saving)
5	Vehicle wash improvements - capital funding granted to replace the vehicle wash system at Alltami depot, which will reduce the monthly revenue costs for disposing waste water (estimated to be costing £6k per month)	Cost avoidance	95% complete. Annual saving £60k	£0.060	Green. Scheme is underway and on track for completion by March 2025
6	Move to 5-day shift pattern Mon-Fri (instead of 4-day shift pattern) on sweepers, gully emptying vehicles, highways operations (subject to consultation and agreement with employees and TUs)	Cost reduction	Saving of 2 operatives	£0.070	Subject to agreement with employees and TUs

Highway Network					
7	Close public conveniences over the winter period from December to March	Cost avoidance	Close for 4 months	£0.030	Red. Likely to receive complaints and objections. Likely to have contractual implications
8	Part-night lighting / switch off further lights in low populated areas, such as industrial estates	Cost avoidance	Delivered and actioned	£0.050	Amber. May generate complaints. Night-time economy impact and safety critical. Energy costs still likely to increase on all remaining assets
9	Fleet efficiencies following insourcing	Efficient commissioning	Some benefit from sale of old plant and vehicles below the value of £10k and review of demand plans	£0.700	Amber. Further work required to confirm efficiencies
Transportation					
10	Local bus re-procurement / service changes to Service 5 (Mold-Buckley-DIP) to curtail the service at DIP in order to meet the budget	Efficient commissioning	Already received support from EOSC to implement	£0.270	Green. Cabinet approval 15.10.2024 to implement service changes to achieve the reduction in cost
Waste Strategy					
11	Re-procurement of waste disposal contracts to achieve better rebate rates	Efficient commissioning	Work already underway to reprocure glass and wood.	£0.050	Green. Procurement underway for glass and wood. Bulky waste to follow. (potential income could be offset with falling rebate rates for plastic/metal)
TOTAL				£1.625	

Housing and Communities – in year action plan 2024/2025					
No	Housing Support				
	Description	Client Groups	Timescales	Savings	Impact Assessment
1	Increase the use of HRA properties by a minimum of five additional units for 3 bed house shares	Single people requiring temporary accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	<p>Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service.</p> <p>£13,959 per unit £69,795 in total</p> <p>£58,836 full year saving per unit.</p>	Red
2	Leasing nine bed HMO	Single people requiring temporary accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	<p>Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service.</p> <p>£61,617 per quarter</p>	Red

				£246,868 full year savings.	
3	Ten STORI leased properties (eight to come online by the end of the financial year)	Families requiring temporary accommodation.	Quarter 4 2024/25	Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service. £76,620 per quarter £306,480 full year savings.	Red
4	Partial new staffing structure in place which will aim to increase HB and service charge recovery and support delivery of the options set out in the report.		Quarter 4 2024/25	Improved housing prevention, increased housing benefit recovery rates.	Red
Housing Programmes					
5	TACP grant funding to purchase new HRA properties (Flintshire has been notionally allocated £2,943,208 for 2024/25).	Those requiring temporary accommodation. Those requiring move on accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	Total number of property acquisitions in 2023/24 were 15. The speed of these coming through will further impact of mitigation of cost pressures.	Amber

				Additional funding has been allocated for 2024/25 and it is anticipated that 6 new properties will come online in 2024/25 (out of an expected total of 17 acquisitions).	
Travellers and refugees					
6	Reduce the costs from the utility provider and maximise the income generated for the Riverside Site.	Gypsy and Travellers	Quarter 4 2024/25	Reduction in budget pressure	Amber
Welfare Reform					
7	Reduction in current earmarked reserve amount.		Quarter 3 2024/25	Reduction of the current earmarked reserve for Welfare Reform. This will be for one year only. There is a potential risk if HSG funding changes.	Green

Date: 17 October 2024

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Budget Monitoring Report
Council Fund Variances

MONTH 6 - SUMMARY

Service	Movement between Periods (£m)	Narrative for Movement between Periods greater than £0.025m
Social Services		
Older People		
Localities	0.562	Demands on older peoples services are leading to increased costs. This includes pressures from ensuring safe hospital discharges and this pressure will likely increase during winter. The residential care service has increased by £0.305m and the domiciliary service increased by £0.248m.
Minor Variances	0.035	
Adults of Working Age		
Resources & Regulated Services	0.063	This is due to the net increase to PDSI and Learning Disabilities care packages
Children to Adult Transition Services	0.036	This is from increase to care packages for young people transferring from Childrens Services to Adult Social Care.
Residential Placements	-0.085	This is from a reduction in care package costs for people with mental ill health.
Minor Variances	-0.010	
Children's Services		
Residential Placements	0.152	A new cohort of Flintshire employed care workers has been recruited. Agency costs have not decreased as much as hoped as some cover delivered through care agencies is still currently required.
Professional Support	0.232	New social worker agency requirements in the First Contact and Permanency teams are costing an additional £0.100m. Seven additional unaccompanied asylum seeking children have reached, or very soon will reach, the age of 18. There will be an additional cost of £0.160m due to this. Some minor cost reductions have netted against these costs.
Minor Variances	-0.008	
Safeguarding & Commissioning		
Business Systems & Financial Assessments	-0.027	Some software costs have transferred to the Performance and Information team.
Charging Policy income	-0.050	This is an increase to the anticipated income recieved through contributions to care.
Safeguarding Unit	-0.034	This is due to additional grant income.
Performance and Information	0.029	This is due to software costs transferred across from the Business Systems and Financial Assessments team.
Minor Variances	0.012	
Total Social Services (excl Out of County)	0.908	
Out of County		
Children's Services	-0.031	Various new and ending placements, rate adjustments and other adjustments to projected expenditure based on actual data has caused a £0.031m favourable movement in comparison to Month 5.
Education & Youth	0.077	A number of new Education Day placements have been added to the caseload, causing a £0.077m adverse movement in comparison to Month 5.
Total Out of County	0.047	
Education & Youth		
Minor Variances	0.012	
Total Education & Youth	0.012	
Schools	0.016	
Streetscene & Transportation		
Transportation	0.054	Additional request in School Transport and Social Services Transport.
Regulatory Services	-0.227	Improved tendering process and vacancy savings.
Other Minor Variances	0.002	
Total Streetscene & Transportation	-0.171	
Planning, Environment & Economy		
Minor Variances	0.004	
Total Planning & Environment	0.004	
People & Resources		
HR & OD	0.011	
Corporate Finance	-0.010	
Total People & Resources	0.001	

Service	Movement between Periods (£m)	Narrative for Movement between Periods greater than £0.025m
Governance		
Procurement	0.026	Movement relates to a potential extra £25k for recruitment. This is likely to increase further but wont know until September
Minor Variances	-0.021	
Total Governance	0.006	
Assets		
Minor Variances	0.011	
Total Assets	0.011	
Housing and Community		
Housing Solutions	-0.117	A positive movement of (£0.117m) as a result of a reduction in the number of placements in Temporary Housing Accommodation in September
Total Housing and Community	-0.117	
Chief Executive's	0.000	
Central & Corporate Finance	-0.870	At Month 6 a further review of the CLIA account results in a further £0.100m favourable movement. The 2024 Pay Award has now been agreed at a level that has resulted in a favourable movement of £0.765m compared to what was originally budgeted for.
Grand Total	-0.153	

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Social Services							
Older People							
Localities	23.879	25.499	1.619	1.057		Residential care costs for older people are projecting an overspend of £0.908m due to demands for this service. This amount is net of client income from property recharges and reimbursements for deputyships and assets held in trust. Homecare is £0.639m overspent and due to the high demand. Locality workforce and professional support budgets are overspent by £0.054m and day care is overspent by £0.019m. There is a significant risk that costs will continue to escalate as pressure to minimise stays in hospitals continues. This risk will increase over the winter period.	To mitigate expected escalating costs a number of policies are being reviewed and amended to maximise financial benefit and reduce costs.
Resources & Regulated Services	9.999	9.909	-0.091	-0.110		In-house residential care is projecting an overspend by £0.338m due to employee and running costs. Homecare is predicted to underspend by £0.444m, although demand is high it cannot be met due to recruitment challenges. The Extra Care budget is expected to overspend by £0.126m from employee costs and day care will underspend by £0.111m.	
Minor Variances	1.511	1.529	0.018	0.002			
Adults of Working Age							
Resources & Regulated Services	36.005	36.173	0.167	0.105		The PDSI (physical disability and sensory impaired) budget is reporting a £0.080m underspend due to costs of care packages. The in-house supported living service is £0.394m overspent due to care hours and agency costs. The care package costs for independently provided care for learning disability services is £0.033m underspent. The learning disability day and work provision service is £0.114m underspent.	Any requests for increases to care packages are reviewed by a panel. Current care packages are being reviewed to ensure the right level of care is provided.
Children to Adult Transition Services	0.848	1.057	0.209	0.173		This is the costs of care packages for young adults transferring from Childrens Services to Adult Social Care services. Care packages are usually new within the financial year and initial estimates are made around the costs. When care packages are agreed there can be variances against the initial estimate. This year some confirmed care packages have already been confirmed as higher than the initial estimate.	
Professional and Administrative Support	0.458	0.358	-0.100	-0.089	-0.089	The underspend is due to in-year staff vacancies.	
Supporting People	-0.386	-0.487	-0.101	-0.101	-0.100	Additional Supporting People funding is expected this year.	
Minor Variances	7.012	6.906	-0.106	-0.022		Positive movement of -£0.085m in Residential Placements at Month 6. A reduction in care package costs for people with mental ill health.	
Children's Services							
Family Support	0.412	0.461	0.050	0.050		This is a demand led service and demand is currently high	

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Legal & Third Party	0.283	0.744	0.460	0.471		Legal costs are overspent by £0.234m due to the number of cases going through the courts and some use of external professionals. Client support and Section 17 costs are overspent by £0.143m and Direct Payment are overspent by £0.083m.	
Professional Support	6.228	7.715	1.487	1.255		To support adequate levels of child protection the established structure needs to be at a sufficient level to meet mandatory safeguarding standards. Vacancies try to be minimised where possible and temporary posts are sometimes required to be able to continue meeting the challenges and demands of Childrens Services. Two managed agency teams were contracted to support the service, one of these teams has ceased and the other is planned to finish later this year. The associated costs are £0.939m. This is being partially mitigated from underspends, mostly vacancies, of £0.211m. The Leaving Care budget which supports young people who are Looked After Children, is overspending by £0.563m due to increased care leavers which includes unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). The costs of some external contracts are £0.074m overspent due to inflationary pressures. Costs of Direct Payments to provide support to children with disabilities are £0.122m overspent due to demand.	Alternative accomodation for UASC is being explored and cheaper rates have been negotiated with a current accomodation provider.
Minor Variances	5.721	5.762	0.040	-0.115			
Safeguarding & Commissioning							
Charging Policy income	-2.650	-2.790	-0.140	-0.090		This is income from service users who financially contribute to their care.	
Vacancy Management	-0.893	-0.828	0.066	0.046		This budget holds in-year portfolio efficiencies achieved through vacancy savings and grant maximisation. There is a target set for these efficiencies, this target will currently not be achieved this financial year.	
Minor Variances	3.619	3.650	0.031	0.071			
Total Social Services (excl Out of County)	92.047	95.657	3.610	2.702	-0.189		
Out of County							
Children's Services	13.795	15.035	1.240	1.270		Detailed projections show a significant overspend within the Out of County pooled budget as a result of the following:- an increase in the number of new placements agreed in-year and fees incurred to external providers. The overspend includes no further contingency and is projected based on current caseload only.	
Education & Youth	5.504	5.682	0.178	0.101			
Total Out of County	19.299	20.717	1.418	1.372			
Education & Youth							

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Inclusion & Progression	5.650	5.907	0.257	0.260		Variance due to an in year pressure of £0.152m against the Home Tuition service due to an increase in pupil numbers accessing Creative In Excellence (an external education provider) We have used £0.100m from the ALN grant to mitigate some of this pressure - previously £0.252m. The remaining variance of £0.106m relates to Canolfan Enfys. This is due to an increase in staff as a response to an increase in pupil numbers. There has also been a reliance on agency staff due to long term sickness.	
Integrated Youth Provision	0.918	0.859	-0.059	-0.053	-0.055	Recruitment delays, enabling grant utilisation against trainee costs. Income generation increases on room hire.	
School Planning & Provision	0.625	0.550	-0.075	-0.060	-0.075	Reduction in expenditure from transition budget due to delayed Capital Projects and reduction in the number of mobile classrooms	
Minor Variances	2.956	2.982	0.026	-0.010	-0.010		
Total Education & Youth	10.148	10.297	0.149	0.137	-0.140		
Schools	117.302	117.136	-0.166	-0.182		The variance primarily relates to the following:- Free School Meals (FSM) budget - (£0.098m) underspend, due to meal take up and levels of eligible FSM children. The Unallocated budget containing Added Years and Copyright Licenses indicates a (£0.124m) underspend. The above underspends are offset by a number of insignificant adverse variances within Primary and Secondary non-delegated, totalling £0.055m.	
Streetscene & Transportation							
Service Delivery	8.617	9.617	1.000	1.000		Significant variance of £0.400m in highways maintenance costs, £0.200m Alltami depot running costs increased. Method Statements have been submitted for both budget pressures above. Budget efficiency pressure of £0.400m in total related to HRCs (charging and trade waste) implementation date later than initially planned. Income from Workplace Recycling Regs legislative changes lower than anticipated.	
Highways Network	11.624	12.093	0.470	0.467		Winter Maintenance costs of £0.300m are anticipated to escalate for the provision of equipment, labour and salt, which have seen significant year-on-year inflation, plus fleet hire costs for gritters are higher than the previous purchased model. We continue to investigate options to reduce procurement costs and ensure appropriate income/funding in preparation for the start of the season. Street-lighting energy cost of £0.100m forecasts continue to rise, and this has been accommodated in budget monitoring.	A report was presented to Cabinet in September 2024, which approved the delivery of efficiencies relating to decision making for marginal forecasts for Winter Maintenance.

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Transportation	11.023	11.237	0.214	0.161	-0.120	School Transport significant variances due to transport contractor costs increasing driven by inflation and cost of living (fuel, energy, insurance, wages). Additional routes for increased demand for ALN transport is also having an impact. Social Services Transport costs increased due to recent procurement and additional adult social services and childrens services requests for transport, which has been raised with the client portfolio. Bereavement Services reporting a pressure of £0.057m, plus public health burials increasing year on year.	
Regulatory Services	11.432	11.601	0.169	0.396	-0.052	The overspend variance is mainly due to increasing volumes of residual waste being collected along with gate fee indexation inflation, increased tipping and gate fees for some recyclable waste, together with the reduction in income levels for both recyclable materials and electricity generation from gas and solar at the former landfill sites.	
Total Streetscene & Transportation	42.695	44.548	1.853	2.024	-0.172		
Planning, Environment & Economy							
Business	2.327	2.153	-0.175	-0.171	-0.171	Part year vacancy savings, the recruitment process has commenced	
Development	-0.200	0.008	0.208	0.209		Fee income estimated shortfall in Building Control, Land Charges and Planning	
Access	1.591	1.720	0.129	0.127		Commitment for the cost Ash Die Back tree works £0.120m projected to March, 2025	
Management & Strategy	1.897	1.799	-0.098	-0.096	-0.096	Part year vacancy savings	
Minor Variances	2.066	2.047	-0.020	-0.028	-0.015		
Total Planning & Environment	7.682	7.727	0.045	0.040	-0.282		
People & Resources							
HR & OD	2.211	2.276	0.065	0.054		Historic Business Efficiency for DBS Checks unrealised together with additional legal fees paid.	
Corporate Finance	2.080	1.915	-0.164	-0.154	-0.104	Part year vacancy savings	
Total People & Resources	4.290	4.191	-0.099	-0.100	-0.104		
Governance							
Customer Services	0.985	0.869	-0.116	-0.116	-0.030	Part year vacancy savings and fee income over recovery in Registrars	
Revenues	0.371	0.212	-0.159	-0.159		Potential Surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund	
Minor Variances	10.710	10.672	-0.039	-0.045	-0.040		
Total Governance	12.066	11.753	-0.313	-0.319	-0.070		
Assets							
Minor Variances	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000			
Total Assets	11.403	11.414	0.010	-0.000			
Housing and Community							

Budget Monitoring Report - Month 6

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Moratorium related Savings (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Housing Solutions	4.309	6.755	2.446	2.563		Anticipated £2.446m overspend for the service. Temporary accommodation costs anticipated to be £3.288m overspent, offset with an increase in the HB Income collected (£0.573m) and NOLO Grant of (£0.423m).	
Minor Variances	13.852	13.851	-0.002	-0.002			
Total Housing and Community	18.161	20.606	2.445	2.562			
Chief Executive's	1.641	1.625	-0.016	-0.016	-0.016		
Central & Corporate Finance	31.372	28.246	-3.126	-2.257		The initial projection on the Central Loans and Investment Account (CLIA) for the 2024/25 indicates an underspend of (£0.250m) as the trend from previous years continues with reduced short term borrowing costs and income from investments in line with current bank interest rates. This is mitigated by potential shortfalls in Corporate windfall income targets based on actual receipts to date. As a result of the refinancing of Enfinium Group Ltd into Enfinium Parc Adfer Ltd, there is a gainshare benefit to all partner authorities within the North Wales Residual Waste Partnership. Flintshires estimated gainshare from this undertaking is £2.108m, net of fees. A commitment has been included to fund the on-going clean-up from the impact of fly tipping at land adjacent to the Riverside Site, Queensferry at a current cost of £0.091m that includes the machine hire, transport and manpower related to the necessary works. At Month 5 following a review on the CLIA a further £0.120m favourable variance has been identified. At Month 6 a further £0.100m favourable variance has been identified. The 2024 Pay Award has now been agreed at a level that has resulted in a favourable movement of £0.765m compared to what was originally budgeted for.	
Grand Total	368.106	373.915	5.809	5.963	-0.973		

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2024/25 Efficiencies Outturn Tracker - Month 6

Efficiency Description		Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
			2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m		R A G		
Portfolio									
Corporate									
Actuarial Review	Portfolio budget reductions	Gary Ferguson	4.000	4.000	0.000	C	G		
Central Loans and Investment Account	Increased income/reduced borrowing	Chris Taylor	1.000	1.000	0.000	C	G		
Additional Income from Fastrack Project	Portfolios	Debbie Griffiths	0.018	0.018	0.000	O	G		
Total Corporate Services			5.018	5.018	0.000				
Assets									
Strategic Funding		Damian Hughes	0.028	0.028	0.000	O	G		
Rent Review - Commercial Assets		Damian Hughes	0.021	0.021	0.000	O	G		
Valuation & Estates	Restructure	Damian Hughes	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G		
			0.059	0.059	0.000				
Assets - ADMs									
ADM Budget	Reduction in ADM Budget	Rachael Corbelli	0.065	0.065	0.000	O	G		
Review of External Partners		Rachael Corbelli	0.087	0.087	0.000	O	G		
Total Assets - ADMs			0.152	0.152	0.000				
Chief Executives									
Executive Office	Reduction in Promotions Budget	Joanne Pierce	0.010	0.010	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Chief Executive's element	Joanne Pierce	0.001	0.001	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total Chief Executives			0.011	0.011	0.000				
People & Resources									
Corporate Finance	Reduction in Staffing	Gary Ferguson	0.104	0.104	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Feasibility Study budget	Reduction in Budget	Gary Ferguson	0.050	0.050	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
HR & OD	Reduction in TU facilities budget	Sharon Carney	0.030	0.030	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Flintshire Trainees	Recruitment Freeze 2024/25	Sharon Carney	0.138	0.138	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total People & Resources			0.322	0.322	0.000				
Governance									
RSA Tags	Governance element	Gareth Owen	0.003	0.003	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Registration Services	Increased income from 2023 Review	Gareth Owen	0.002	0.002	0.000	C	G	Fee Income expected to meet target	
Discretionary Rate Relief		Gareth Owen	0.004	0.004	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Internal Audit	Removal of Vacant Posts	Gareth Owen	0.104	0.104	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Equipment reduction in requirements		Gareth Owen	0.018	0.018	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Governance element	Gareth Owen	0.015	0.015	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Contact Centre	Reduction in budget	Gareth Owen	0.010	0.010	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Single Person Discount Review 24/25		Gareth Owen	0.250	0.250	0.000	C	G	Achieved	
Procurement	Reduction in contribution	Gareth Owen	0.009	0.009	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
HRA Recharging	Management Costs Apportionment	Gareth Owen	0.027	0.027	0.000	C	G	Recharge at increased rate agreed with HRA	
Granicus	GovDelivery	Gareth Owen	0.025	0.025	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Registration Services		Gareth Owen	0.040	0.040	0.000	C	G	Fee Income expected to meet target	
Graphic Design		Gareth Owen	0.039	0.039	0.000	C	G	Removal of posts Sept 2024	
Total Governance			0.546	0.546	0.000				
Planning, Environment & Economy									
Fees & Charges Review 2023	Increased income from 2023 Review	Andrew Farrow	0.050	0.050	0.000	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
Fees & Charges Review 2024	Increased income from 2024 Review	Andrew Farrow	0.017	0.017	0.000	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	PE&E element	Andrew Farrow	0.008	0.008	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Planning Fee Income	Fee Income Target Increase	Andrew Farrow	0.295	0.251	(0.044)	O	A	Dependant on actual fee income levels received in year	
Ambition North Wales Contribution	Budget Saving	Andrew Farrow	0.035	0.035	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Wales Rally GB	Budget Saving	Andrew Farrow	0.030	0.030	0.000	C	G	Budget Removed	
Total Planning, Environment & Economy			0.435	0.391	(0.044)				
Streetscene & Transportation									
Cash in Transit - reduced costs	Part of transition to Card and App payments at car parks	Katie Wilby	0.012	0.012	0.000	O	G	Efficiency originated by Revenues but operated by S&T	
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Green Waste	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.099	0.099	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Car Parking	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.063	0.063	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Bersavement Services	Increased income from 2023 Review	Katie Wilby	0.033	0.033	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2024 - Bersavement Services	Increased income from 2024 Review	Katie Wilby	0.012	0.012	0.000	O	G		
IT - Mobile Phone contract	S&T element	Katie Wilby	0.011	0.011	0.000	C	G		
Part time opening of HWRC's		Katie Wilby	0.250	0.225	(0.025)	O	A	HWRC sites open over part of the week rather than the full 7 days e.g. Friday to Monday. Savings would come from labour. Security of sites could become an issue when they are closed, which could incur additional costs. Fly tipping could increase as a result of the part-time closure (as happened during the pandemic) and there may be an impact on residual waste tonnages as residents seek to divert the waste to other collection methods. Started on 6th May hence £25k shortfall of Efficiency pressure.	Implementation Date 6th May
Review/reduce service standards	Grass cutting etc.	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Range of grass cutting and grounds maintenance operations in place, which vary from external contracted services on highway verges, roundabouts and central reservations, weed spraying, tenant gardens and school grounds to our own in-house service delivery for amenity areas and public open spaces, such as car parks, cemeteries, leisure centres, libraries, Council offices and housing estates, town centres, sheltered housing, bus stops and play areas and playing fields, nature conservation areas. This proposal would see all grass cutting operations externalised through a contract.	

Efficiency Description		Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
			2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m	2024/25 £m		R A G		
Portfolio									
Review/reduce service standards	Cemetery maintenance	Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Discretionary service - savings would come from reduction in labour, plant and materials. Likely to generate complaints from members of the public. Previously considered transferring responsibility to Town/Community Councils, but no appetite or capacity to take this on.	
Introduce Night Working		Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Streetscene introduced an evening shift in 2012. A small number of people work through the night (365 days a year) dealing with emergencies and small amounts of planned works. The proposal will see this level of work increase with operations such as gully emptying, town centre sweeping etc. carried out during the evening and overnight period. The saving will be generated by a reduction in plant and equipment. Impact on communities due to evening and night working. Workforce/Trade Union support will be required. There was a lack of appetite to continue when previously introduced and unable to recruit or maintain staff on a night time shift, due to the unsociable hours	
Reduce cleansing standards and enforce zero balance for littering		Katie Wilby	0.030	0.030	0.000	O	G	Potential consequential impact on littering and fly tipping, which would require additional resources for enforcement.	
In-house services e.g. weed spraying, traffic management		Katie Wilby	0.035	0.035	0.000	O	G	Cost-benefit assessment to be undertaken to assess whether in-house provision would be more cost efficient than a contracted service	
Full cost recovery for supporting community events		Katie Wilby	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	Introduce a charge for providing support for community events for road closures, such as fairs, festivals, street parties etc. Currently, costs are approx. £25k per annum. The charge would help to mitigate the cost.	
Reduce non essential services on Bank Holidays (x5)		Katie Wilby	0.077	0.077	0.000	O	G	Stand 85% of Grounds, Highways, Streetlighting, Cleansing on 5 Bank Holidays per year. Currently, operations for these services continue on public holidays. Savings would come from the reduction in overtime.	
Charging for DIY Waste streams at HWRC's		Katie Wilby	0.300	0.075	(0.225)	O	A	A number of local authorities charge for DIY waste streams, such as soil, rubble, plasterboard and waste wood, as these waste streams are costly to treat and dispose, which is no longer sustainable or affordable. Charging would ensure cost recovery of these non-household waste streams.	August Implementation Date - Further delayed
Remove vacancies for Schools Crossing Patrols		Katie Wilby	0.084	0.084	0.000	O	G	The portfolio currently has vacancies for crossing patrol officers within the road safety team, which could be given up.	
Remove Officer vacancies across the Portfolio		Katie Wilby	0.294	0.294	0.000	O	G	2 x Transport Strategy Officers; 1 x Road Safety Officer; 1 x Business Manager; 1 x Support Services Officer; 1 x Enforcement Officer; 1 x Waste Disposal Manager.	
Charge for Trade Waste at one HRC site		Katie Wilby	0.200	0.050	(0.150)	O	A	A number of local authorities currently provide a facility for commercial traders and businesses to dispose of their waste through a chargeable service. There is the potential to designate one of the Council's HRC sites for trade waste only for the receipt of other chargeable recyclable materials (wood, soil, rubble, green waste etc) from businesses.	August Implementation Date - Further delayed
Increase fees for Bulky Waste		Katie Wilby	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	Currently charge for bulky waste collections. The fee could be increased in line with inflation (by £5 per collection).	
Reduce SmartClient for Technical Support		Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	ground surveys. Reduce budget available.	
Winter Maintenance Review of Weather Stations for 2024/25		Katie Wilby	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G	Review is already underway for the use of route-based forecasting or domain-based forecasting instead of the current approach	
Total Streetscene & Transportation			1.644	1.244	(0.400)				
Social Services									
Fees & Charges Review 2023	Increased income from 2023 Review	Craig Macleod	0.063	0.063	0.000	O	G		
Fees & Charges Review 2024	Increased income from 2024 Review	Craig Macleod	0.021	0.021	0.000	O	G		
RSA Tags	Social Services element	Craig Macleod	0.002	0.002	0.000	O	G		
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Social Services element	Craig Macleod	0.046	0.011	(0.035)	O	A	The efficiency is a high proportion of the total cost of mobile units in 2023/24 and unlikely it will be achieved in full	
Newydd Cleaning Contracts	Reduction to contract with Newydd	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.000	(0.100)	C	R	Negotiations with Newydd have not yielded any efficiencies and therefore will not lead to cost reductions in 2024/25.	
Reduce Regional Contribution	Reduction to in-year contribution to Regional Team	Craig Macleod	0.025	0.025	0.000	O	G		
Extra BCUHB contribution to Marleyfield	Additional income from BCUHB for hospital discharge beds	Craig Macleod	0.040	0.040	0.000	O	G		
Service Review	Reduction in posts		0.075	0.035	(0.040)	O	A	This is dependent on natural wastage of posts which can then be deleted. This will occur within the financial year and so the efficiency will not likely be achieved in full this financial year.	
Vacancy Management	In-year vacancy savings	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G		
Increase to Income budget	Older People Commissioning	Craig Macleod	0.050	0.050	0.000	O	G		
Disability Day Service	Reduced budget	Craig Macleod	0.040	0.040	0.000	O	G		
Appointeeship service charging	Increased income	Craig Macleod	0.050	0.025	(0.025)	O	A	There will be a requirement for a consultation with stakeholders meaning the efficiency will be unable to be implemented at the start of the financial year and will likely be towards the midway point.	
Additional Contributions for residential care from BCUHB	Additional income from BCUHB for hospital discharge beds	Craig Macleod	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G		
Efficiencies to Planned Contracts with Third Sector	Reduced expenditure	Craig Macleod	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G		
Grant Maximisation		Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G		
Reduced NEWCES contribution	Reduced expenditure	Craig Macleod	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G		
Grant funding for Adult Social Services	2024/25 only	Craig Macleod	0.100	0.100	0.000	O	G		
Disability services	Charging for college placements pending financial assessments	Craig Macleod	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G		
Total Social Services			0.872	0.672	(0.200)				
Housing & Communities									
RSA Tags	Housing & Communities element	Vicky Clark	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G		

Efficiency Description	Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed	Reason for variation	Mitigating Action if Amber or Red
Portfolio		2024/25	2024/25	2024/25		R		
		£m	£m	£m		A		
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Housing & Communities element	Vicky Clark	0.009	0.009	0.000	C	G	Use of the Reserve in 2024/25 instead of base budget pressure
CTRS Reduction	Budget Reduction	Vicky Clark	0.254	0.254	0.000	O	G	
Total Housing & Communities			0.264	0.264	0.000			
Education & Youth								
Fees & Charges Review 2023 - Integrated Youth Service	Increased income from 2023 Review	Claire Homard	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G	
Fees & Charges Review 2024 - Integrated Youth Service	Increased income from 2024 Review	Claire Homard	0.001	0.001	0.000	O	G	
RSA Tags	Education & Youth element	Claire Homard	0.007	0.007	0.000	O	G	
IT - Mobile Phone contract	Education & Youth element	Claire Homard	0.005	0.005	0.000	C	G	
GWE - Reduction in Contribution		Claire Homard	0.099	0.099	0.000	O	G	
Early Entitlement	Reduced numbers accessing Early Entitlement	Claire Homard	0.075	0.075	0.000	O	G	
Adult Community Learning	Income generation	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Youth Services	Buildings Asset transfer of some buildings	Claire Homard	0.032	0.032	0.000	O	G	
Business Support Review		Claire Homard	0.032	0.032	0.000	O	G	
School Planning & Provision	Mobile Classrooms	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
School Planning & Provision	Transition Funding	Claire Homard	0.010	0.010	0.000	O	G	
Inclusion & Progression	Contribution towards PEP Caseworker	Claire Homard	0.020	0.020	0.000	O	G	
Total Education & Youth			0.302	0.302	0.000			
Schools								
Utility Costs		Claire Homard	0.600	0.600	0.000	O	G	
School Demography		Claire Homard	0.675	0.675	0.000	O	G	
3% Reduction in Delegated Funding		Claire Homard	3.273	3.273	0.000	O	G	
Remove Schools Deficit Subsidy for 1 year		Claire Homard	0.750	0.750	0.000	C	G	
Total Schools			5.298	5.298	0.000			
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies			14.921	14.278	(0.644)			

	%	£
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies	100	14.921
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	-4	(0.644)
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	96	14.278
Total 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies (Less Previously agreed Decisions)	100	0.000
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	0	0.000
Total Projected 2024/25 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	0	0.000

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Movements on Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves

	£m	£m
Total Reserves as at 1 April 2024	15.271	
Less - Base Level	(8.985)	
Total Reserves above base level available for delegation to Cabinet		6.286
Less - Children's Services Legal Costs		(0.142)
Less - Approved "Budget Risk" Reserve 2024/25		(3.000)
Less - Approved Time Limited Pressures 2024/25		(0.172)
Add - Transfer to Reserve Budget 2024/25		0.437
Add - Reimbursement from Aura Leisure and Libraries		0.200
Less - Cambrian Aquatics approved funding		(0.200)
Less - Provision of Free School Meals payment to eligible children during the summer school holidays		(0.277)
Add- Review of Earmarked Reserves at Month 5		0.167
Add- Review of Earmarked Reserves at Month 6		0.859
Less - Month 6 projected outturn		(2.809)
Total Contingency Reserve available for use		1.349

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Budget Monitoring Report
Housing Revenue Account Variances

MONTH 6 - SUMMARY

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
Housing Revenue Account						
Income	(42.166)	(42.040)	0.126	0.155	There is a net pressure relating to void properties of £0.158m. This relates to costs such as void rent loss, council tax charges and service charges and is net of additional income relating to new build properties and voids moving to target rent. We are anticipating a variance of approximately £0.001m on garage rents. We are forecasting a reduction in the requirement to top up the Bad Debt Provision of £(0.025)m. Other minor variances of (£0.006m).	
Capital Financing - Loan Charges	6.845	6.845				
Estate Management	3.206	3.007	(0.199)	(0.141)	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.179m) which is being offset by agency costs of £0.100m. Additional allocation of Housing Support Grant (£0.125m). Other minor variances of £0.005m.	
Landlord Service Costs	1.798	1.798	0.000	0.035	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.174m) which is being offset by agency costs of £0.110m. Material increased costs of £0.033. Other minor variances of £0.031m.	
Repairs & Maintenance	12.741	12.725	(0.017)	(0.006)	Minor Variances	
Management & Support Services	2.787	2.655	(0.132)	(0.155)	Projected vacancy savings of approximately (£0.080m). Reduction in Support Recharge -(£.068m). Other minor variances of £0.028	
Capital Expenditure From Revenue (CERA)	14.467	14.467				
HRA Projects	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000		
Contribution To / (From) Reserves	0.193	0.193				
Total Housing Revenue Account	0.000	(0.222)	(0.222)	(0.111)		

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Social Services – In Year action plan 2024/2025				
No	Maximise income			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
1	Use the classification of 'temporary care' for people moving to D2RA beds instead of treating step down care as 'Short Term Care'. People will then be financially assessed and charged under the Residential charging framework instead of the domiciliary framework which is capped at £100 a week.	Older people	Domiciliary cap is £100. Residential cap is £762.01 On average there are 622 people supported a year in short term care arrangements (up to 8 weeks). Income will be based on individual financial assessment	Red Public & Health
2	Complete a financial review of people currently assessed as 'Nil Payers' to establish if their finances have changed and they can now make a financial contribution to their care	All adults except mental health	Any contributions will be aligned to individual financial assessment	Green
3	Introduce Charging for AMHP Assessment for other local authorities	Mental Health	Very small numbers and saving will be modest <£1k	Green
4	Review of CHC and CC processes across all services	All Groups	This is unlikely to deliver quick saving given processes involved in making claims/ resolving disputes	Green
5	Review Charging Policy to maximise income	All Groups	Opportunity to review further approaches, unlikely to deliver significant in years savings	Amber

No	Support people to access their own resources			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
6	Review our service offer in line with the SSW(W)Act introducing a 'Framework of Support' which has a clear focus on access personal, family and community resources	All	Development and implementation of more defined and tighter eligibility, reducing additional service demand	Amber
7	Revised offer to be applied to all new referrals	All		Amber
8	Introduce the 'Framework of Support' into refocused review and reassessment processes	All	Review and where appropriate reducing existing service provision	Red
9	Raise awareness of small aids available for private purchase	Disabled adults and children Older People	Cost avoidance through demand management	Amber
10	Review delivery model for low value equipment	Disabled adults and children Older People	Cost avoidance through demand management	Amber
11	Retain a core meal and snack provision in our 3 Residential Homes with additional snacks such as chocolate bars and crisps being available through a resident and visitor 'tuck shop'	Older People	If implemented from January 2025 could save £15k	Red
12	Invite Education colleagues to attend the daily Safeguarding Hub	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
13	Review the Exit From Care Strategy to step children down from statutory services where safe and appropriate	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
14	Review back office and authorisation processes for expenditure to support people through pre-paid cards	Children & Families	Cost avoidance through demand management	Green
No	Right size care packages			

	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
15	Work with Dom Care Providers to identify where care and support can be appropriately decreased	Adults	Reductions based on assessed need	Green
16	Review and where appropriate reduce Double Handed Dom Care Packages	Adults	Reductions based on assessed need	Amber
17	Rightsizing review of LD Supported Living care packages	Learning Disability	Reductions based on assessed need	Amber
18	Review and reduce respite offer where appropriate aligned to need	Learning Disability	Reductions based on assessed need	Red
19	Increase use of Telecare Equipment and Technology	All Groups	Cost avoidance	Green
20	Review back office processes around Direct Payments	All Groups	Cost avoidance	Green
21	Reduce direct payment funding from 6 week to 4 week credits	All Groups	One off saving of moving from a 6 week top a 4 week permissible allowance	Green
22	Evaluate the D2RA Model operating at Marleyfield House Care Home and identify potential savings	Older People	Cost avoidance	Amber
No	Efficient commissioning			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
23	Review process for using Block Booked Beds (BBB)	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
24	Ensure all Dom Care Package Retainers cease after 2 weeks	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
25	Broker representation at Top-Up Panel to challenge and ensure consistency of approach	Older people	Cost avoidance	Green
26	Review the pathways from hospital to home	Adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
27	Review the Hospital Discharge Process for independent providers	Adults	Cost avoidance	Green

28	Review of OP and Disability Panel Process	Older people and disabled adults	Cost avoidance	Amber
29	Support use of CareCubed across all services for High Cost/Low Volume placements initially, as well as other high cost placements	All groups	Cost avoidance and reduction in care packages	Red
30	Refine governance processes for accessing legal advice	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green
31	Review all UASC post 18 individuals and reduce support in line with need	UASC	Cost saving of £100 pw for 22 UASC's - saving of £44k	Green
32	Return all unused or no longer required IT equipment and Mobile Phones to reduce costs	None	Cost avoidance	Green
No	Exit strategy for agency staff			
	Description	Client Groups	Savings	Impact Assessment
33	Review team structures	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green
34	Review of all cases	Children and families	Cost avoidance	Green

Streetscene & Transportation – In Year action plan 2024/2025					
No	Description	Category	Notes	Cost reduction £m	Impact Assessment (RAG)
Service Delivery					
1	Revise security arrangements for Alltami depot, HRC sites and Brookhill landfill to a monitored CCTV with reactive keyholder service instead of nightly security guard/dog handler patrols	Cost avoidance	Reduced. Annual saving of £75k	£0.075	Green. Already actioned and deliverable in-year
2	Maximise income / cost recovery from in-house construction service	Maximise income	Income target required	£0.120	Amber. Dependent upon grant funding and work being awarded in-house
3	Maximise NMWTRA income and cost recovery	Maximise income	Income target required	£0.100	Amber. Dependent upon NMWTRA funding
4	Review of additional hours, overtime through HFX rostering system	Cost avoidance	Underway.	£0.100	1% reduction in sickness absence (agency saving)
5	Vehicle wash improvements - capital funding granted to replace the vehicle wash system at Alltami depot, which will reduce the monthly revenue costs for disposing waste water (estimated to be costing £6k per month)	Cost avoidance	95% complete. Annual saving £60k	£0.060	Green. Scheme is underway and on track for completion by March 2025
6	Move to 5-day shift pattern Mon-Fri (instead of 4-day shift pattern) on sweepers, gully emptying vehicles, highways operations (subject to consultation and agreement with employees and TUs)	Cost reduction	Saving of 2 operatives	£0.070	Subject to agreement with employees and TUs

Highway Network					
7	Close public conveniences over the winter period from December to March	Cost avoidance	Close for 4 months	£0.030	Red. Likely to receive complaints and objections. Likely to have contractual implications
8	Part-night lighting / switch off further lights in low populated areas, such as industrial estates	Cost avoidance	Delivered and actioned	£0.050	Amber. May generate complaints. Night-time economy impact and safety critical. Energy costs still likely to increase on all remaining assets
9	Fleet efficiencies following insourcing	Efficient commissioning	Some benefit from sale of old plant and vehicles below the value of £10k and review of demand plans	£0.700	Amber. Further work required to confirm efficiencies
Transportation					
10	Local bus re-procurement / service changes to Service 5 (Mold-Buckley-DIP) to curtail the service at DIP in order to meet the budget	Efficient commissioning	Already received support from EOSC to implement	£0.270	Green. Cabinet approval 15.10.2024 to implement service changes to achieve the reduction in cost
Waste Strategy					
11	Re-procurement of waste disposal contracts to achieve better rebate rates	Efficient commissioning	Work already underway to reprocure glass and wood.	£0.050	Green. Procurement underway for glass and wood. Bulky waste to follow. (potential income could be offset with falling rebate rates for plastic/metal)
TOTAL				£1.625	

Housing and Communities – in year action plan 2024/2025					
No	Housing Support				
	Description	Client Groups	Timescales	Savings	Impact Assessment
1	Increase the use of HRA properties by a minimum of five additional units for 3 bed house shares	Single people requiring temporary accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	<p>Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service.</p> <p>£13,959 per unit £69,795 in total</p> <p>£58,836 full year saving per unit.</p>	Red
2	Leasing nine bed HMO	Single people requiring temporary accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	<p>Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service.</p> <p>£61,617 per quarter</p>	Red

				£246,868 full year savings.	
3	Ten STORI leased properties (eight to come online by the end of the financial year)	Families requiring temporary accommodation.	Quarter 4 2024/25	Increased use of alternative properties to hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation will support cost mitigation options to the service. £76,620 per quarter £306,480 full year savings.	Red
4	Partial new staffing structure in place which will aim to increase HB and service charge recovery and support delivery of the options set out in the report.		Quarter 4 2024/25	Improved housing prevention, increased housing benefit recovery rates.	Red
Housing Programmes					
5	TACP grant funding to purchase new HRA properties (Flintshire has been notionally allocated £2,943,208 for 2024/25).	Those requiring temporary accommodation. Those requiring move on accommodation	Quarter 4 2024/25	Total number of property acquisitions in 2023/24 were 15. The speed of these coming through will further impact of mitigation of cost pressures.	Amber

				Additional funding has been allocated for 2024/25 and it is anticipated that 6 new properties will come online in 2024/25 (out of an expected total of 17 acquisitions).	
Travellers and refugees					
6	Reduce the costs from the utility provider and maximise the income generated for the Riverside Site.	Gypsy and Travellers	Quarter 4 2024/25	Reduction in budget pressure	Amber
Welfare Reform					
7	Reduction in current earmarked reserve amount.		Quarter 3 2024/25	Reduction of the current earmarked reserve for Welfare Reform. This will be for one year only. There is a potential risk if HSG funding changes.	Green

Date: 17 October 2024

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Report Author	Corporate Finance Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report summarises changes made to the Capital Programme 2024/25 since it was set in December 2023 to the end of Month 6 (September 2024), along with expenditure to date and projected outturn.

The Capital Programme has seen a net decrease in budget of £7.305m during the period which comprises of:-

- Net budget increase in the programme of £0.047m (See Table 2 – Council Fund (CF) £7.200m, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£7.153m);
- Net Carry Forward to 2025/26 of (£4.847m) (All CF)
- Identified savings at Month 6 of (£2.505m) (CF)

Actual expenditure was £38.373m (See Table 3).

Capital receipts received in the second quarter of 2024/25, along with savings identified total £2.568m. A request for an additional allocation of £0.806m towards Phase 1 of the office rationalisation programme gives a revised projected surplus in the Capital Programme at Month 6 of £2.590m (from a Month 4 funding position surplus of £0.828m) for the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Capital Programme, prior to the realisation of additional capital receipts and/or other funding sources. (See Table 5)

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Cabinet are requested to:
1	Approve the overall report.
2	Approve the carry forward adjustments, as set out at 1.12
3	Note the additional allocations approved by Cabinet on the 15 th October 2024, as set out in 1.14

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING POSITION – MONTH 6 2024/25
1.01	Background Council approved a Council Fund (CF) Capital Programme of £25.326m for 2024/25 at its meeting on 6 th December 2023 and a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme of £29.498m for 2024/25 at its meeting on 23 rd January 2024.
1.02	For presentational purposes the Capital Programme is shown as a whole, with sub-totals for the Council Fund and HRA. The HRA programme is 'ring fenced' and can only be used for HRA purposes.
1.03	Changes since Budget approval Table 1 below sets out how the programme changed during 2024/25. More detailed cumulative information relating to each Portfolio is provided in Appendix A:-

Table 1

REVISED PROGRAMME	Original Budget 2024/25	Carry Forward from 2023/24	2024/25 Previously Reported		Savings (Current)	Changes (Current)	Revised Budget 2024/25
			Changes	Carry Forward to 2025/26			
			£m	£m			
People & Resources	0.350	0.364	(0.313)	0.000	0.000	(0.015)	0.386
Governance	2.353	0.283	0.000	(0.433)	0.000	0.015	2.218
Education & Youth	11.583	5.145	2.482	(1.745)	0.000	7.050	24.515
Social Services	4.800	1.420	14.287	(0.183)	0.000	0.014	20.338
Planning, Environment & Economy	0.240	0.779	2.632	(0.508)	0.000	0.528	3.671
Streetscene & Transportation	2.470	4.621	9.163	(1.546)	(2.405)	(0.479)	11.824
Housing and Communities	1.500	0.029	1.154	0.000	0.000	0.045	2.728
Capital Programme and Assets	2.030	1.595	23.230	(0.432)	(0.100)	0.042	26.365
Council Fund Total	25.326	14.236	52.635	(4.847)	(2.505)	7.200	92.045
HRA Total	29.498	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(7.153)	22.345
Programme Total	54.824	14.236	52.635	(4.847)	(2.505)	0.047	114.390

1.04

Carry Forward from 2023/24

Carry forward sums from 2023/24 to 2024/25, totalling £14.236m (CF £14.236m, HRA £0.000m), were approved as a result of the quarterly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet during 2023/24.

1.05

Changes during this period

Funding changes during this period have resulted in a net increase in the programme total of £0.047m (CF £7.200m, HRA (£7.153m)). A summary of the changes, detailing major items, is shown in Table 2 below:-

Table 2

CHANGES DURING THIS PERIOD		
	Para	£m
<u>COUNCIL FUND</u>		
Increases		
Schools Modernisation	1.06	4.828
Education - General	1.07	2.212
Other Aggregate Increases		1.048
		8.088
Decreases		
Other Aggregate Decreases		(0.888)
		(0.888)
Total		7.200
<u>HRA</u>		
Decreases		
Estate Modernisation	1.08	(4.000)
SHARP	1.08	(3.153)
		(7.153)
Total		(7.153)

1.06 Introduction of grant funding from Welsh Government for Ysgol Croes Atti Flint, to support the new Welsh Medium Primary School as part of the school modernisation programme.

1.07 Introduction of WG funding relating to schools Community Focus Grant and schools capital Repair and Maintenance Grant.

1.08 Re-profiling of prudential borrowing for the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), due to schemes progressing into 2025/26 and no schemes due to commenced in year relating to the modernisation programme.

1.09 **Capital Expenditure compared to Budget**

Expenditure as at Month 6, across the whole of the Capital Programme was £38.373m. The breakdown of expenditure is analysed in Table 3, along with the percentage spend against budget.

This shows that 33.55% of the budget has been spent (CF 31.00%, HRA 44.03%). Corresponding figures for Month 6 2023/24 were 29.07% (CF 25.81%, HRA 37.56%).

1.10 The table also shows a projected underspend (pending carry forward and other adjustments) of £1.681m on the Council Fund and a break-even position on the HRA.

Table 3

EXPENDITURE	Revised Budget	Cumulative Expenditure Month 6	Percentage Spend v Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance Budget v Outturn (Under)/Over
	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
People & Resources	0.386	0.000	0.00	0.386	0.000
Governance	2.218	0.017	0.76	2.148	(0.070)
Education & Youth	24.515	5.811	23.70	23.779	(0.736)
Social Services	20.338	5.635	27.71	20.338	0.000
Planning, Environment & Economy	3.671	0.035	0.95	3.471	(0.200)
Streetscene & Transportation	11.824	5.420	45.84	11.574	(0.250)
Housing & Communities	2.728	1.815	66.53	2.728	0.000
Capital Programme & Assets	26.365	9.802	37.18	25.940	(0.425)
Council Fund Total	92.045	28.534	31.00	90.364	(1.681)
Disabled Adaptations	1.100	0.750	68.18	1.100	0.000
Energy Schemes	4.563	1.995	43.72	4.563	0.000
Major Works	2.156	1.530	0.60	2.156	0.000
Accelerated Programmes	0.532	0.309	58.08	0.532	0.000
WHQS Improvements	12.994	4.931	9.48	12.994	0.000
SHARP Programme	1.000	0.325	32.46	1.000	0.000
Housing Revenue Account Total	22.345	9.839	44.03	22.345	0.000
Programme Total	114.390	38.373	33.55	112.709	(1.681)

1.11 Details of the variances for individual programme areas are listed in Appendix B, which includes the reasons, and remedial actions which may be required, where those variances exceed +/- 10% of the revised budget. In addition, where carry forward into 2025/26 has been identified, this is also included in the narrative.

1.12 **Carry Forward into 2025/26**
During the quarter, carry forward requirements of £1.681m (all CF) have been identified which reflects reviewed spending plans across all programme areas. These amounts can be split into two areas, those required to meet the cost of programme works and/or retention payments in 2025/26 and Corporate provision that are allocated as requested and approved.

1.13 Information relating to each programme area is contained in Appendix B and summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4

CARRY FORWARD INTO 2025/26					Total
	Month 4	Reversed	Sub Total	Month 6	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Governance	0.433	0.000	0.433	0.070	0.503
Education & Youth	1.745	0.000	1.745	0.736	2.481
Social Services	0.183	0.000	0.183	0.000	0.183
Planning, Environment & Economy	0.508	0.000	0.508	0.200	0.708
Streetscene & Transportation	3.951	(2.405)	1.546	0.250	1.796
Capital Programme & Assets	0.532	(0.100)	0.432	0.425	0.857
Council Fund	7.352	(2.505)	4.847	1.681	6.528
TOTAL	7.352	(2.505)	4.847	1.681	6.528

1.14

Additional Allocations

Additional allocations have been identified in the programme in this quarter as follows:

- Office Rationalisation Programme and County Hall Campus (Phase One) - £0.806m. The objective of this phase of the project is to move as many people as possible out of County Hall by the end of February 2025. To enable this to happen, works are required at both Ty Dewi Sant and Flint offices. These works are essential to be undertaken as soon as possible under phase one of the project as they are necessary to provide alternative office accommodation for employees moving out of County Hall. This allocation was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of the 15th October 2024.

1.15

Savings

The following savings have been identified in the programme this quarter:

- Waste Transfer Station Project - £2.405m. Work has commenced to scope the feasibility study and review of operational depots and infrastructure, which will help to determine the direction of the Waste Transfer Station Project. Due to the timescales associated with this work, a proportion of funding has been released back into the capital programme in the interim.
- Community Asset Transfer - £0.100m. This money had been earmarked for Mancot Library, however the allocation is no longer required as the Community Library Organisation has found alternative premises.

1.16

Funding of 2024/25 Approved Schemes

The position at Month 6 is summarised in Table 5 below for the three year Capital Programme between 2024/25 – 2026/27:-

Table 5

FUNDING OF APPROVED SCHEMES 2024/25 - 2026/27		
	£m	£m
Balance carried forward from 2023/24		(0.819)
Increases		
Reduction of funding compared to estimated	0.051	
Additional allocation for office rationalisation	0.806	<u>0.857</u>
Decreases		
Surplus in 2024/25 to 2026/27 Budget	(0.052)	
Actual In year receipts	(0.071)	
Savings (para 1.15)	(2.505)	<u>(2.628)</u>
Funding - (Available)/Shortfall		(2.590)

1.17 Capital receipts received in the second quarter of 2024/25, along with savings identified total £2.568m. A request for an additional allocation of £0.806m towards Phase 1 of the office rationalisation programme gives a revised projected surplus in the Capital Programme at Month 6 of £2.590m (from a Month 4 funding position surplus of £0.828m) for the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Capital Programme, prior to the realisation of additional capital receipts and/or other funding sources.

1.18 **Investment in County Towns**
At its meeting on 12th December 2017, the Council approved a Notice of Motion relating to the reporting of investment in county towns. The extent and format of the reporting was agreed at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14th June 2018.

1.19 Table 6 below shows a summary of the 2023/24 actual expenditure, the 2024/25 revised budget and budgets for future years as approved by Council at its meeting of 6th December, 2024. Further detail can be found in Appendix C, including details of the 2024/25 spend to Month 6.

Table 6**INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025 -
	Actual	Revised	2027
	£m	Budget	Budget
		£m	£m
Buckley / Penyffordd	1.872	1.184	9.288
Connah's Quay / Shotton	1.150	2.340	0.000
Flint / Bagillt	5.452	29.123	1.880
Holywell / Caerwys / Mostyn	1.894	1.416	0.000
Mold / Treuddyn / Cilcain	17.880	28.641	12.800
Queensferry / Hawarden / Sealand	0.518	4.420	0.000
Saltney / Broughton / Hope	0.835	0.033	16.000
Unallocated / To Be Confirmed	0.856	3.793	26.642
Total	30.457	70.950	66.610

1.20 The inclusion of actuals for 2023/24 and approved schemes for future years allows a slightly fuller picture of investment plans. However, expenditure which has occurred in years prior to 2023/24 has not been included, and the expenditure and budgets reported should be considered in that context.

1.21 A significant factor which will increase allocations to areas is new or remodelled schools. The impact of these can be seen in the detail shown in Appendix C.

1.22 Some expenditure cannot yet be allocated to specific towns as schemes are not yet fully developed or are generic in nature and not easily identifiable to one of the seven areas. As such schemes are identified the expenditure will be allocated to the relevant area.

1.23 Information on the split between internal and external funding can be found in Appendix C.

1.24 In addition to the information contained in Appendix C, there is also considerable capital expenditure on the HRA Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), which was originally outside the scope of this analysis. A summary is provided in Table 7 below, albeit using a slightly different catchment area basis.

Table 7

WHQS Programme		
	2023/24 Actual £m	2024/25 Budget £m
Holywell	5.588	5.356
Flint	1.610	1.277
Deeside & Saltney	1.410	1.277
Buckley	1.360	1.277
Mold	2.289	2.530
Connah's Quay & Shotton	0.160	1.277
Total	12.417	12.994

1.25 The 2021 Prudential Code introduced a new requirement that monitoring of prudential indicators should be reported quarterly as part of capital monitoring. This update is provided in Appendix D.

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 Financial implications - As set out in the body of the report.

2.02 Personnel implications - None directly as a result of this report.

3.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

3.01 The legacy impacts of the pandemic along with the supply and demand of materials, leading to cost increases, higher tender prices and project delays will continue to be monitored closely during the year. Due to the re-profiling of schemes from 2023/24 and resources available to manage and deliver schemes, the levels of planned expenditure in 2024/25 may be affected, resulting in a high level of carry forward requests to re-phase budgets into the 2025/26 programme.

Grants received will also to be closely monitored to ensure that expenditure is incurred within the terms and conditions of the grant. The capital team will work with project leads to report potential risks of achieving spend within timescales and assist in liaising with the grant provider.

The Council has a prudent policy of allocating its own capital receipts to fund capital projects only when receipts are received rather than when it is anticipated the receipt will be received, and this position continues to be the case. In line with current policy no allowance has been made for these receipts in reporting the Council's capital funding position.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	No consultation is required as a direct result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A: Capital Programme - Changes during 2024/25
5.02	Appendix B: Variances
5.03	Appendix C: Investment in Towns
5.04	Appendix D: Prudential Indicators – Quarter 2 2024/25

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Capital Programme monitoring papers 2024/25.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Chris Taylor, Strategic Finance Manager Telephone: 01352 703309 E-mail: christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Budget Re-profiling: Capital schemes are very dynamic and a number of factors can influence their timing and funding. Budget re-profiling assures that the correct resources are available in the correct accounting period to finance the actual level of expenditure.</p> <p>Capital Expenditure: Expenditure on the acquisition of non-current assets or expenditure which extends the useful life of an existing asset</p> <p>Capital Programme: The Council’s financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.</p> <p>Capital Receipts: Receipts (in excess of £10,000) realised from the disposal of assets.</p> <p>Carry Forward: Carry forward occurs when schemes due to be completed in a given financial year are delayed until a subsequent year. In this case the relevant funding is carried forward to meet the delayed, contractually committed expenditure.</p>

CERA: Capital Expenditure charged to Revenue Account. The Council is allowed to use its revenue resources to fund capital expenditure. However the opposite is not permissible.

Council Fund (CF): The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA): The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure relating to its housing stock is charged.

MRA: Major Repairs Allowance. A general capital grant from WG for HRA purposes.

Non-current Asset: A resource controlled (but not necessarily owned) by the Council, from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the Council for more than 12 months.

Section 106: Monies are received from developers/contractors pursuant to Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. These sums are available for use once the relevant terms of the individual agreement have been met. The monies are most commonly used for educational enhancement, play areas, highways and affordable housing.

Target Hardening: Measures taken to prevent unauthorised access to Council sites.

Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB), commonly referred to as Supported Borrowing - Each year Welsh Government provide Councils with a Supported Borrowing allocation. Councils borrow to fund capital expenditure equivalent to that annual allocation, Welsh Government then include funding to cover the revenue costs associated with the borrowing for future years within the Revenue Support Grant. The Council decides how this funding is spent.

Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing: Borrowing administered under the Prudential Code, whereby Authorities can set their own policies on acceptable levels and types of borrowing. The Prudential Framework allows Authorities to take out loans in response to overall cash flow forecasts and other factors provided they can show that the borrowing is to meet planned capital expenditure in the current year or the next three years.

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2024/25

	Original Budget 2024/25	Carry Forward from 2023/24	2024/25 Previously Reported		Savings (Current)	Changes (Current)	Revised Budget 2024/25
			Changes	Carry Forward to 2025/26			
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Fund :							
People & Resources							
'Headroom'	0.350	0.364	(0.313)	0.000	0.000	(0.015)	0.386
	0.350	0.364	(0.313)	0.000	0.000	(0.015)	0.386
Governance							
Information Technology	2.353	0.283	0.000	(0.433)	0.000	0.015	2.218
	2.353	0.283	0.000	(0.433)	0.000	0.015	2.218
Education & Youth							
Education - General	0.600	3.944	0.574	(1.445)	0.000	2.005	5.678
Primary Schools	1.000	0.228	(0.445)	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.791
Schools Modernisation	9.483	0.001	0.456	0.000	0.000	4.828	14.768
Secondary Schools	0.000	0.458	1.897	0.000	0.000	0.329	2.684
Special Education	0.500	0.514	0.000	(0.300)	0.000	(0.120)	0.594
	11.583	5.145	2.482	(1.745)	0.000	7.050	24.515
Social Services							
Services to Older People	4.800	1.337	9.006	(0.183)	0.000	0.231	15.191
Learning Disability	0.000	0.000	4.536	0.000	0.000	(0.217)	4.319
Children's Services	0.000	0.083	0.745	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.828
	4.800	1.420	14.287	(0.183)	0.000	0.014	20.338
Planning, Environment & Economy							
Closed Landfill Sites	0.000	0.250	0.000	(0.250)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Engineering	0.000	0.383	0.000	(0.258)	0.000	0.259	0.384
Energy Services	0.000	0.000	0.315	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.380
Town Centre Regeneration	0.200	0.141	2.307	0.000	0.000	0.200	2.848
Private Sector Renewal/Improv't	0.040	0.005	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.059
	0.240	0.779	2.632	(0.508)	0.000	0.528	3.671
Streetscene & Transportation							
Waste Services	0.000	3.405	0.217	(1.000)	(2.405)	0.000	0.217
Cemeteries	0.490	0.259	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.749
Highways	1.980	0.911	1.378	(0.500)	0.000	(0.479)	3.290
Local Transport Grant	0.000	0.000	7.568	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.568
Solar Farms	0.000	0.046	0.000	(0.046)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	2.470	4.621	9.163	(1.546)	(2.405)	(0.479)	11.824

	Original Budget 2024/25	Carry Forward from 2023/24	2024/25 Previously Reported		Savings (Current)	Changes (Current)	Revised Budget 2024/25
			Changes	Carry Forward to 2025/26			
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing & Communities							
Affordable Housing	0.000	0.000	0.868	0.000	0.000	(0.007)	0.861
Disabled Facilities Grants	1.500	0.029	0.286	0.000	0.000	0.052	1.867
	1.500	0.029	1.154	0.000	0.000	0.045	2.728
Capital Programme & Assets							
Administrative Buildings	1.630	0.509	0.031	(0.041)	0.000	0.000	2.129
Community Asset Transfers	0.000	0.580	0.007	(0.391)	(0.100)	0.050	0.146
Leisure Centres & Libraries	0.200	0.245	(0.031)	0.000	0.000	(0.050)	0.364
Play Areas	0.200	0.233	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.638
Theatr Clwyd	0.000	0.028	23.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	23.088
	2.030	1.595	23.230	(0.432)	(0.100)	0.042	26.365
Housing Revenue Account :							
Disabled Adaptations	1.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.100
Energy Schemes	4.563	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.563
Major Works	1.538	0.000	0.618	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.156
Accelerated Programmes	0.000	0.000	0.532	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.532
WHQS Improvements	14.144	0.000	(1.150)	0.000	0.000	0.000	12.994
Modernisation / Improvements	4.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(4.000)	0.000
SHARP Programme	4.153	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(3.153)	1.000
	29.498	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(7.153)	22.345
Totals :							
Council Fund	25.326	14.236	52.635	(4.847)	(2.505)	7.200	92.045
Housing Revenue Account	29.498	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(7.153)	22.345
Grand Total	54.824	14.236	52.635	(4.847)	(2.505)	0.047	114.390

PEOPLE & RESOURCES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
'Headroom'	0.386	0.000	0.386	0.000	0	0.000		Corporate provision - to be allocated as requested and approved.	Any unspent allocation will be the subject of a carry forward request at outturn.
Total	0.386	0.000	0.386	0.000	0	0.000			

GOVERNANCE

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Information Technology	2.218	0.017	2.148	(0.070)	-3	(0.433)	SQL Server implementation to fall into 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.070m into 2025/26.	
Total	2.218	0.017	2.148	(0.070)	-3	(0.433)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

EDUCATION & YOUTH

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Education - General	5.678	1.158	5.577	(0.101)	-2	(1.445)	£0.035m Joint Archive Facility works and £0.066m pool ventilation works at Pen Coch to fall into 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.101m into 2025/26.	
Primary Schools	0.791	0.037	0.756	(0.035)	-4	0.000	£0.035m Sandycroft Primary R&M works to fall into financial year 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.035m into 2025/26.	
Schools Modernisation	14.768	3.822	14.768	0.000	0	0.000			
Secondary Schools	2.684	0.760	2.084	(0.600)	-22	0.000	£0.500m Holywell Campus works and £0.100m Buckley Elfed R&M mechanical works to fall into 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.600m into 2025/26.	
Special Education	0.594	0.033	0.594	0.000	0	(0.300)			
Total	24.515	5.811	23.779	(0.736)	-3	(1.745)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

SOCIAL SERVICES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Services to Older People	15.191	3.995	15.191	0.000	0	(0.183)			
Learning Disability Services	4.319	1.195	4.319	0.000	0	0.000			
Children's Services	0.828	0.446	0.828	0.000	0	0.000			
Total	20.338	5.635	20.338	0.000	0	(0.183)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Closed Landfill Sites	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		(0.250)			
Engineering	0.384	0.000	0.384	0.000	0	(0.258)			
Energy Services	0.380	(0.187)	0.380	0.000	0	0.000			
Ranger Services	0.000	(0.003)	0.000	0.000		0.000			
Townscape Heritage Initiatives	2.848	0.193	2.648	(0.200)	-7	0.000	Planning permission in relation to the demolition of redundant business units at Greenfield Business Park is currently being explored. Therefore, the demolition is unlikely to take place until the next financial year.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.200m into 2025/26.	
Private Sector Renewal/Improvement	0.059	0.031	0.059	0.000	0	0.000			
Total	3.671	0.035	3.471	(0.200)	-5	(0.508)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTATION
Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Waste Services	0.217	0.003	0.217	0.000	0	(3.405)			A saving identified of £2.405m. Work has commenced to scope the feasibility study and review of operational depots and infrastructure, which will help to determine the direction of the Waste Transfer Station Project. Due to the timescales associated with this work, a proportion of funding has been released back into the capital programme in the interim.
Cemeteries	0.749	0.012	0.499	(0.250)	-33	0.000	The purchase of required land at Hawarden Cemetery is anticipated to be completed in 2024/25. However, the development at the site is programmed for the 2025/26 financial year.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.250m to 2025/26.	
Highways	3.290	1.371	3.290	0.000	0	(0.500)			
Local Transport Grant	7.568	4.032	7.568	0.000	0	0.000			
Street Farms	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		(0.046)			
Total	11.824	5.420	11.574	(0.250)	-2	(3.951)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Affordable Housing	0.861	0.861	0.861	0.000	0	0.000			
Disabled Facilities Grants	1.867	0.953	1.867	0.000	0	0.000			DFG spend is customer driven and volatile.
Total	2.728	1.815	2.728	0.000	0	0.000			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

CAPITAL PROGRAMME & ASSETS

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Administrative Buildings	2.129	0.471	2.129	0.000	0	(0.041)			
Community Asset Transfers	0.146	0.071	0.096	(0.050)	-34	(0.491)	The CAT at the Glanrafon Community Centre has yet to be completed. Therefore, works are looking unlikely to be completed in 2024/25.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.050m to 2025/26.	A saving identified of £0.100m. This money had been earmarked for Mancot Library however, the allocation is no longer required as the Community Library Organisation has found alternative premises.
Leisure Centres & Libraries	0.364	0.035	0.207	(0.157)	-43	0.000	Deeside Leisure Centre AWP replacement works likely to fall into 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.157m into 2025/26.	
Play Areas	0.638	0.209	0.420	(0.218)	-34	0.000	Match funding schemes progressing into 2025/26.	Carry Forward - Request approval to move funding of £0.218m into 2025/26.	Playarea spend is volatile and is driven by the replacement rolling programme.
Theatr Clwyd	23.088	9.016	23.088	0.000	0	0.000			
Total	26.365	9.802	25.940	(0.425)	-2	(0.532)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Disabled Adaptations	1.100	0.750	1.100	0.000	0	0.000	Client led and volatile. Potential overspend of £0.300m due to an increase in large adaptations required, will continue to monitor and review.		
Energy Services	4.563	1.995	4.563	0.000	0	0.000	ORP 3 works continuing in Leeswood and Holywell - £1.6m WG Funding.		Additional funding offered of £0.735m ORP bid for in year. Funding to be used within 2024/25, additional properties identified.
Major Works	2.156	1.530	2.156	0.000	0	0.000	Smoke Alarm Installation programme, Urgent Capital Works and Fire Risk Assessments. Full spend assumed.		Fire Safety Heights Grant awarded from WG, £3m. Work to be carried on in 2024/25. Works currently delayed. Current shortfall in funding due to these delays, WG have offered to meet this shortfall in additional funding.
Accelerated Programmes	0.532	0.309	0.532	0.000	0	0.000	Asbestos Removal programme. Full spend assumed.		
WHQS Improvements	12.994	4.931	12.994	0.000	0	0.000	Additional £0.516m received from WG for WHQS Implementation which is to be used for Stock Condition Surveys. WHQS 2 Schemes ongoing.		
Modernisation/Improvements	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	No schemes currently identified. Business Plan assumes Prudential Borrowing to fund any schemes.		
SHAMP	1.000	0.325	1.000	0.000	0	0.000	A number of pipeline schemes at feasibility stage ,potential buy backs identified to assist with the reduction in Homeless spend.		Additional £2.9m TACP funding awarded for 2024/25 which could potentially contribute to any buy backs identified.
Total	22.345	9.839	22.345	0.000	0	0.000			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

SUMMARY

Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Month 6

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
People & Resources	0.386	0.000	0.386	0.000	0	0.000			
Governance	2.218	0.017	2.148	(0.070)	-3	(0.433)			
Education & Youth	24.515	5.811	23.779	(0.736)	-3	(1.745)			
Social Services	20.338	5.635	20.338	0.000	0	(0.183)			
Planning, Environment & Economy	3.671	0.035	3.471	(0.200)	-5	(0.508)			
Streetscene & Transportation	11.824	5.420	11.574	(0.250)	-2	(3.951)			
Housing & Communities	2.728	1.815	2.728	0.000	0	0.000			
Capital Programme & Assets	26.365	9.802	25.940	(0.425)	-2	(0.532)			
Sub Total - Council Fund	92.045	28.534	90.364	(1.681)	-2	(7.352)			
Housing Revenue Account	22.345	9.839	22.345	0.000	0	0.000			
Total	114.390	38.373	112.709	(1.681)	-1	(7.352)			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2023/24 ACTUAL SPEND

APPENDIX C

TOWN FUNDING	23/24 ACTUAL £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS			
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000	
EXPENDITURE																					
HOUSING - HRA																					
SHARP	2,399		273	158	644	131		619	50				99		126	299			1,207	1,192	2,399
EDUCATION & YOUTH																					
Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint	847						847												0	847	847
Ysgol Penyffordd Extension	1,015	672	343																672	343	1,015
SOCIAL SERVICES																					
Croes Atti Newydd Residential Care Home, Flint	3,294						3,294												0	3,294	3,294
Relocation of Tri-Ffordd Day Service provision	43										43								0	43	43
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTION																					
Highways Maintenance	2,350	395		222		420		343		392		244		243		91			2,350	0	2,350
Transport Grant	3,490		189		126	760		5	877		426		175		466	4	462		9	3,481	3,490
CAPITAL PROGRAMME & ASSETS																					
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	17,019									1,747	15,272								1,747	15,272	17,019
	30,457	1,067	805	380	770	551	4,901	967	927	2,139	15,741	244	274	243	592	394	462		5,985	24,472	30,457

AREA TOTAL

1,872

1,150

5,452

1,894

17,880

518

835

856

INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2024/25 REVISED BUDGET

APPENDIX C (Cont)

TOWN FUNDING	REVISED BUDGET £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS				
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000		
EXPENDITURE																						
HOUSING - HRA																						
SHARP	1,000	318															682			1,000	0	1,000
EDUCATION & YOUTH																						
Ysgol Croes Atti Flint	12,925					2,834	10,091													2,834	10,091	12,925
St Richard Gwyn, Flint	1,017						1,017													0	1,017	1,017
SOCIAL SERVICES																						
Croes Atti Newydd Residential Care Home, Flint	14,960					5,954	9,006													5,954	9,006	14,960
Relocation of Tri-Ffordd Day Service provision	4,319									1,429	2,890								1,429	2,890	4,319	
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTION																						
Cemeteries	749	190											559							749	0	749
Highways Maintenance	3,290	45			188	186		273		262			389		28		1,581	338	2,952	338	3,290	
Transport Grant	7,568		513		1,402		35		720					3,472		5		1,192	0	7,568	7,568	
CAPITAL PROGRAMME & ASSETS																						
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	23,088									7,028	16,060									7,028	16,060	23,088
Greenfield Business Centre	423								423											423	0	423
PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY																						
Rhos-town Community Hub, Shotton	750						750													0	750	750
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES																						
Affordable Housing	861	118									743									861	0	861
	70,950	671	513	188	2,152	8,974	20,149	696	720	9,462	19,179	948	3,472	28	5	2,263	1,530		23,230	47,720	70,950	
AREA TOTAL			1,184		2,340		29,123		1,416		28,641		4,420		33		3,793					

Page 180

TOWN FUNDING	ACTUAL TO DATE £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS				
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000		
EXPENDITURE																						
HOUSING - HRA																						
SHARP	325	318															7			325	0	325
EDUCATION & YOUTH																						
Ysgol Croes Atti Flint	3,801						3,801													0	3,801	3,801
St Richard Gwyn, Flint	570						570													0	570	570
SOCIAL SERVICES																						
Croes Atti Newydd Residential Care Home, Flint	3,995						3,995													0	3,995	3,995
Relocation of Tri-Ffordd Day Service provision	1,195										1,195									0	1,195	1,195
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTION																						
Cemeteries	12												12							12	0	12
Highways Maintenance	1,371	45		188		186		273		262		389		28					1,371	0	1,371	
Transport Grant	4,020		15		1,326		13		64		196		2,400		5				0	4,020	4,020	
CAPITAL PROGRAMME & ASSETS																						
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	9,016										9,016									0	9,016	9,016
Greenfield Business Centre	279							279												279	0	279
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES																						
Affordable Housing	861	118								743										861	0	861
	25,445	481	15	188	1,326	186	8,379	552	64	1,005	10,407	401	2,400	28	5	7	1		2,848	22,597	25,445	

AREAS TOTAL

496

1,514

8,565

616

11,412

2,801

33

8

INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2025 - 2027 BUDGET

APPENDIX C (Cont)

TOWN FUNDING	FUTURE BUDGET £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS			
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000			
EXPENDITURE																					
EDUCATION & YOUTH																					
Joint Archive Facility, FCC and DCC	12,800									3,079	9,721								3,079	9,721	12,800
Ysgol Croes Atti Flint	1,697					1,697													1,697	0	1,697
Drury County Primary	4,800	1,680	3,120																1,680	3,120	4,800
Elfed High School	4,488	1,571	2,917																1,571	2,917	4,488
Sallney/Broughton Area	16,000													5,600	10,400				5,600	10,400	16,000
SOCIAL SERVICES																					
Croes Atti Newydd Residential Care Home, Flint	183					183													183	0	183
Development of Children's Residential Care	1,000																1,000		1,000	0	1,000
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTION																					
Highways Asset Management Plan	3,000																3,000		3,000	0	3,000
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES																					
Affordable Housing	22,642																22,642		22,642	0	22,642
	66,610	3,251	6,037	0	0	1,880	0	0	0	3,079	9,721	0	0	5,600	10,400	26,642	0	40,452	26,158	66,610	
AREA TOTAL			9,288	0	0	1,880	0	0	0	12,800	0	0	16,000	26,642							

Prudential Indicators Q2 2024/25

The Council measures and manages its capital expenditure, borrowing and commercial and service investments with references to the following indicators.

It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis.

Table 1 - Capital Expenditure in £ millions: The Council has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below. The increase in forecasted expenditure between 2023/24 to 2024/25, in the main relate to works at Theatr Clwyd, Ty Croes Atti and the Band B schools programme.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Council Fund	46.277	90.364	26.435	25.418
Housing Revenue Account	23.530	22.345	28.683	23.987
Total	69.807	112.709	55.118	49.405

Table 2 - Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions: The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast *	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Council Fund	219.706	315.506	323.482	337.463
Housing Revenue Account	133.150	132.921	139.734	142.410
Total	352.856	448.427	463.216	479.873

* £77m of the CFR increase in 2024/25 arises from a change in the accounting for leases.

The increase in estimated CFR between 2023/24 and 2024/25 in the main, relates to the change in accounting for leases under IFRS 16. This means that under the new rules, the lease of any assets must be recognised on the Council's balance sheet.

In addition to this, is estimated expenditure for the HRA and NEW Homes, Supported Borrowing, and Council Fund schemes including the Sustainable Communities for Schools programme, Theatr Clwyd and Ty Croes Atti Residential Care Home.

Table 3 - Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions: Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Authority has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium

term as is shown below.

	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Debt (Incl Leases)	334.743	412.466	432.854	451.870
Capital Financing Requirement	352.856	448.427	463.216	479.873

Table 4 - Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary in £ millions: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	2024/25 Limit	30.09.24 Actual
Operational Boundary - Total	£485m	£397m
Authorised Limit - Total	£520m	£397m

Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

Table 5 - Net Income from Commercial and Service Investments to Net Revenue Stream in £ millions: The Council’s income from commercial and service investments as a proportion of its net revenue stream has been and is expected to be as indicated below.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Total net income from service and commercial investment	1.710	1.674	1.673	1.673
Proportion of net revenue stream	0.49%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%

Table 6 - Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream in £ millions: Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue.

The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Council Fund	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%	4.5%
HRA	17.0%	16.2%	18.2%	18.6%

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Council Tax Base for 2025/26
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Setting the council tax base is integral to the revenue budget and council tax approval process for 2025/26. It allows the Council, Police & Crime Commissioners Office for North Wales, and Town/Community Councils to also calculate next year's council tax precept.

The base for has been calculated at 66,458 band 'D' equivalent properties, after considering the total number of properties that will be subject to council tax, including those that are subject to the council tax premium rates, less those which are exempt from council tax or where statutory household discounts apply.

Setting the tax base at 66,458 band 'D' equivalents also incorporates the decision of Council to uplift the premium rates from 75% to 100% for Long Term Empty properties, from April 2025. Overall, there is growth in the tax base equating to 0.57% compared to the previous year, this represents an extra 377 band D equivalent properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Approve the tax base of 66,458 band D equivalent properties for tax setting purposes (as shown in Appendix 1) for the financial year 2025/26, which incorporates the planned uplift to the rates from 75% to 100% to the rates for Long Term Empty Properties and the continuation of the 100% premium rates for Second Homes.
2	Continue to set a 'nil' discount for properties falling within any of the Prescribed Classes (A, B or C) and for this to apply to the whole of the county area.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2025/26
1.01	The council fulfils the role of 'billing authority' for the collection of council tax and each year is required to set the council tax base for the following tax year.
1.02	The calculation of the base, expressed as an equivalent number of band 'D' properties, is always set as at the end of the calendar year which then allows the council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales and town/community councils to calculate the next financial year's council tax precepts.
1.03	Council recently decided to use discretionary powers to vary the premium rates from April 2025, and to uplift the premium rates from 75% to 100% for long term empty homes, and to maintain a premium rate of 100% for second homes. The Tax base projections for 2025/26 reflects those decisions.
1.04	Once approved, the tax base calculations (before adjusting for the assumed losses in collection) are also supplied to Welsh Government and are then used for the calculation of entitlements to Revenue Support Grant and this figure will appear in The Local Government Finance Report (No 1) (Wales) 2025/26. This information will also be published in a national statistical release in January 2025.
1.05	The calculation of the tax base is the measure of the annual taxable capacity for all areas in the county, including the additional taxable capacity for the council tax premium, and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The starting point for determining the base is the Valuation List supplied by the Valuation Office Agency. The total number of properties in each band is then reduced by exemptions, disregards, and discounts. Discounts include, for example, reductions for single-persons or students.
1.06	Due to housebuilding, good tax base management by reviewing discounts and exemptions, and the uplift in the premium rates, the number of band D equivalent properties has increased by 0.57% or 377 properties.
1.07	The latest tax base has been calculated using a projected collection level of 98.8%. In other words, setting an assumed collection level of 98.8% is the level at which the council may eventually collect from what is due to be paid - allowing for an overall provision of 1.2% for potential bad debts. The 98.8% assumed collection level in Flintshire contrasts with a Welsh average of 97.9%.
1.08	To determine the final level of the base, the council is required to determine what discount, if any, is awarded to owners of second homes (otherwise known as Prescribed Discount Class A and B properties) or long-term empty properties (Prescribed Discount Class C).

1.09	The council tax base for 2025/26 has also been calculated in line with current policies of not awarding discounts to any Prescribed Class. The fact that some properties are liable to pay the premium rates, effectively increases the size of the tax base by one band D property for every band D long term empty property or band D second home.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
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2.01	Setting the tax base is part of an annual process of determining council tax charges for the next financial year as part of the council's budget preparations.
2.02	The tax base is also used by the Police & Crime Commissioner and town/community councils to set their new council tax precepts, and which will be included in the 2025/26 bills sent to every council taxpayer.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	The council has a statutory duty to set a council tax base no later than 31st December and the proposed tax base is a complex calculation across 34 town and community areas requiring an accurate forecast for the next financial year of the number of chargeable properties after considering new builds, property exemptions and discount schemes, including those properties that are subject to the council tax premium scheme (as amended).
3.02	The tax base is based on current property data, discounts and exemptions, but includes a bad debt provision of 1.2% for non-collection, giving an eventual collection rate of 98.8%.
3.03	The council tax base at 66,458 sets a Base at an accurate level to ensure, as far as possible, that a financial deficit does not occur in the Collection Fund.
3.04	Officers carefully track and monitor the tax base and Collection Fund performance and the results feed into corporate monthly budget monitoring and reporting processes.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	None.
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 to this report shows the breakdown of the tax base for 2025/26 by town and community area.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Finance Act 1992 – sections 22b(7) and 68 • Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) (Wales) Regs 1995 • The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) (Wales) (Amendment) Regs 2016 • Council tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (Wales) Regs 2004 • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 – section 139

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: David Barnes, Revenues & Procurement Manager</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704848</p> <p>E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Revenue Support Grant: the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to partly fund services, alongside revenue from Council tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although the freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.</p> <p>Tax Base: is a measure of the Councils ‘taxable capacity’ considering the number of chargeable properties after exemptions and discounts.</p> <p>Chargeable Dwellings: are properties deemed to fall liable to Council tax which are listed in the Valuation List.</p> <p>Prescribed Discount Classes: Special rules apply to certain dwellings where no-one is resident. In these cases, a Welsh billing authority may decide to apply a lower rate of discount or, to apply no discount at all. These classes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class A – property which is unoccupied and furnished but where occupation is prohibited by law for over 28 days each year. • Class B – property which is unoccupied and furnished and occupation is not prohibited by law. • Class C – property which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished beyond the normal exemption period. <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.</p>

<p>For the purposes of charging a premium a long-term empty home is defined as a property which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least 1 year. A second home is defined as a dwelling which is not a person's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished. There are some exceptions from the Council tax premium, some of which are time limited.</p>

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APPENDIX 1 - COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2025/26

Community	2025-26 Properties at Band 'D' Equivalent	2024-25 Properties at Band 'D' Equivalent
Argoed	2,550.06	2,543.48
Bagillt	1,493.78	1,471.65
Broughton & Bretton	2,765.17	2,752.50
Brynford	479.91	481.59
Buckley	6,806.41	6,775.24
Caerwys	649.69	640.09
Cilcain	752.75	754.61
Connahs Quay	6,277.40	6,229.16
Flint	5,113.56	5,062.87
Gwernaffield & Pantymwyn	1,025.38	1,025.88
Gwernymynydd	592.63	593.54
Halkyn	1,358.72	1,353.13
Hawarden	6,381.06	6,398.85
Higher Kinnerton	893.29	894.93
Holywell	3,493.13	3,427.02
Hope	1,858.70	1,836.54
Leeswood	859.67	861.65
Llanasa	2,055.12	2,037.05
Llanfynydd	888.07	884.86
Mold	4,550.81	4,518.45
Mostyn	744.78	738.22
Nannerch	272.52	281.80
Nercwys	304.61	306.80
Northop	1,586.20	1,587.78
Northop Hall	842.60	837.24
Penyffordd	2,314.39	2,293.99
Queensferry	720.01	708.85
Saltney	1,957.94	1,946.15
Sealand	1,564.80	1,554.24
Shotton	2,237.08	2,215.01
Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor	419.59	427.18
Treuddyn	773.63	767.82
Whitford	1,193.18	1,182.63
Ysceifiog	681.36	690.20
Total Band 'D' Equivalent Properties	66,458.00	66,081.00

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Residual Waste Collection Change - Implementation and Policy Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2024, Cabinet approved the transition to a three-weekly residual waste kerbside collection model, whilst retaining the comprehensive weekly kerbside recycling and food waste collection service currently provided. This is a fundamental action set out in the Council's Resource and Waste Strategy to improve the Council's recycling performance, maximise resource efficiency, minimise waste, reduce emissions and minimise the risk of infraction fines. It is also a key action recommended within an internal audit report on recycling performance for the authority, which was rated "red" for assurance, in mitigation against the strategic red risk on the Council risk register.

The report that was presented to Cabinet in July 2024 detailed that a further report would be provided to set out the implementation plan and communications plan, to provide members with assurance that the change to service will be well planned and managed to minimise the impact to Flintshire residents. This update report presents the proposed implementation date and details the action plan and communications plan in place for the service change.

The report also includes an updated Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to service, and an updated HRC Vehicle Permit Policy to reflect the revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approves the proposed implementation date for the residual waste collection frequency change already approved.
2	Cabinet notes the proposed implementation plan presented with this report and supports the work undertaken to date.

3	Cabinet notes the communication plan presented with this report.
4	Cabinet notes the updated Recycling and Household Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to services.
5	Cabinet notes the updated Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy to be published following the adoption of revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their vehicles.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR DELIVERING SERVICE CHANGE TO RECYCLING AND WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES
1.01	<p>In July 2024, Cabinet approved the transition to a three-weekly residual waste kerbside collection model, whilst retaining the comprehensive weekly kerbside recycling and food waste collection service currently provided. This is a fundamental action set out in the Council’s Resource and Waste Strategy to improve the Council’s recycling performance, maximise resource efficiency, minimise waste, reduce emissions and minimise the risk of infraction fines. It is also a key action recommended within an internal audit report on recycling performance for the authority, which was rated “red” for assurance, in mitigation against the strategic red risk on the Council risk register.</p> <p>The report that was presented to Cabinet in July 2024 detailed that a further report would be provided to set out the implementation plan and communications plan, to provide members with assurance that the change to service will be well planned and managed to minimise the impact to Flintshire residents. This update report presents the proposed implementation date, and details the action plan and communications plan in place for the service change.</p> <p>The report also includes an updated Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Operations Policy to reflect the previously approved changes to service, and an updated HRC Vehicle Permit Policy to reflect the revised procedures put in place to support customers with disabilities who may need to access the HRCs using their own vehicles.</p>
1.02	<p><u>Implementation Date</u></p> <p>It is proposed that the implementation date of the service change is Monday, 28th April 2025. This allows sufficient time for the service to undertake the appropriate planning, testing, and familiarisation of new routes, procure additional resources, such as vehicles and containers, and develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan for residents.</p>

	<p>We have considered earlier implementation dates; however, the lead-in times for delivery of the recycling recovery vehicles (RRVs) and bespoke collection vehicles for food waste collections, as well as ordering stock such as recycling bags and containers do not allow for an earlier implementation date.</p> <p>Additionally, the beginning of April 2025 conflicts with the Easter holiday period, which risks some residents not being at home when their first scheduled collection for the new service takes place and could result in collections not being made for up to six weeks if they were on holiday. An implementation date of 28th April 2024 would ensure that we avoid the Easter holiday period when people may be away from home for their first scheduled collection.</p>
1.03	<p><u>Implementation Plan</u></p> <p>To effectively manage the transition in service, a project group has been established to progress the service change, which is meeting on a weekly basis. Several individual workstreams have been established by this group leading to a number of sub-projects. Each sub-project has been assigned a project lead and project support officers to progress required actions. This has required cross-portfolio working and external support to progress. The workstreams include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data cleansing for existing residual waste rounds, recycling rounds, absorbent hygiene products (AHP)/nappy collections and assisted collections. • Residual and recycling round reviews (including five-day working Monday to Friday) • Collection container stock review and new recycling bag trial • Staffing and resource reviews in consultation with employees and Trade Unions • Procedural reviews of current services to data cleanse and improve efficiencies. • Planning for garden waste subscriptions and collection service in spring 2025 • Enhanced excess waste enforcement post implementation. • Time and motion studies of existing working practice • Fleet vehicle review for waste and recycling collection services. <p>Appendix 1 sets out these workstreams in a Gantt chart as an overview document and the relative timescales for their action and implementation.</p>
1.04	<p>To assist with service change planning, WRAP Cymru have shared with us a paper to help local authorities learn from the issues that have been experienced in other areas across Wales, which outlines the steps that can be taken to help mitigate and minimise issues during a service change.</p> <p>Adequate time for planning and preparation has been highlighted as a key risk, and support functions within the local authority (health and safety, information technology, human resources, fleet services, procurement, customer services, communications/public relations) need to be actively involved from the start and have a full understanding of the change and the resources that may be required from them pre, during and post the service change. The project group has included relevant personnel from these support functions, who will be key as the project develops over the coming months.</p>

WRAP Cymru advise that local authorities should not underestimate the demands on resource of continuing to manage business as usual on top of mobilising a new service and adequate time is required to ensure that the pre-mobilisation, planning and support can be planned and resourced. The amount of work and resources required for each element should not be underestimated. This will be a key element of our operational plans going forward.

1.05

Communication Plan

The key to successful implementation will be the managed communication of information to stakeholders throughout the transition period. To aid this, a four-phased communications plan has been developed pre, during and post service change to share the right level of information at the appropriate times. Support from WRAP Cymru, the Communications team, Customer Services, Connects Centres and Contact Centre will be provided to deliver this.

WRAP Cymru has emphasised the importance of ensuring both internal and external plans and lines of communication are clear with a robust communications plan to include appropriate communications for members, frontline staff, residents, all council employees.

Details of the four-phased plan include:

Phase one: September to December 2024

- Instilling current processes ensuring residents are engaged with the service.
- Developing resources to support the service change campaign.

Phase two: November 2024 to April 2025

- Promote the date of the service change.
- Launch 'Let's get it sorted' campaign.
- Launch resources to support service change preparedness.
- Update website/social media with relevant resources.
- Community engagement events (Connects/HRCs/community centres)
- Align with national recycling campaigns.
- Staff engagement and training (involving TUs)

Phase three: January – April 2025

- Social media campaign/developing FAQs
- Community engagement events (Connects/HRCs/community centres)
- Door knocking campaigns.
- Member workshops/briefing sessions
- Staff briefings (involving TUs)

Phase four: April 2025 onwards

- Continuation of engagement campaigns
- Door knocking campaigns and route monitoring
- Developing FAQs

Appendix 2 outlines the high level four-phased communications plan in a Gantt chart and the relative timescales for each action and implementation.

1.06	<p><u>Household Recycling and Waste Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy</u></p> <p>The household waste collections and household recycling centre policy was last updated and published in 2017. As part of the implementation plan, an update of this policy has been included with this report to reflect the changes that have already been approved by Cabinet and implemented since this time through various other committee cycles.</p> <p>The updated policy takes account of the revised residual waste collection frequency, introduction of services such as absorbent hygiene products (AHP) and nappy collections, which were introduced in 2021, and changes to the household recycling centres, such as operational days, booking systems for certain waste streams and charging for some materials.</p> <p>The purpose of including the policy document update in this report is to publish an accurate and up-to-date policy to reflect the changes that have already been approved previously and for our elected members and residents to have a clear policy to which to refer.</p> <p>Appendix 3 details the updated policy to be published.</p>
1.07	<p><u>Vehicle Permit Policy</u></p> <p>The household recycling centre vehicle permit policy has been updated to include a procedure for the assessment of vehicles that are required by residents with disabilities who may be unable to access the HRCs due to their vehicle not meeting the criteria of the policy, for example, a high sided camper van or cases where the vehicle has been adapted to accommodate the disability.</p> <p>The policy already allows for mobility vehicles to be allowed unrestricted access if they are within the size criteria of the policy; however, a request has been put forward by some members to make adjustments to the policy for those vehicles outside the size restrictions and concerns have been raised that the council could be in breach of the Equality Act by restricting access to these residents.</p> <p>Following consultation with the strategic equality advisor, the Council is required to make reasonable adjustments to policy in these instances, on provision of demonstratable need for the adjustment. The policy has therefore been updated to allow for those vehicles to be issued with a permit, subject to the following eligibility checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standard vehicle permit application should be completed. • Applicant to provide a copy of a valid blue badge. <p>Appendix 4 details the updated section (blue writing) to be published.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	As outlined in this report, a project group has been set up for the implementation of this service change and varying resources from other areas of the portfolio will need to be allocated as the project progresses. This will include input from several Streetscene teams, including Waste Strategy, Waste and Recycling Operations, Enforcement, Training and Compliance, Fleet Services, Stores Management, Business Admin Support, and the Technical Team.
2.02	Additional support will be required from support functions across the local authority (health & safety, information technology, human resources, fleet services, procurement, customer services, communications/public relations, contact centre), which are currently being programmed into the implementation plan and consulted upon with the relevant teams.
2.03	Work is already underway on the review of current waste and recycling rounds, and staffing and resource reviews will be undertaken in consultation with employees and Trade Unions accordingly.
2.04	Modelling work undertaken has shown that a transition to a 3-weekly residual waste collection model, while retaining the comprehensive weekly recycling service, will deliver annual savings of £0.654m. The reports presented and approved through the July 2024 committee cycle provide further background details on the modelling work carried out, which will provide the baseline data for measuring and monitoring performance in the future.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	This is an operational update for members following the approval of the Cabinet decision to transition to a 3-weekly collection model. The purpose of presenting the proposed implementation plan and communications plan is to ensure that members have sight of the plans in place and provide an update on progress made to date, as well as identify any potential risks to the programme.
3.02	WRAP Cymru have shared information to help local authorities learn from the issues that have been experienced in other areas across Wales and have outlined the steps that can be taken to help mitigate and minimise issues during a service change. The advice received from WRAP Cymru has been factored into our plans.
3.03	The service change is a fundamental action in achieving the objectives of our Resource and Waste Strategy and mitigating the likelihood of Welsh Government issuing the outstanding infraction charges for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24, which currently equate to £1.2m.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation.

4.02	Chief Officer team
4.03	Council portfolios (via the project group)
4.04	Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Implementation Plan
5.02	Appendix 2 – Communication Plan
5.03	Appendix 3 – Recycling and Household Collections and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy
5.04	Appendix 4 – Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Cabinet Report - Resource and Waste Strategy Cabinet Report - Transition to a Restricted Capacity Residual Waste Collection Model

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

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Residual Waste Materials that remain following efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle or compost. Commonly known as ‘general waste’ or ‘black bin waste’.</p> <p>Dry Recycling Recyclable items collected such as, cardboard, paper, tin cans, plastic bottles/tubs/trays, glass bottles/jars, waxed cartons, aerosols</p> <p>AHP Absorbent hygiene products such as nappies and incontinence pads.</p> <p>Kerbside Collections the collection of recycling and waste from residential properties</p> <p>Household Recycling Centres Waste disposal centres where residents can dispose of domestic waste and recycling items that are not collected at the Kerbside.</p>

Resources Materials, such as glass, plastic, paper fibres, that can be utilised to produce new items.

Infraction fine a financial penalty imposed by government for not meeting statutory recycling targets.

Round Review a review of the waste and recycling collection rounds to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to collect the waste presented as efficiently as possible.

Excess Waste additional residual waste placed alongside the black bin, or on top of the black bin so that the lid does not fully close.

Appendix 1 - Implementation Plan

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	Implementation	May	June
Recycling and Residual Waste - Round Review												
Data Cleanse of current rounds												
Round mapping, time and motion studies, data validation												
Round testing, data validation, systems update												
Post implementation monitoring and adjustment												
Collection Containers												
Review container stock and ordering												
Recycling Container Trail												
Staffing and Resources												
IT Systems upgrades												
Staffing and Recruitment												
Health & Safety assessments												
Staff training												
Procedural Reviews												
Recycling Collections from flats												
Absorbent Hygiene Products												
Assisted Collections												
Clear bag policy at HRCs												
Subscriptions												
Garden Waste Subscriptions Promotion												
Excess Waste												
Enhanced Monitoring												
Communications												
Phase 1 (Pre-cabinet)												
Phase 2 (Post-cabinet)												
Phase 3 (Implementation build up)												
Continued Education												

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Appendix 2 - Communications Plan

	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	Implementation	May	June
Phase 1											
"Did you know campaign" - social media / engagement sessions / website videos											
Recycling Education - increased promotion of services and equipment (link to national campaigns)											
Increased promotion of food waste recycling - resident engagement / walkarounds / social media											
Phase 2											
Promotion of clear bag policy at HRCs											
"Lets get it sorted" how to campaign roll out - PR / members briefing / website/ social media / resident engagement											
FAQs & promotion of weekly recycling service - members email / resident engagement / website / leaflets											
Christmas campaign - social media											
Promotion of new collection schedules											
Phase 3											
Move to 3-weekly - door knocking campaign											
Delivery of new collection schedule calendar											
"Lets get it sorted" how to campaign continued with focus on reduced black bin collections (key things to prepare) - residents engagement / FAQ sessions / informative videos / staff comms / social media											
Are you ready campaign - leaflets / bin stickers / social media / member workshops / staff comms											
Staff training & FAQs											
Round up of key messages and reminders - social media / connect centre & HRC messaging / toolbox talks / member workshops / resident engagement / leaflets											
Phase 4											
Continued promotion of change and education, door knocking and route monitoring, develop FAQs where required.											

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HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING AND WASTE COLLECTIONS and HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE OPERATIONS POLICY



 **Sir y Fflint yn ailgylchu**
Flintshire recycles

Overview

Policy	Household Recycling and Waste collection and Household recycling centre Operations Policy
Portfolio	Streetscene and Transportation
Service Area	Waste Strategy / Service Delivery
Related Documents	HRC Vehicle Permit Policy

Revision History

Version	Issue date	Summary of Changes
1	2017	Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy
2	November 2024	Policy revision following approved service changes implemented since 2017.

Approval

Version	Who/Where	Date
1	Cabinet	2017
2	Cabinet	
3		

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Legislations
3. Household Recycling and Waste collection Eligibility
4. Recycling and Waste Types and Frequency
5. Container Presentation
6. Collection Day and Time
7. Recycling Preparation and Presentation
8. Formalised Collection Points
9. Collections on Private Roads
10. Excess non-recyclable waste presentation and enforcement
11. Assisted collection
12. Missed wheeled bin(s) and Food Caddy
13. Missed Recycling
14. Clinical/Medical Household Waste Collection
15. Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) Household Waste Collection
16. Bulky Household Waste Collection
17. Household Recycling Centres (HRC's)
18. Locations
19. Operating days and hours
20. Materials Accepted
21. Changeable and Bookable Items
22. Recycling and Residual (Non-Recyclable) Waste
23. Materials and items not accepted.
24. Vehicle Permit Policy
25. Conditions of Site Use
26. Site Monitoring and Security

1. Introduction

Our vision is to lead Flintshire towards a circular economy, maximise our resource efficiency, minimise waste and work collaboratively with our communities to take collective environmental responsibility.

Through an effective resource and waste strategy, we aim to safeguard the well-being of current and future generations, support the local economy, and reduce our impact on climate change.

This policy sets out the Council's recycling and waste collection and disposal arrangements for householders in Flintshire and the householder's duty in accordance with set legislation to ensure that the vision is achieved.

2. Legislation

2.1. Under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA), Flintshire County Council (the "Council") is classed as a Waste Collection and Disposal Authority and, as such, has a statutory duty to collect household recycling and waste from all domestic properties in the county. Under Section 46(4) of the Act, the Council has specific powers to stipulate:

- The amount, size and type of the collection receptacle(s).
- Where the receptacle(s) must be placed for the purpose of collecting and emptying.
- The time the receptacle(s) must be placed for the purpose of collecting and emptying.
- The waste types which may or may not be placed within each of the receptacle(s).

2.2. In addition, Section 51 of the EPA sets out the authority's statutory duty as a waste disposal authority in that: -

2.3. It shall be the duty of each waste disposal authority to arrange:

- for the disposal of the controlled waste collected in its area by the waste collection authorities; and
- for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and recycling and for the disposal of waste so deposited.

2.4. Household waste and non-household waste (including construction waste) is defined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012.

3. Household Recycling and Waste Collection Eligibility

3.1. Each household in Flintshire, registered on the council tax register, will be entitled to receive the recycling and waste collection services as set out in this policy.

3.2. Non-domestic premises (businesses, charities and public sector organisations) are not entitled to a collection under this policy and are subject to the Workplace Recycling Regulations as set out in The Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023.

4. Recycling and Waste Types and Frequency

4.1. The Council operates a comprehensive weekly recycling collection service offering the following services:

Table 1: Recycling Collection Arrangements

Recycling	Container Type	Container size	Frequency
Glass bottles and jars	Blue box	40 litres	Weekly
Mixed plastics (bottles, tubs, pots, trays), Metals (tin cans and foil), Aerosols and Wax cartons	Silver hessian sack	90 litres	Weekly
Cardboard and paper (cardboard boxes, paper, envelopes, pamphlets)	Blue hessian sack	70 litres	Weekly
Food waste (uneaten food, peelings, carcasses, tea bags, eggshells, pet food, leftover food)	Green Container Silver caddy Liners	23 litres 7 litres 7 litres	Weekly
Domestic batteries	Clear plastic bag / pot	Not specified	Weekly

4.2. The Council operates a chargeable service for the collection of household garden waste (green waste). The charge is reviewed through the corporate annual review of fees and charges.

Table 2: Garden Waste Collection Arrangements

Recycling	Container Type	Container size	Frequency
Garden waste (grass, leaves, hedge cuttings, plants)	Brown wheeled bin	140 litres	Fortnightly

4.3. For any items that are deemed non-recyclable then the following service is provided:

Table 3: Residual Waste Collection Arrangements

Waste	Container Type	Container size	Frequency
Residual waste (e.g., non-recyclable waste, polystyrene, animal waste, used tissues and small hygiene products)	Black wheeled bin	180 litres	Once every three weeks
AHP (Absorbent hygiene Products) / Nappies	Orange container/Sacks	40 litres	Weekly

4.4. Some items not yet collected via the council collection services, such as plastic film,

crisp packets and pet food pouches, can be taken to local businesses, retailers or supermarkets for recycling. Further information on these locations is provided on the council website.

5. Container Presentation

- 5.1. Where operationally possible, all households are included in the collection service, and properties will receive curtilage (kerbside) collections. However, in some locations specific collection points will be identified by the Council and in some locations (e.g. terraced properties or flats) local collections will be provided from communal collection points or communal bins, which are provided for the purpose of storing recycling and waste materials prior to collection.
- 5.2. All containers are provided free of charge to the household, except for additional brown wheeled bins which are chargeable (see separate fees and charges policy).
- 5.3. All recycling and waste items must be presented in Council supplied containers to ensure that it is safe to collect.
- 5.4. All containers supplied to householders for the purpose of the recycling and waste collections shall remain the property of the Council and can be recalled or changed at the Council's discretion.
- 5.5. Householders are responsible for the storage, safe keeping, and cleaning of containers provided by the Council.
- 5.6. Only recycling and waste produced by a household on a normal day-to-day basis should be placed in the containers provided (i.e., it should not contain non-standard items such as bulky waste, commercial or business waste).
- 5.7. Households may request and present for collection multiple recycling containers to accommodate the amount of household recycling they produce on a weekly basis.
- 5.8. Only one black wheeled bin will be provided per property. Any property presenting more than one black wheeled bin will have the additional wheeled bin removed without notice.
- 5.9. Where a household has 6 or more permanent occupants, they may make a request for a larger, 240-litre black wheeled bin for the storage of non-recyclable waste, subject to relevant checks as stipulated by the Council. This service shall be subject to annual review and the 240-litre wheeled bin will be exchanged for a standard 180-litre wheeled bin once the number of permanent occupants reduces below 6.
- 5.10. All containers supplied by the Council must only be used for the storage of items as prescribed by the Council. Failure to do so may result in the Council retrieving the container(s) from the households.
- 5.11. Any request to provide a new or replacement wheeled bin, recycling container or food bags (e.g., due to damage or for a new property etc.) shall be made by contacting the Council through the Contact Centre on 01352 701234 or connects Centre. Only wheeled bins will be delivered by the Council to the householder's property. All other recycling containers can be collected from a network of collection sites across the

authority. A list of these sites can be found on the Council's [website](#).

- 5.12. Where a household produces large quantities of garden waste, they may purchase up to two additional 140-litre wheeled bins for the storage of this material. The charge for additional brown bins will be reviewed annually and details of current charges are available in the Council's fees & charges listing.
- 5.13. Lids on wheeled bins and hessian sacks must be fully closed when the recycling and waste is presented for collection to ensure that items are securely contained and to protect the environment and the health and safety of the collection crews when handling, moving or lifting the bins and to prevent street littering. Containers must not be overfilled, preventing them from being fully closed, so as to minimise spillage.
- 5.14. Any waste jammed in a wheeled bin that does not naturally fall out following the normal mechanical emptying process on the waste collection vehicles will not be taken. In these cases, householders will have to loosen the materials themselves ready for the next scheduled collection.
- 5.15. All wheeled bins, food containers and recycling containers must be placed on the driveway or footway within one metre of the curtilage or boundary of the property and be easily accessible and visible to the crews without the need to open gates etc. Where this is not possible, the containers should be placed on the footway or verge outside the property, at a point where they cause minimal obstruction to highway users.
- 5.16. The householder must collect their wheeled bins and recycling containers after they have been emptied and return them to within the boundary of their property on the day of collection. This includes at communal collection points. Containers must not be permanently stored on the public highway. Collection crews will return all bins and containers to the same point as they have been presented.
- 5.17. When householders move home, they are required to leave all wheeled bins and recycling containers at the property for the new occupant to use. The only exemptions are additional garden waste bins (brown wheeled bins) that have been purchased by the householder from the Council.

6. Collection Day and Time

- 6.1. Wheeled bin(s) and recycling collections, where operationally possible, will take place on the same day each week.
- 6.2. All wheeled bins, food containers and recycling bags and containers must be presented for collection by 7am on the day of collection and removed as soon as possible after collections have taken place.
- 6.3. Container(s) may be placed at their collection point on the evening before collection, however, the Council will not accept liability for any injury or damage to third parties as a result of any incidents occurring with a container left on the public highway unless caused by the acts or omissions of its employees, contractors or agents.
- 6.4. We recognise that Flintshire residents want to do their best to protect the environment, but occasionally high winds can cause problems on collection days. In windy weather,

household waste and recycling containers and their contents can easily get blown around and this can lead to some littering issues in some places. During windy weather, it is recommended that containers are not placed out for collection the evening before and that residents bring containers back in as soon as they can after collection to prevent them from being blown away.

- 6.5. It may be necessary for the Council to change collection days or time on occasion e.g., over the Christmas and New Year period or during inclement weather.
- 6.6. On some occasions, the Council may have to suspended collections due to a service disruption (e.g. during adverse weather, fuel shortage, national emergency etc.). The Council will make every effort to minimise the level of disruption to householders during these periods and will try to reschedule any missed collections as soon as the cause of the disruption comes to an end.
- 6.7. Notification of changed collection days in these instances will be available on the Council website, social media accounts and via the Council's Contact Centre.
- 6.8. Where the Council is unable to collect any missed waste collections due to a service disruption, householders should retain their recycling and waste materials until the next scheduled collection day when all material will be collected.
- 6.9. In these circumstances, residents can use their nearest household recycling centre (HRC), on selected days, for the disposal of large amounts of recycling and waste, that cannot be stored safely at home.

7. Recycling Preparation and Presentation

- 7.1. Certain recycling items (plastic pots, bottles, tubs, trays, glass jars, bottles, and metal tins and cans) placed in the container(s) should be rinsed and be free of the material originally stored in them.
- 7.2. Households must separate their waste items into the appropriate containers as per the advice provided by the Council. If the householder fails to correctly separate their waste materials into the prescribed containers as required, the waste may not be collected, and this shall not be classed as a missed collection.
- 7.3. In this instance the collection crew will notify the resident why the containers have not been emptied by way of informative sticker/leaflet left with the container. Following such an incident the householder will be requested to place their items in the correct container which will then be collected on the next scheduled collection day.

8. Formalised Collection Points

- 8.1. Where required, site specific arrangements will be made for recycling and waste collections at flats, terraced properties or properties with narrow or difficult access arrangements. These specific collection arrangements will be communicated to the householder by the Council.
- 8.2. Wheeled bins and recycling containers will be returned to their point of origin by the collection crews immediately after collection with the lid of the container(s) closed.
- 8.3. The householder must collect their wheeled bins and recycling containers after

they have been emptied and return them to within the boundary of their property on the day of collection. Containers must not be permanently stored at the designated collection points.

8.4. Every household that utilises an agreed collection point must have the number or name of their property clearly marked on their container(s) so that any containers can be linked back to the property.

9. Collections on private roads

9.1. Where possible, collection vehicles will travel along private roads or unadopted roads allowing residents to present their waste containers at the same point on their property as though the road were adopted.

9.2. Unadopted roads refer to roads that do not have to be adequately maintained by the highway authority under the Highways Act 1980. A legal duty to maintain these roads still exists, but the responsibility lies with the owners of the road, which usually consists of the owners of any properties fronting that road.

9.3. A private road is a road that is owned and maintained by a private individual, organisation or company rather than by the Council.

9.4. Should any private road be deemed unsuitable for the vehicles to travel along and/or poses a risk of damage to the vehicle the Council reserves the right to stop collections from the property. In this instance, the residents will be required to bring their container(s) to point where the private road meets the adopted highway.

9.5. Where a household is required to bring their containers to the adopted highway, then this will be discussed and agreed, in writing, in advance with the householder.

9.6. When a collection cannot be made from a private road on the day of collection, the household will be notified as soon as practically possible, and an alternative collection arrangement will be discussed and agreed.

9.7. If the owner of the private road or unadopted road refuses to allow the collection vehicles to use the road, the residents will be required to bring their container(s) to a point where the private road meets the adopted highway.

9.8. The Council will not be responsible for the maintenance of any private road or unadopted road used for the purpose of recycling or waste collections and will not take any responsibility for damage or disruption.

9.9. Householders who are physically unable to present their containers at the designated collection point or kerbside, and who have applied and been granted as eligible for an assisted collection will be entitled to a collection service from their property.

9.10. In some cases, this may mean an alternative collection method (e.g. smaller vehicle) or different collection day from the standard service and assisted collections on unadopted or private roads will need to be risk assessed independently and arranged with the householder or relevant landowner.

10. Excess non-recyclable waste presentation and enforcement

10.1. The Council will not collect excess non-recyclable waste that is presented in addition to the volume permitted within the black wheeled bin.

10.2. Excess waste is classed as:

- Additional non-recyclable waste placed alongside or outside the black wheeled bin.
- Additional waste placed on top of a wheeled black bin, with the lid either closed or open.
- More than one black wheeled bin (additional) placed out by a property for collection.

10.3. Any property that is identified as presenting excess waste may be subject to enforcement action. The Council takes a three-staged approach to excess waste presentation focusing on education and engagement first, then formal enforcement action if the issue persists. The stages are:

➤ **First stage (Informal): an advisory sticker and letter will be issued**

At this stage, a letter of advice will be issued along with informative leaflets on how the household can reduce waste and what can be separated for recycling, a sticker will also be placed on the bin to notify the resident. The crew will take the excess waste on this occasion.

➤ **Second stage (Formal): a Section 46 Notice will be issued**

A formal notice of the intention to take enforcement action if excess waste continues to be presented will be served on the property; this is known as a Section 46 Notice. At this stage, both an enforcement officer and the waste strategy team will be involved to help explain the requirements of the collection service and offer further advice on how to present waste and recycling for collection. This stage is recorded and monitored for future occurrences.

On this occasion, the crew will not take the excess waste, and it will be the responsibility of the householder to sort materials into the correct recycling containers provided ready for the next scheduled collection day.

➤ **Third stage (Formal): A Fixed Penalty Notice / Prosecution**

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued if stage one and two have been unsuccessful in effecting a change in the householder's behaviour and excess waste is continuing to be presented. There will be 28 days in which to pay the FPN, charged at £75 per instance. If this remains unpaid then the Council can progress to prosecution. Any excess waste will again be left for the resident to separate into the correct recycling containers in advance of the next scheduled collection day.

The Council will not return for excess waste reported as a missed collection following a Stage 2 or 3 event. Any additional bins presented by a property will be removed without notice.

11. Assisted Collections

11.1. Where, through ill-health or disability, a householder cannot present their wheeled bin or recycling containers at the curtilage or kerbside, and subject to there being no other able bodied adult person living at the property to assist with presenting the containers, the householder may make a formal request to the Council for an assisted collection.

- 11.2. This means that crews will collect recycling and waste containers from a location on the property which is agreed with the householder and returned following collection.
- 11.3. If an assisted collection is approved, a suitable collection point on the property shall be agreed with the householder and collections will then take place from this point. A risk assessment will be carried out prior to any collections at this agreed point. All containers will be returned to the agreed collection point by the collection crew once they have been emptied.
- 11.4. Assisted Collections will be restricted to those households who are in genuine need following approval of an application to the Council. If an assisted collection is no longer required, then the resident will be required to notify the Contact Centre and the property will be removed from the list. The Council will also review individual cases every 12 months and, if it is found that the service is no longer required, the assisted collection will be removed with 3 weeks' notice. Residents can apply for an assisted collection online.
- 11.5. When providing an assisted collection, there is a requirement for the access to the container(s) to be of an adequate standard so as not to pose a hazard to the collection crews and for all pets to be restrained or kept away from the area during collections. The Council reserves the right to withdraw the assisted waste collection arrangement from any property where the collection crew deems it unsafe to collect from.

12. Missed wheeled bin(s) and Food Caddy

- 12.1. If a wheeled bin (black or brown) or food waste caddy is placed out for collection at the kerbside, or at a collection point specified by the Council, on the correct collection day and time i.e. before 7am and it is not picked up by the Council by 3pm on the specified collection day, then this will be classed as a missed collection.
- 12.2. Where a genuine missed collection is reported, the Council will endeavour to return and collect the wheeled bin(s) or food caddy within two working days following receipt of the report of a missed collection.
- 12.3. Where it is proven that the householder has failed to place the bin out for collection at a collection point as specified in this policy or on the designated day and time, the Council will not return for the collection and the resident will be required to place their container(s) for collection on the next scheduled collection date or make arrangements to dispose of the waste at a household recycling centre.
- 12.4. Missed collections can be reported through the Contact Centre on telephone number 01352 701234 or through the Council's [website](#) after 3pm on the day of missed collection.

13. Missed Recycling

- 13.1. Where a recycling container is not collected this can be reported as a missed collection. However, the Council will not return for a missed recycling collections and the householder will be expected to place the recycling out for collection on the next scheduled collection day.

13.2. Alternatively, if the householder is unable to wait until the next scheduled collection day, then the recycling can be taken to one of the Council's five [HRCs](#).

14. Clinical/Medical Household Waste Collection

14.1. The Council provides a collection service for clinical/medical waste (e.g., dressings, bandages, stoma bags, catheters, needles) from householders upon request.

14.2. Requests for this service can be made by call the Contact Centre on 01352 701234 or by emailing streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk

14.3. The Council shall provide a suitable container(s) for the householder to store and present their clinical waste in.

14.4. An agreed collection point, day of collection, frequency of collection and any other specific instructions regarding this service, will be agreed between the Council and the householder in advance of collection being made.

14.5. If a collection is arranged, but no waste is presented on three consecutive collections, then the household will be removed from the collection schedule. Unless there is a prior agreement, households will automatically be removed from the collection service and will need to reapply.

15. Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) Household Waste Collection

15.1. The Council provides a collection service for absorbent hygiene products (AHP) waste (nappies, incontinence pads etc.) from householders upon request, and via a prescribed application form on the Council website.

15.2. The Council shall provide a suitable container and bags for the householder to store their AHP waste in for collection.

15.3. The AHP waste will be collected weekly on a designated day as stipulated by the Council. This may not be a day aligned with the standard recycling and waste collections for that property.

15.4. The AHP container can be presented for collection at the curtilage, or from just inside the boundary of the property, where the crew can see and access it easily. For assisted collection or private road households, this may vary.

15.5. A registered property will be provided with a collection service for a period of two years from the date of registration or until the collection is no longer required (whichever is shorter). After two years, households will automatically be removed from the service and need to reapply via the online [form](#).

15.6. When the service is no longer required then it is the responsibility of the household to notify the Council which can be done via the Streetscene Contact Centre or by emailing: streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk.

15.7. If no AHP waste is presented for collection on more than three occasions, then the household will be automatically removed from the collection schedule, unless agreed otherwise.

16. Bulky Household Waste Collection

- 16.1. The Council provides a bulky waste collection service for householders for items such as furniture, white goods (e.g. refrigerators, washing machines, tumble dryers) electrical items. A full list of items is published on the Council [website](#).
- 16.2. This is a chargeable service for 1 to 5 items. Extra items, up to a maximum of five additional items, can also be collected at an additional charge per item. The charges are reviewed through the corporate annual review of fees and charges.
- 16.3. Bulky collections can be requested through the Streetscene Contact Centre on 01352 701234 where a collection appointment with the householder will be made.
- 16.4. Fridges and fridge freezers are removed free of charge from all homes. These items must be presented at the kerbside and emptied of all contents prior to collection.
- 16.5. Home improvements including kitchen/bathroom renewals, fitted wardrobes and any soil and rubble from landscaping works will not be collected as part of a bulky waste collection service and households should make the appropriate arrangements with their contractor to ensure that they comply with their own duty of care for the compliant disposal of the material.
- 16.6. Non-domestic waste (from businesses, charities and public sector organisations) is not eligible for collection via this service.
- 16.7. The Council reserves the right to refuse the collection of any waste items that may cause harm or that may put at risk the health and safety of collection staff or members of the public.
- 16.8. The cost for this service is detailed in the Council's fees and charges listing. A subsidy to the standard charges is applied to householders in receipt of income support, unemployment benefit, disability living allowance, war pension, state pension or guaranteed pension credits. Proof of benefit will be required upon application.

17. Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)

- 17.1. The Council will provide well managed Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) that are accessible, safe and meet the requirements of householders of Flintshire that are registered on the Council Tax register.
- 17.2. The Council manages and operates five household recycling centres (HRCs) for Flintshire residents to donate for reuse, recycle, compost or dispose of small volumes of household items that cannot be collected by the household collection service. Waste items from non-domestic premises such as businesses will only be accepted at cost through Greenfield HRC as part of a permit scheme.
- 17.3. Residents are required to sort and separate their recycling and waste items before visiting the HRC site so that they can be placed quickly and conveniently into the correct recycling container. This allows for a quick transit through the site, thereby minimising overcrowding and queuing whilst maximising recycling.

18. Locations

Table 4: HRC Locations:

Site	Address
Buckley	Globe Way, Buckley. CH7 3LY
Greenfield	Greenfield Business Park No.2, Greenfield. CH8 7GJ
Mold	Nercwys Road, Nercwys, Mold. CH7 4ED
Sandycroft	Prince William Avenue, Deeside. CH5 2QZ
Oakenholt	Chester Road, Oakenholt. CH6 5SF

19. Operating days and hours

Table 5: HRC opening times.

	Greenfield	Buckley	Mold	Sandycroft	Oakenholt
Monday	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
Tuesday	CLOSED	CLOSED	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
Wednesday	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Thursday	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Friday	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
Saturday	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
Sunday	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm	9am – 5pm

19.1. All sites are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

19.2. The Council reserves the right to close the HRCs without notice in response to an emergency or if deemed to be unsafe (e.g. during adverse weather). In these instances, every effort will be made to reopen them as soon as it is safe to do so.

19.3. Information on any service disruption will be communicated via the council website and social media platforms.

20. Materials Accepted

20.1. A list of materials accepted at each HRC is listed on the Council [website](#). These materials do vary per site and are subject to change. Households are encouraged to review what can be accepted at each site before visiting. Unusually large amounts of the items listed or multiple loads of the same item(s) may not be accepted.

21. Changeable and Bookable Items

21.1. The Council operates a booking and charging system for some non-household waste items. Charge will be reviewed through the corporate annual review of fees and charges.

21.2. Details of how to book these items for disposal are shown on the Council [website](#).

21.3. Details of charges for the non-household items are listed in the Council's fees and charges listings.

22. Recycling and Residual (Non-Recyclable) Waste

- 22.1. Prior to visiting the HRCs, householders are encouraged to sort and separate their items into recycling and waste streams to allow for quick and efficient disposal on site.
- 22.2. Mixed bags of waste are not permitted to be placed into the residual (general) waste skip to ensure recyclable items are placed in the correct container. If residual waste does need to be disposed of this must be brought in a clear (transparent) bag or container so that recycling can be identified and removed prior to disposal, if present.
- 22.3. Any waste presented in black sacks, for example, will not be accepted and the customer will be asked to open these bags before disposal. Where recycling is presented within the black sacks, the customer will be asked to pre-sort the items and place them into the appropriate recycling container. Gloves and hand sanitising facilities will be available. The aim is to reduce the amount of waste going for disposal and to achieve this, customers will be required to sort their waste and will not be permitted to dispose of recyclable waste.

23. Materials and items not accepted.

- 23.1. The Council endeavours to accept a wide range of recycling and waste items generated by households; however, some items are not accepted due to their individual properties. These waste types include, but are not limited to:

Table 6: Waste types not accepted.

Item	Additional Information
Poisonous weed and invasive species (including but not limited to Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Common Ragwort)	See guidance from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for dealing with invasive weeds. NRW
Commercial fridges and freezers	Large commercial-type fridge/freezer will need to be disposed of through a specialist company to remove it.
Commercial tyres	Commercial tyres will need to be removed by a specialist company.
Petrol and diesel	Customers will need to contact a local fuel disposal specialist to dispose of petrol or diesel
Ammunition	Ammunition can be surrendered at the local police station, through a registered firearms dealer or to another authorised firearm certificate holder. Customers must not dispose of them themselves.
Fireworks and marine flares	Where possible, customers should follow the manufacturer's guidance for disposal. Used fireworks only can be thoroughly soaked in water, bagged and placed in the residual waste bin.

	However, it is illegal to dispose of unused fireworks or flares in this way.
Other explosive materials	See the guidance above on fireworks and ammunition.
Flammable liquids	Customers will need to contact a disposal specialist to dispose of flammable liquids
Clinical waste (e.g. sharps, dressings or colostomy bags)	Customers should speak to their local GP surgery, pharmacy or community nurse for help with disposing of infectious clinical waste. The Council also provides a clinical waste collection service for non-infectious clinical waste – see Clinical/Medical Household Waste Collection for further details
Medicines	Medicines and associated products should be disposed of at your local GP surgery or pharmacy
Animal carcasses	We do not accept domestic pets or wildlife carcasses at the Household Recycling Centres. Customers should contact their nearest veterinary surgery for advice.
Large or difficult wastes (e.g., vehicles, trailers, sheds, caravans, large tree stumps, boulders, engines)	Customers should contact specialist waste disposal companies for large or difficult waste streams or hire a skip from a reputable, accredited skip hire company

24. Vehicle Permit Policy

24.1. The Council operates a vehicle permit policy on all HRCs. The policy can be viewed here [Vehicle and Trailer Permit \(flintshire.gov.uk\)](http://flintshire.gov.uk)

25. Conditions of Site Use

25.1. The HRCs are operated to provide Flintshire households with a pleasant and professional experience. When visiting the HRCs we expect all customer to abide by our condition of site use rules.

25.2. The Council reserves the right to reject any person from a Household Recycling Centre if it suspects that they have contravened any of the conditions highlighted within this Policy.

- Respect site staff and other customers
- Comply with the instructions given by site staff
- Follow any signage, speed limits, health and safety law and guidelines
- Verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated
- Animals are not permitted to exit vehicles
- The use of mobile phones whilst driving and disposing of waste on site is prohibited
- Persons under 16 must be supervised by an adult
- All items are to be pre-sorted prior to visiting the site into the item type for quick and efficient disposal
- The Council reserves the right to inspect all items brought to site for compliance
- All items must be placed in the correct container for their disposal so to maximise

reuse and recycling.

- Customers may request assistance if required
- Any non-recyclable waste placed in the residual waste skip must be available for inspection and must not be contained in black sacks.

26. Site Monitoring and Security

26.1. For the safety and wellbeing of the site staff, customers and infrastructure, all HRCs are covered by CCTV cameras. The site staff also reserve the right to utilise body cameras for their own protection and that of our customers.

26.2. The recordings on these devices may be used in the investigation and prosecution of any persons abusing the site rules or committing a criminal offence.

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Vehicle Permit Policy



 **Sir y Fflint yn ailgylchu**
Flintshire recycles

Policy	Vehicle Permit Policy
Portfolio	Streetscene and Transportation
Service Area	Waste Strategy
Related Documents	Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy

Revision History

Version	Issue date	Summary of Changes
1	April 2022	Standalone policy implemented following review of the Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy
2	April 2023	S1-Includes definition of trade/business waste S1.1-Update to permit criteria for sign written vehicles S2.1- Defines mobility vehicle access S2.2-Defines access for trailers with caged sides S3.1 & 3.2 – Defines documents needed on application S3.3-Defines access criteria for sign written vehicles S4-Defines action to be taken on permit administration and collection of soil conditioner S7(c) - Defines process when borrowing a vehicle
3	November 2024	S1 Updated text to reflect trade waste procedure. S 1.1 – Added clarity regarding permit re-application S 2.2 – Added mobility/disability vehicles S 3.2 – Added application process for mobility/disability vehicles

Consultation

Version	Who	Date
1	Operatives, management, Chief Officer Team, Elected Members, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet	2021/22
2	Operatives, management, Chief Officer Team, Elected Members, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee	September – November 2022
3	Management, Chief Officer Team, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee	September - November 2024

Approval

Version	Who/Where	Date
1	Cabinet	18 January 2022
2	Cabinet	20 December 2022
3		

CONTENTS

1. Flintshire Vehicle Permit Scheme
 - 1.1 Vehicle Permit Scheme Criteria
2. Vehicle Eligibility
 - 2.1 Vehicles that do not require a permit
 - 2.2 Vehicles that do require a permit
 - 2.3 Vehicles not eligible for a permit
3. Application Process
 - 3.1 Vehicle documentation required on application
 - 3.2 Trailer documentation required on application
 - 3.3 Sign written vehicles
 - 3.4 [Motability/Disability vehicles](#)
4. Permit Holder Access
 - 3.5 Changing/Selling a vehicle
 - 3.6 Lost or damaged vehicle permits
 - 3.7 Collection of soil conditioner
- 4 Withdrawal from the vehicle permit scheme
- 5 One-off permit
- 6 Temporary permit
- 7 Abuse of the vehicle permit scheme

1. Flintshire Vehicle Permit Scheme

The Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) are provided for householders to dispose of household waste safely and conveniently, as well as encouraging increased participation in recycling.

Flintshire County Council currently manages and operates five Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) for Flintshire residents to recycle or reuse household items that cannot be collected by the kerbside collections vehicles. The centres are situated at the following locations across the County:

- Greenfield
- Sandycroft
- Mold
- Buckley
- Rockliffe (Oakenholt)

The HRCs are solely for the disposal of small scale household waste from domestic properties. [Commercial and/or business waste is only accepted through a permit scheme at the Greenfield HRC in line with the conditions of the Environmental Permit.](#)

The Council's HRCs are not permitted to accept trade, commercial or business waste, which can be defined as any waste that comes from a commercial activity. If you use part of your home to run your business, then any waste from that part is business waste. Business waste also includes any waste that comes from construction, demolition, industry and agriculture. [This waste can be disposed of at a charge through a permit scheme, subject to compliance checks, at Greenfield HRC.](#)

To control access and manage the waste volumes being delivered to a HRC, the Council operates a vehicle permit scheme.

This policy sets out the parameters of the vehicle permit scheme.

1.1 Vehicle Permit Scheme Criteria

- A permit is issued on a rolling twelve month basis
- Twelve visits are permitted every twelve months.
- A householder can choose when to use the permits e.g. either all in one month or spread the visits over the year.
- [A full application must be resubmitted following the permit expiry or, if all twelve visits have not been used on expiry, once all the permit allocation has been fully utilised.](#)
- Only one permit is to be issued per residential address.
- [Permits will be issued for the site in closest proximity to the resident's property or, where a valid business case is presented, for the resident's site choice.](#)
- Trailers **will not** be allowed access if towed by a vehicle requiring a permit (E.g. van)
- Certain sign written vehicles may be eligible for an annual permit subject to certain conditions (see Section 3.3)
- Vehicles registered to a business address or associated with business, trade or commercial waste **are not** eligible for a [standard](#) permit.

- Domestic vehicles **are not** eligible if they are linked to businesses.(as above).
- The vehicle/owner must **not be** a registered waste carrier with either Natural Resources Wales or Environment Agency (England) [when disposing of household recycling and waste materials](#).
- Permits are available to Flintshire residents only and only **one** permit can be issued per household.
- Permits issued apply to a vehicle at a specific Flintshire address and not the waste. Therefore, even with a permit, HRC site staff can still turn away anybody suspected of bringing in waste of a commercial nature or waste related to the business of the sign written vehicle. If this does occur then the permit will be withdrawn from the resident as the terms and conditions of its issue will have been breached.
- Householders will **not** be permitted to use a permit to bring in any waste that relates to the business activity for which the vehicle is normally used.

2. Vehicle Eligibility

The type of vehicle will dictate whether a permit is required.

2.1 Vehicles that do not require a permit

- Small car
- Standard car
- Large family car
- Sports Utility vehicles (SUV)
- 4x4 vehicles (also known as All-Wheel drive)
- Motorbike
- Mobility vehicle (size must be within restrictions of policy - standard or low roof elevation below 7 feet or 2.14 metres and must have mobility aid modifications)

2.2 Vehicles that do require a permit

- Pick-up (two and four seats) i.e. a small vehicle with an open/closed part at the back in which goods can be carried
- Car derived van
- Small van
- Medium van (standard or low roof elevation below 7 feet or 2.14 metres)
- Single axle trailers up to 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length with/without caged sides*
- Twin axle trailers up to 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length with/without caged sides*
- Minibus (with internal fixtures intact)
- Camper vans and motor homes (with internal fixtures intact and below 7 feet or 2.14 metres)

- Mobility vehicles that exceed the size restriction as set out in this policy but have mobility aid modifications to support a customer with a disability to facilitate their day to day lives.
- Vehicles that exceed the size restriction as set out in this policy but are needed by a customer with a disability to facilitate their day to day lives.
- Vehicles that have been adapted to accommodate a disability, which would not ordinarily meet the criteria for a standard vehicle permit.

** The policy may allow trailers with caged sides to have access to the HRC as long as they do not exceed the dimensions indicated above (either at the point of purchase or retrofitted) and providing that the waste can be removed without removing the sides completely or without lowering the ramps.*

2.3 Vehicles that are not eligible for a permit

- Large box van (Luton type)
- Large goods vehicles (LGVs)
- Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)
- Tipper vehicles
- Flatbed vehicles
- Large vans (XLWB; LWB)
- Vans with high roof elevations (over 7 feet or 2.14 metres)
- Trailers longer than 6.6 feet / 2 metres in length
- Boxed trailers / trailers with extended side panels / modified trailers
- Trailers with access ramps
- Minibus (with internal fixtures removed)
- Camper vans and motor homes (with internal fixtures removed)
- Agricultural vehicles
- Horse boxes / trailers

3. Application process

Householders paying standard council tax in Flintshire will be entitled to apply for permits by fully completing an application form. Permits will only be issued to Flintshire households. (Only households in Flintshire paying standard Council Tax are entitled to use the Council's Household Recycling Centres).

All applications for a vehicle permit will be made via the online e-form available on the Council's Website.

On application, all required documentation must be submitted so that an assessment of eligibility can be made.

Householders will be required to provide the following information:

- Name of applicant
- Address
- Telephone number
- Vehicle registration number
- Vehicle make, model and colour
- Height of the vehicle / dimensions of the trailer
- Type of Vehicle: as specified in Section 2.2
- Confirmation of acceptance of Terms and Conditions of the permitting scheme

For applicants who repeatedly do not provide the required documentation their application will be refused, and they will not be eligible to re-apply for a period of six months.

A resident will be allowed one appeal should a vehicle permit be refused. To lodge an appeal the resident must complete the relevant e-form on the Council's website clearly stating the grounds for appeal. Before considering an appeal, residents must refer to this policy and only appeal if they deem that the policy has not been applied correctly.

Terms and Conditions apply and can be viewed on the Council's website along with the privacy notice.

3.1 Vehicle documentation required on application

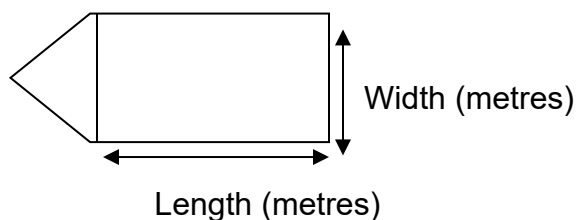
- Completed e-form.
- Full vehicle log book / A copy of the V5 Vehicle Registration document
- Driving licence
- 1 x utility bill or council tax bill to prove you live within the County of Flintshire (current and within the last 12 months)
- The addresses on the documentation must match and must detail the property where the vehicle is registered.
- Photos of the vehicle for which the permit is requested:
 - Rear interior view from rear doors showing registration plate (additional picture required if registration plate cannot be seen if doors are open)
 - Side view (one side)

3.2 Trailer documentation required on application:

- Complete e-form
- Full vehicle log book / A copy of the V5 Vehicle Registration document
- Trailer dimensions (see diagram below)
- Driving licence

- 1 x utility bill or council tax bill to prove you live within the County of Flintshire (current and within the last 12 months)
- The addresses on the documentation must match and must detail the property where the vehicle is registered
- Photos of trailer for which the permit is requested clearly showing:
 - Rear of trailer showing registration plate
 - Side view showing full length and height.

The trailer dimensions required to be submitted with the application are:



No alternative or self-interpreted dimensions will be accepted.

3.3 Certain sign written vehicles may be issued an annual permit (allowing a maximum of 12 visits), on condition that:

- the vehicle is registered to a Flintshire residential address for council tax;
- the waste deposited is not associated with any trade waste activity
- the waste deposited at the HRC has not been or is unlikely to have been produced by the activity of that business or associated business;
- the only waste presented at the HRC is domestic household waste

The new annual permit would be available for Flintshire residents only and only one permit will be issued per household. Permits issued apply to a vehicle at a specific Flintshire address and not the waste. Therefore, even with a permit, HRC site staff can still turn away anybody suspected of bringing in waste of a commercial nature or waste related to the business of the sign written vehicle. If this does occur then the permit will be withdrawn from the resident as the terms and conditions of its issue will have been breached. Householders will not be permitted to use a permit to bring in any waste that relates to the business activity for which the vehicle is normally used.

3.4 Mobility/Disability vehicle documentation required on application:

Where a resident has a disability and utilises a vehicle not permitted under this policy then adjustments can be made to allow that vehicle to obtain a permit.

A full permit application must be made so that an assessment of the vehicle can be undertaken.

Assessment is subject to the submission of the following information:

- A standard vehicle permit application be completed as per section 3.1.
- Provide a copy of a valid blue badge.

The Council reserves the right not to grant a permit if it is deemed that the vehicle could cause a health and safety issue when using the site.

4 Permit Holder Access

To better control access to HRCs and prevent abuse of the permit scheme, permits will be issued to a designated HRC site. The permits will be issued for the site in closest proximity to the resident's property or, where a valid business case is presented, for the resident's site choice. This will assist in the control of larger more complex vehicles at each site meaning that one site is not overwhelmed with permitted vehicles.

- Permits will only be issued to individual addresses once per annum.
- Vehicles cannot be issued permits against multiple addresses.
- A permit is only valid for the vehicle described on the permit

4.1 Changing/Selling a vehicle

When a resident sells a vehicle which has been issued with a vehicle permit they must return the permit to the following address with a covering letter explaining the situation. The permit is not transferable with the vehicle at the point of sale.

Flintshire County Council,

Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Alltami, Flintshire CH7 6LG

If the resident purchases another vehicle that requires a permit then a new application must be made to ensure that the vehicle is compliant with this policy.

4.2 Lost or Damaged Vehicle Permits

If a resident loses or damages a permit they must contact the council immediately to notify of the situation. The permit will be immediately cancelled and site staff notified. A replacement permit can be issued; however, the number of uses already taken place will be deducted from the permit.

Streetscene Contact Centre 01352 701234

Email: streetsceneadmin@flintshire.gov.uk

4.3 Collection of Soil Conditioner

Soil condition is available free of charge from the HRCs. If a resident wants to collect this product in a vehicle that is subject to this policy then they must have a valid permit to gain access to the site. This is to ensure that only vehicles accessing the HRCs are of the approved height or length.

If the resident is only attending site to collect soil conditioner, and not to dispose of any recycling or waste, then they will have to show their valid permit however a visit will not be deducted from the allocated twelve.

5. Withdrawing from the vehicle permit scheme

Residents can withdraw from the vehicle permit scheme at any time by returning their permit to the following address with a covering letter explaining their wish to cancel:

Flintshire County Council

Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Alltami, Flintshire CH7 6LG

Should unused permits not be handed back, the Council will treat this situation the same as if a householder has lost the permits.

6. One-Off Permit

For those vehicles that do not conform to the vehicle eligibility criteria, such as a vehicle registered to a business, whose owner(s) require to use their vehicle/trailer to dispose of larger, bulky items, then a one-off permit can be issued if it is clearly demonstrated that the waste being disposed of is not related to the business or activity of the business to which the vehicle is registered or used e.g. a vehicle registered to a plumber wanting to dispose of household garden waste.

To obtain a one-off permit an application must be made in advance of the visit via the specified e-form on the Council's website so that an assessment can be made and a permit issued.

The vehicle type for the application of a one-off permit must conform to one of the vehicle types stated in Section 2.2.

A one-off permit may be issued a maximum of two times in a twelve month period.

7. Temporary Permit

a) Using a Hired Vehicle to remove household waste

A temporary permit can be issued to a Flintshire resident who hires a vehicle to remove their own household waste.

The householder will be required to provide the vehicle hire agreement to demonstrate that the vehicle is on hire.

b) Borrowing or using a workplace or company van and commercial type vehicle

Householders from Flintshire may use their employer's van or commercial type vehicles (subject to the vehicle complying with the type and size restrictions detailed in Section 2.2) to deposit their own household waste at Household Recycling Centres.

However, the householder will require a letter from the owner (or their representative) on company notepaper giving permission to the applicant to use the vehicle to move their own domestic waste, which will be used in place of the Vehicle Registration Document V5 for verification purposes (proof of residency in Flintshire will still be required by the householder).

c) Borrowing or using family/friend's vehicle

Householders from Flintshire may make use of a family member or friend's vehicle (subject to the vehicle complying with the type and size restrictions detailed in Section 2.2) to deposit their own household waste at Household Recycling Centres.

Proof of residency in Flintshire will still be required by the householder, but it is not a requirement that the vehicle must be registered within Flintshire.

The vehicle type for the application of a one-off permit will be required to conform to one of the vehicle types stated in Section 2.2. If the vehicle does not meet the vehicle sizing or type requirements it will not be allowed access onto the HRC site.

A temporary permit will be issued a maximum of one time in a twelve month period and will allow for three visits over a seven day period.

To obtain a temporary permit an application must be made in advance by contacting **Streetscene Contact Centre on 01352 701234** / streetsceneadmin@flintshire.gov.uk so that an assessment can be made and a permit issued.

8. Abuse of the vehicle permit scheme

Flintshire County Council reserves the right to terminate all concessions afforded by the permit scheme if the permit holder is in contravention of any stipulations contained within this policy and the Terms and Conditions of use.

Abuse, aggressive behaviour or threats to members of staff or other residents will not be tolerated and may result in a permit either being revoked with immediate effect or the permit holder being excluded from access to Flintshire County Council HRCs.

HRC staff members are authorised and permitted to confiscate a permit should certain circumstances make this necessary, for example:

- Abuse, aggressive behaviour or threats towards site staff or other residents.
- Not adhering to site rules including breach of site safety rules, speeding restrictions, staff directives.
- Permits defaced, altered or with illegible details are invalid.
- Not declaring hazardous waste within a load.
- Depositing non-conforming or waste types that are not permitted on site.

Permits issued apply to a vehicle at a specific Flintshire address and not the waste, therefore, even with a permit the site staff at HRCs are still able to turn away anybody suspected of bringing in waste of a commercial nature.

The Council will monitor visits to HRC sites to prevent and control duplicated requests for replacement of lost or stolen permits, that is, householders that continue to use the supposedly lost permits, after receiving new ones.

The Council will monitor visits to identify any permits that have been copied or faked.

The Council will have the right to reject any person from a HRC site if it suspects that the person has contravened any of the conditions highlighted within this Policy.

Householders who turn up at a Household Recycling Centre site without a permit for their van or small commercial-type vehicle will be turned away.

Any person bringing trade waste to site with or without a permit will be reported to Natural Resources Wales.

This Policy supersedes the Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy 2017, Sections 12.7 to 12.13

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Self-Evaluation Report Education Services 2023-24
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education and Youth Portfolio undertakes a rigorous annual self-evaluation of its performance and services to provide assurance to the Council on the quality of education services in Flintshire. The report identifies strengths and areas for further improvement, and those areas for improvement are then reflected in the Council Improvement Plan and the Portfolio's own Business Plan.

The Portfolio's evaluation report this year is structured against the previous Estyn framework for Local Government Education Services (LGES) which was in place until the end of the academic year 2023-24. The report is delivered in three main sections to provide assurance to the Council across the three inspection areas of:

- Outcomes
- Quality of Education Services
- Leadership and Management

The new LGES framework has started from September 2024 so next year's report will be structured to reflect the changes to the model.

Each inspection area is evaluated in detail for the period 2023-2024 and concludes with a summary of further areas identified for improvement to ensure the continued provision of quality education services to the residents of Flintshire. The report also contains a summary of progress against the four recommendations from the Estyn inspection of Flintshire's Education Services in 2019.

The overall conclusion of the self-evaluation report is that education services in Flintshire are strong, effectively support children and young people and continue to provide good value for money particularly in the context of the financial challenges facing the Council's budget and the schools' delegated budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To review the outcome of the Education Portfolio's annual self-evaluation report on the quality of education services for the period 2023-2024.
2	To provide any observations to the Portfolio Team on the report.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SELF EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES
1.01	<p>The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead service improvements within the Education and Youth Portfolio to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Only by robustly evaluating the strengths of the current provision and identifying areas for further improvement can the Portfolio continue to refine the way it delivers services to secure better outcomes.</p> <p>At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well are we doing and what impact are our services having?• How do we know?• How can we improve things further?
1.02	<p>The previous Estyn Framework for the inspection of Local Authority Education Services was in place from 2018 to the end of the academic year 2024. As this report is a reflection of the Portfolio's performance for the 2023-2024 period, it has been written against that framework which focuses on three inspection areas:</p> <p>1. Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Standards and progress overall1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning <p>2. Quality of Education Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Support for School Improvement2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners2.3 Other education support services <p>3. Leadership & Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning3.3 Professional learning3.4 Safeguarding arrangements3.5 Use of resources

	<p>Next year's self-evaluation report will be structured against the new Estyn Framework for the inspection of Local Government Education Services which now include a separate inspection of Youth Services.</p>
1.03	<p>Education Services in Flintshire were last inspected in June 2019. The report was positive and there was no requirement for any Estyn follow up. The report identified four recommendations for improvement which the Service has continued to focus on since 2019, despite the interruptions and impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. These recommendations are embedded in the Council Plan and the Portfolio Business Plan.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <p>R1 Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4</p> <p>R2 Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools</p> <p>R3 Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work</p> <p>R4 Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively</p> <p>There have been ongoing discussions with Estyn Inspectors about how progress against these recommendations will be assessed when the Education Portfolio is next inspected because of the impact of the pandemic and the severe financial challenges facing local authorities, which have significantly changed the local context, particularly in relation to recommendations 2 and 4. The Chief Officer has been assured by Estyn that the changed context will be understood.</p>
1.04	<p>The suspension of learner assessments, public examinations as well as other data collections by Welsh Government and its decision not to collect and report on pupil assessment data below the national level has resulted in many of the key performance indicators by which the Portfolio traditionally measured its progress, and referenced in its annual self-evaluation report, now not being available.</p> <p>The focus is now on schools using their own performance data to drive improvements for their learners. The role of the Local Authority's Education Service and the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) is to rigorously challenge schools and provide targeted support where needed, to ensure that schools are using their own evaluation processes effectively to continuously improve and secure improved outcomes for all.</p> <p>Where the portfolio does have relevant data in relation to some of its services, this has been included in the report.</p>
1.05	<p>Section 1 of this self-evaluation report describes the Portfolio's current view of 'outcomes' within this context. It uses evidence from Estyn reports on its schools. It is also based on first-hand evidence of working closely with school leaders and reviewing every individual school in Flintshire with the school improvement advisers from the regional school improvement service, GwE.</p>

	<p>Section 2 provides a detailed overview of the range of education services within Flintshire and how they contribute to securing positive pupil outcomes in terms of academic achievement and learner wellbeing.</p> <p>Section 3 provides an evaluation of the quality of the leadership and management of education services at a whole council level as well as specifically within the Education and Youth portfolio.</p>
1.06	<p>Inspection Area 1 Headlines – Outcomes</p> <p><u>Inspections</u></p> <p>Since Inspections in the school sector resumed in the summer of 2022 to the end of the summer term 2024, 33 Flintshire primary schools, 6 Flintshire secondary schools and the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit (PPRU) have been inspected. All Flintshire schools have now been inspected under the last schools’ inspection framework. The new six-year cycle of school inspections begins in September 2024.</p> <p>Inspection performance across the school sectors overall is generally strong. Most schools have no level of follow up. Two secondary schools are currently in the statutory category of ‘In Need of Significant Improvement’ and one secondary school and one primary school are in the non-statutory category of Estyn Review. In most cases, there is a strong record of close correlation between the Council’s pre-inspection reports and Estyn findings. The Council has a very good track record in effectively supporting schools to be removed from Estyn categories quickly.</p> <p>The primary school inspection profile for Flintshire has been continuously strong. Judgements are no longer given by Estyn for the five inspection areas but 32 of the 33 schools inspected required no follow up by Estyn and 6 schools were invited to submit a case study/cameo for Estyn which is an indicator of highly effective practice. One of those schools was invited to submit 2 case studies. One primary school was placed in the statutory category of ‘In Need of Significant Improvement’ in September 2022 and successfully removed from follow up in February 2024. This means there are currently no primary schools in any form of statutory follow up and only one primary school in the minor category of Estyn Review.</p> <p>The inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is currently judged to be satisfactory. Of the 11 secondary schools in the Local Authority, two are in the statutory category of ‘In Need of Significant Improvement. One school was inspected during the 2022 -2023 academic year and one in 2023- 2024 One other secondary school was placed in the non-statutory category of Estyn Review during 2022 -2023. No secondary school is in the statutory category of Special Measures.</p> <p>The inspection profile for Flintshire funded non-maintained settings is very strong. 5 settings were inspected during the 2023-24 academic year. No settings were placed into follow up and there are currently no non-maintained EE providers in a follow up inspection category.</p>

1.07	<p><u>Wellbeing & Attitudes to Learning (including Attendance and Exclusions)</u></p> <p>Of the schools inspected between April 2022 and July 2024, 92% had no area relating to ‘wellbeing and attitude to learning’ identified as a recommendation for improvement. Estyn identified many strengths across Flintshire schools in this aspect of their provision, with three schools invited to prepare case studies for Estyn’s website which indicates highly effective practice worthy of being shared across Wales.</p> <p>It is recognised that improving attendance to pre-pandemic levels remains a challenge, not only for Flintshire but on a national basis. Primary attendance shows a slight reduction (0.3%) with secondary overall attendance improving by 1.2%. While overall levels of attendance remain comparatively low to those prior to the pandemic, they currently show more of a favourable comparison on a national basis, with primary attendance in Flintshire ranking as the 5th highest nationally and secondary ranking as 3rd highest; this compares with 16th place and 20th respectively for 2018/19, the period prior to the pandemic. Illness remains the primary cause for absence across both sectors. Holidays account for the second highest level of absence within the primary sector.</p> <p>Whilst a reduction in the levels of exclusion across Flintshire schools remained a priority for the year, this was not achieved with the levels of both permanent and fixed term increasing, particularly within the secondary sector. The main reasons for exclusion remain physical assault against a pupil, verbal/threatening behaviour against an adult, and persistent disruptive behaviour. The data suggests there is an increasing level of verbal/threatening behaviour against adults with a higher percentage of exclusions attributed to this. There is also a notable increase in the percentage of permanent exclusion attributed to substance misuse within the secondary sector. The increase in pupil exclusions is not unique to Flintshire – it is a national issue across all authorities in Wales and is a reflection of the ongoing challenges being faced by young people, particularly as a result of the pandemic.</p>
1.08	<p>Areas identified for ongoing improvement in standards and progress for 2024-25 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain focus on strategies to improve attendance rates • Maintain focus on strategies to reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions • Maintain positive inspection outcomes across all sectors - early years, primary, secondary and specialist provision • Support the very few of schools in follow up or statutory category to make rapid and sustained progress against their recommendations
1.09	<p>Inspection Area 2 Headlines – Quality of Education Services</p> <p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <p>The quality of education services delivered by the Portfolio is strong. The provision for school improvement services is effective and the partnership with GwE delivers positive outcomes for schools, as evidenced by our</p>

	<p>Estyn profile. Senior leaders within the service use a range of data and intelligence effectively to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information are scrutinised to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, the Council is effective in challenging schools where needed and allocating specific support for those schools to improve.</p> <p>Schools in Flintshire are continuing to engage positively with the National Reform Journey and in developing themselves as Learning Organisations. All primary schools in Flintshire implemented the new curriculum from September 2022 and all secondary schools from September 2023. There is a comprehensive and well embedded professional learning offer for all schools in Flintshire and this is enhanced by what is being offered at local level by schools and between schools. There are high levels of engagement by Flintshire schools in professional learning.</p> <p><u>Support for Vulnerable Learners</u></p> <p>Flintshire provides a suitable range of services to promote social inclusion and support for learners with ALN through a combination of internal and externally commissioned services and provision. The Council meets its statutory duties well as demonstrated by the low levels of appeal to the Education Tribunal and the low levels of young people becoming NEET. Council expenditure remains higher for those pupils presenting with a range of behavioural, social and emotional needs as this continues to be the most significant area of presenting need.</p> <p>The challenges of recent years continue to impact on learners and the Council's and schools' ability to respond. Schools continue to be as creative as possible in their offer to engage learners, but the financial climate is starting to impact on the sustainability of the range of the support and provision available.</p> <p><u>Range of Other Education Services</u></p> <p>The Portfolio delivers a very wide range of services to support the array of needs presented by children and young people within schools, early years settings and also via its Youth and Youth Justice services. A detailed overview of each of these service areas is included in Inspection Area 2 of the annual report, with evidence of their impact as well as the ongoing challenges being faced. Despite the ongoing budgetary challenges, the Education Portfolio is proud of the range and quality of its offer which deliver demonstrably positive outcomes for children and young people in Flintshire.</p>
1.10	<p>Areas for ongoing improvement for the quality of education services includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop options for in-house provision to support the increasing number of pupils struggling to engage with education due to mental health difficulties and neurodiversity • Develop new strategic plan for specialist provision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to education, employment and training for young people in the Youth Justice Service • Embed a skills and employment pathway into the Youth Service to ensure a sustainable model for high quality play and youth work delivery • Continue to strengthen links between the Portfolio and its secondary schools with the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Board • Implement year 3 of the 5 year action plan from the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan • Continue to work collectively across schools and council services to mitigate the impacts of poverty and reduce inequality. • Continue to embed the Anti Racist Wales Plan in schools • Continue to embed the Young Flintshire Model
1.11	<p>Inspection Area 3 Headlines – Leadership and Management</p> <p><u>Quality and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers</u></p> <p>There is strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is innovative and pragmatic. Education priorities are exemplified in corporate and portfolio level plans and are regularly scrutinised through the quarterly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. The annual performance report for the period 2023-24 showed 85% of actions on track (RAG – Green) with 15% subject to ongoing monitoring (RAG Amber) but none rated as RAG Red. In terms of performance monitoring, of the 17 measures identified for the Portfolio in the Council Plan for 2023-24, 10 were RAG rated as Green, 3 as Amber and 4 as Red.</p> <p>Elected members effectively undertake their statutory duties and make a worthwhile contribution to the development and progress of statutory plans. They also show real commitment to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable learners. Reports presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee are thoroughly reviewed by members and officers are appropriately challenged. Members are also positive in their acknowledgement of the work of officers and the impact of their services on children and young people. There is strong member engagement in the following areas relevant to children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh in Education Forum • The Corporate Parenting Forum • The Corporate Safeguarding Panel • The Schools Standards Quality Board • The Youth Justice Executive Board • The Education Consultative Committee • SACRE • School Budget Forum • Regional School Improvement (GwE) Joint Committee <p>Senior leaders and managers communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools to good effect through a range of forums. For school improvement these include regular meetings with the head teacher community, working through nominated representatives on</p>

the primary and secondary Head Teacher Federations, School Performance Monitoring Group and other specific groups e.g. Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator Forum, County Curriculum Steering Group and Emotional Health and Well-Being Strategy Group, Digital Advisory Group and Welsh in Education Strategic Forum. There is also effective monitoring and challenge for other areas of provision through the Youth Justice Executive Board, Children's Services Forum and the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The key objectives of the Public Service Board are clearly aligned with the Council's and Portfolio's strategic improvement plans.

Whilst a lean team in terms of personnel, senior leaders in the Education Portfolio work in a collegiate way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together for the young people of Flintshire. They are well respected by elected members, external partners, regional colleagues and school leaders. There are effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. Managers ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities.

Self-Evaluation Processes and Improvement Planning

The Council has a well-established process of evaluation, review and challenge. Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate understanding of the Council's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities.

The Education Portfolio undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities, first at a service level analysing any available data and first-hand evidence to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of individual services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic plans is reviewed effectively and timely interventions made. This is then fed into the Portfolio's overall evaluation of its annual Business Plan and into the Portfolio Annual Self Evaluation Report. This then links to the Council Plan which is regularly reviewed by Chief Officers and senior managers and reported on regularly to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a corporate priority set out in the annual Council Plan and the Council has robust arrangements in place across all areas. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for all council services to safeguard and protect children and adults, ensuring that all are fully aware of their responsibilities.

The Education and Youth Portfolio has appropriate arrangements for the strategic planning for safeguarding within both the core education service and schools, which includes monitoring. The safeguarding model policy for schools is updated annually in line with revised national guidance (Keeping Learners Safe and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures).

Use of Resources

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Council despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the Council's allocation of both revenue and capital resources but this has become increasingly challenging in recent years where cuts have been applied to schools' delegated budgets to enable the Council to set a legal and balanced budget. Risks related to the impact of poor funding on the quality of education services have been clearly set out and are understood by elected members and head teachers. The Council reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that funding is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

The Council is committed to an ambitious school modernisation investment programme by maximising Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities funding (previously 21st Century Schools) and its own capital funding. Flintshire is also a Pathfinder Council for the new Mutual Investment Model created by Welsh Government to deliver a new 3-16 learning campus in Mynydd Isa which will be the Council's first net zero carbon school in operation.

In response to a recommendation in its Estyn inspection of 2019, the Council had made significant progress in reducing the number of schools in deficit. It refreshed its policy for the management and monitoring of schools' deficits which is robustly applied. There are effective working relationships between senior council officers and school leaders to ensure an appropriate level of both challenge and support to control spending and reduce deficits in schools.

With the level of inflationary pressures experienced again over the 23-24 financial year and a further 3% cut to school budgets, the number of schools declaring a deficit position has increased as expected. This was also exacerbated by the Council decision to remove the additional funding of £0.750m it had set aside in the budget to support secondary schools in financial difficulty as it was unaffordable for 2024-25. The overall level of reserves held by Flintshire schools at March 31st 2024 was £4.125m, a decrease of £3.117m from the previous year – a reduction of 43.04%. The number of schools forecasting a deficit position by March 2025 has increased to 27, from 8 schools who ended the 2022-23 financial year in deficit. Looking forward to future years, it appears that setting a balanced budget is becoming increasingly difficult across all sectors and that there is a risk around deficit balances becoming greater in the short to medium term.

1.12

Areas for ongoing improvement – Leadership and Management

- Maintain rigorous budgetary monitoring and management processes to protect the delivery of quality education services in times of extreme budget challenge to mitigate adverse impacts on school performance and learner outcomes.
- Embed the new model of school improvement services in line with the requirements of the WG Middle Tier Review.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop and embed the Belonging Strategy as the Portfolio's strategic approach to its delivery of education services • Continue to improve the school estate through the School Modernisation Strategy and the maximisation of Welsh Government funding streams.
1.13	The full self-evaluation report is included at Appendix 1.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no revenue or capital resource implications as a result of this report.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment document which outlines the key risks related to the delivery of education services. It is regularly reviewed by the Portfolio's Senior Management Team and is regularly reported to the appropriate Council committee.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	N/A for this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Self Evaluation Report Education Services 2023-24

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Estyn Report Flintshire Education Services 2019 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Inspection%20report%20Flintshire%20County%20Council%202019.pdf</p> <p>Estyn Framework for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services 2021 https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-11/What%20we%20inspect%20-%20Local%20government%20education%20services%20for%20inspections%20from%202021.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Claire Homard, Chief Officer Education & Youth

	Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Estyn – the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales. GwE – Regional School Improvement Services for the 6 Education Authorities of the North Wales region.

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Education & Youth Portfolio

Self-Evaluation Report of Education Services



2023-2024

Introduction & Local Context - Flintshire County Council

Formed in 1996 following local government reorganisation, Flintshire is a well governed and high performing unitary local authority in the northeast corner of Wales bordering Cheshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire. Flintshire has a strong track record of being a direct provider of local services from Education, Social Care, Streetscene and Housing. Whilst direct provision is at the core of its model, Flintshire is also a creative and flexible council and operates both as a provider and a commissioner of services. It has been instrumental in developing collaborative arrangements such as a regional school improvement service, an employee-owned mutual in leisure, libraries and cultural services, catering and cleaning services and a local social housing trading company. Over the last few years, the Council has also developed its own residential care for children in order to provide high quality, local provision to meet growing demand in a more cost effective way. Continuing to develop sustainable models of delivery and maintaining high quality services continues to be a priority for the Council, particularly in challenging financial times, to secure the best outcomes for its residents and value for money for the public purse.

Flintshire provides local public services for 155,100 people who live in 66,973 households. It has the largest population of the North Wales authorities and is the seventh largest in Wales. The population is expected to rise by 2.1% by 2028 but this reflects more of an increase in the number of people over the age of 65 as the numbers of children, young people and the working population are predicted to decrease. In the 2021 census the number of children aged under 15 years decreased by 4.2% and the proportion of people aged 65+ increased to 21.4% (33,200 people) compared to 17.6% (26,836 people) in 2011. This will obviously impact on future demands for services in different ways.

With just over 6,000 staff, the Council is one of the two largest employers in the county, alongside Airbus, and provides direct services including, education, housing, planning, refuse collection, environmental health, recycling, roads, social services, trading standards, transport and tourism. It provides leisure, library and catering/cleaning services via 'arms' length' trading companies. Flintshire has seven libraries, ten sports and leisure centres, two country parks and maintains 733 miles of roads.

Flintshire has 78 schools (64 Primary, 11 Secondary, 2 Specialist & 1 PRU) providing education for 22,861 pupils, including those educated other than at school.

Manufacturing, retail trade and human health and social work are the sectors which currently employ the most people in Flintshire. The availability of employment is rising and unemployment in Flintshire in February 2023 stood at 3.0%, better than the Welsh average of 3.8%. The North Wales Economic Framework, supported by UK, Welsh Government and Local Government funding streams provides a clear strategy for future economic growth and clearly articulates the skills and knowledge that will be needed within the local and regional population to deliver on emerging economic, social, digital, and wellbeing priorities.

The County has a mix of affluent and deprived areas. Due to the interconnections of factors, there are particular communities that are more vulnerable than others in Flintshire. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 highlights that coastal communities in Flintshire experience high levels of deprivation (3.3% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in 10% most deprived; 10.9% in 20% most deprived in Wales), particularly when it comes to the employment, income, education, and community safety dimensions.

The number of school aged pupils entitled to Free School Meals (e-FSM) has decreased from 17.8% in 2023 (Wales 2023 average 20.3%) to 14.1% in 2024.

This figure is a significant shift away from current Welsh averages and is linked to the Council being an early implementer of Universal Credit (UC). Families below the income threshold for Universal Credit are entitled to a free school meal but when earnings rise and exceed the UC threshold, the child continues to receive a free meal under Transitional Protection until that phase of the child's education ends. The Council does not receive any funding for pupils on Transitional Protection but is still required to make the provision of a meal. The reduction in the overall percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals will have a significant impact on funding streams to the Council and to schools as this is the measure of deprivation used in many budget formulae. Since 2019 the percentage of Flintshire children on Transitional Protection increased from 0% to 23.7% so represents a growing risk to funding for education. However, from December 2023 Transitional Protection is being phased out, reducing this financial pressure over time.

Based on the 2021 Annual Population Survey, the Welsh language is spoken by 23.9% of the population in Flintshire compared to 29.5% across Wales. This is a significant increase from the 2011 national census which reported 13.2% of the county's population having some Welsh language skills.

The county has 5 Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Welsh medium secondary school. There are no dual stream or bilingual schools in Flintshire. Currently 6.47% of children in Flintshire are educated through the medium of Welsh. There are ambitious targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to more than double this number over the next ten years.

The county also has a mixed provision of faith-based education with 9 Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary schools, 5 Roman Catholic primary schools and 1 Roman Catholic secondary school. 10.70% of children in Flintshire currently receive their education in a faith-based setting.

Flintshire has a strong tradition of supporting a local infrastructure of non-maintained early years' provision through both English and Welsh, which supports the Council in its delivery of childcare and early years' education. Flintshire was an early adopter of the Welsh Government's flagship childcare policy of 30 hours free provision for working parents and there is a strong network of childminders, playgroups and private day nurseries delivering this combination of childcare and early education prior to children transitioning into schools. Flintshire Council also supports neighbouring local authorities with the administration of their Childcare Offer.

Overall, 10.78% of school aged pupils in Flintshire in 2024 are designated as having a Special Educational Need. Of this number 1.80% have a Statement of Special Educational Need, higher than the Welsh average of 1%. 3.05% of pupils are designated as School Action which is lower than the Welsh average of 3.20% and 1.54% are at School Action Plus, lower than the Welsh average of 2.5%. Under the new legislation in Wales for Additional Learning Needs, there are also Individual Development Plans (IDP) in place which can be school maintained or Local Authority maintained. In Flintshire 4.38% of learners have an IDP which is lower than the Welsh average of 4.50%.

The current Chief Executive, Neal Cockerton, was appointed in November 2021 and was previously a member of the Council's Chief Officer Team. The Chief Officer for Education and Youth, Claire Homard, was appointed in June 2017, initially as Interim Chief Officer and then permanently in 2018. She also fulfils the role as Statutory Director of Education for the Council. The Leader of the Council is Cllr David Hughes. Since May 2023, Cllr Mared Eastwood has been the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture. The Chair of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee is Cllr Teresa Carberry.

Structure of the Council

Flintshire County Council has 67 Councillors that are normally democratically elected at least every four years. After the elections of May 2022 there is a minority Labour administration with informal support from some members of the Liberal Democrat group and some independent councillors.

The political make up of Flintshire County Council elected members from August 2024 is as follows: Labour: 29; Independent: 22; Liberal Democrats: 3; Eagle Group: 6; Flintshire People’s Voice: 5; Conservative: 1; Non-Aligned: 1.

The Council has a Cabinet and a Scrutiny function. Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Cabinet to account and to assist in the improvement and development of the Council’s policies and services. Flintshire has 5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Education, Youth & Culture*
- Corporate Resources
- Community & Housing
- Environment & Economy
- Social and Health Care*

*Education Youth & Culture and Social and Health Care Committees hold a joint meeting once a year.

There are several other Committees that are appointed by Council at its Annual Meeting to ensure that all other functions are discharged, including: Appeals; Climate Change; Clwyd Pension Fund; Constitution and Democratic Services; Governance and Audit; Grievance; Grievance Appeals; Investigation and Disciplinary; Joint Governance (for pensions); and Licensing. There is a detailed Constitution that describes the various parts that make up the Council, their functions, membership and procedural rules.

Cllr Mared Eastwood



Cabinet Member
for Education,
Welsh Language & Culture

Neal Cockerton



Chief Executive

Claire Homard



Chief Officer
Education & Youth

Working in Partnership

Flintshire County Council has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration. Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Boards (PSBs) worked closely and effectively during the COVID pandemic, and so came together as a single Public Services Board in January 2023.

The evidence and insight in both the Flintshire and Wrexham well-being assessments (published in 2022) was used to develop and publish a Well-being Plan for the two areas in 2023, as a statutory requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). Informed by the four pillars of sustainable development: social, economic, environment and culture, the plan seeks to address the key areas which pose the greatest need or challenge for our communities and describe where the PSB can make the greatest contribution, adding value to existing partnerships and core services.

The well-being plan is shaped around two well-being objectives

- Build flourishing communities by reducing inequalities across environment, education, employment, income and housing.
- Improve community well-being by enabling people of all ages to live safe, healthy and independent lives.

The focused outcomes of the PSB Plan relate to Children and Young People, Our Communities and Where we work.

Public Services Board partners include: Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham, Coleg Cambria, Wrexham University, and the Department for Work & Pensions.

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Policy-and-Performance/PSB/Flintshire-and-Wrexham-Public-Services-Board-Well-being-Plan-2023-2028.pdf>

Flintshire's Corporate Plan April 2023-2024

The Council Improvement Plan is reviewed and refreshed each year and approved by full Council. In the reporting period April 2023- March 2024, the following core improvement themes drove the business plans of each portfolio and were reported on via quarterly monitoring reports, culminating in an Annual Performance Report.

Theme / Wellbeing Objective	In-year Priority
Poverty Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs	Income Poverty
	Child Poverty
	Food Poverty
	Fuel Poverty
	Digital Poverty
Affordable and Accessible Housing Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities	Housing support and homeless prevention
	Housing Needs and Housing Options
	Social Housing
	Private Rented Sector
	Empty Properties
Green Society and Environment Limiting the impact of the Council's services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint	Carbon Neutrality
	Climate Change and Adaption
	Fleet Strategy
	Green Access
	Green Environment
	Renewable Energy
	Active and Sustainable Travel Options
Circular Economy	
Economy Enabling a sustainable economic recovery	Town Centre Regeneration
	Business
	Transport Connectivity
	Digital Infrastructure
	Local Development Plan (LDP) Targets
	Spending Money for the benefit of Flintshire
	Reducing worklessness
Personal and Community Well-Being Supporting people in need to live as well as they can	Independent Living
	Safeguarding
	Direct Provision to support people closer to home
	Local Dementia Strategy
	A well-connected safe and clean local environment
Education and Skills Enabling and supporting learning communities	Educational Engagement and Achievement
	Digital Learning Opportunities
	Learning Environments
	Learning Community Networks
	Specialist Educational Provision
	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
	Wellbeing

Review of Estyn Recommendations from Local Government of Education Services Inspection (June 2019)

The Council's Education Services were last inspected by Estyn in June 2019 under the Local Government Education Services Framework. The outcome was a positive report and no requirement for any kind of follow up. The recommendations from the report were as follows and are embedded in business plans for the Council and the Education & Youth Portfolio:

- R1** Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4
- R2** Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools
- R3** Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work
- R4** Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively

Post Inspection Action Plan - Estyn LGES Recommendations Evaluation 2023-2024

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	R1: Improve outcomes for learners in KS4	
VB	<p>Liaise effectively with GwE and Update level 2 Business Plan with GwE for 2023-24</p> <p>The level 2 Business Plan was completed for primary, special and secondary schools during summer term 2023. Progress was monitored through regular meetings with GwE officers. The plan included identified regional priorities, a comprehensive support plan for schools and a wide range of professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Evaluation of the plan fed into the new GwE Regional Business Plan. This spans a three-year period between 2023-2026 which also contained a detailed 12-month Business Plan for 2023-2024. The priorities continue to be focused on a combination of improving school provision, leadership and outcomes, as well as delivering The Reform Journey and Curriculum for Wales.</p>	
VB	<p>Ensure all secondary school support plans are updated and include a focus on KS4 provision and outcomes</p> <p>All secondary school support plans were completed by Supporting Improvement Advisers in discussion with schools. These plans are live documents and kept under review. One secondary school plan was revised to meet the statutory requirements of a post inspection action plan following the school being placed in Significant Improvement in January 2023. This plan was approved by Estyn.</p>	
VB	<p>Review the 14-19 curriculum offer for KS4 learners and update 14-16 and post-16 strategies</p> <p>New terms of reference have been developed for the Curriculum Deputies Group and they have continued to meet on a termly basis. Schools have shared their curriculum models and continue to share expertise when looking at future requirements in light of the new curriculum and also the review of KS4 qualifications.</p>	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>Focused discussion and research has taken place with post-16 schools and their learners in light of the forthcoming major changes from the introduction of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) now renamed MEDR. The priority is ensuring continued excellent partnership working and strategic planning for Flintshire’s post-16 sector.</p> <p>The Flintshire Post-16 Network was re-established following the pandemic to ensure all post-16 learners have the very best opportunities and outcomes. The network consists of headteachers from schools with sixth forms and a senior representative from Coleg Cambria. The Network exists to provide strategic direction and local support and monitoring for Post-16 provision in Flintshire.</p> <p>The Post 16 Learning Adviser has met with headteachers with sixth forms to evaluate current provision and assess future need. Work is currently underway on refreshing the Post-16 strategy. The focus remains on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring sufficient access to high quality and relevant education for all, including ALN students • Providing an offer that meets all needs including the needs of students and wider economic and employment needs • Building on strong reputations and specialisms within school sixth form provision • Ensuring Post-16 provision is sustainable, resilient, and efficient and delivers maximum value 	
VB	<p>Review the pre SEREN and SEREN activity offer for learners in Flintshire</p> <p>The Seren Academy is a fully funded Welsh Government initiative dedicated to supporting the most able state educated learners in Wales to achieve their full academic potential into leading universities and succeed on highly selective degree programmes. It is a fully funded programme available to years 8 to 13 learners from state schools and further education colleges across Wales, regardless of their economic background, personal situation, or location. The Seren Academy now operates as one continuous programme supporting learners through three stages of progression. Across all stages, learners are provided with opportunities to further their super-curricular exploration and push the boundaries of their academic development and engagement.</p>	
	<p>Stage 01 - Years 8-9</p> <p>This stage provides a taste for learners and whether the Seren Academy is the right fit for them to formally become members in Stage 02 (Year 10). Flintshire has the freedom to create the Seren cohort to include the most able learners, but also learners who we feel have the potential to excel if exposed to the programme. This phase will motivate and inspire learners and provide them with the opportunity to achieve selection in Stage 02. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to university including a visit • Communication workshop • Debating Club • Online Masterclasses (Psychology, Engineering, Philosophy, Maths etc) • GCSE options advice from University of Cambridge 	
	<p>Stage 02 - Years 10-11</p> <p>Stage 02 will empower learners to take ownership and responsibility for their future educational choices and provide further super-curricular opportunities. Alongside developing learners’ insight into life at university and how they can start to prepare</p>	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>for this step-up, learners will also be challenged to develop their academic literacy, oracy and research skills. This stage provides more tailored and specific advice in relation to a learner's future educational goals, setting them up for success in Stage 03. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ University visit ■ Communication workshop ■ Debating Club ■ Online Masterclasses (Psychology, Engineering, Philosophy, Maths etc) ■ A level options advice from University of Cambridge ■ Summer School opportunities at Cardiff, Swansea and Aberystwyth Universities. ■ STEM workshops 	
	<p>Stage 03 (Years 12 to 13)</p> <p>Specific support is provided to learners for entry into leading universities with unique opportunities for learners to receive direct advice from university admissions tutors, on how to apply, develop competitive personal statements, prepare for admissions tests and how to approach interviews. By providing extra-curricular study experiences and super-curricular enrichment activities that enhance and go beyond the curriculum, the Seren Academy supports the aspirations and ambitions of the most able learners, helping to widen their horizons, develop a passion for their chosen field of study, and reach their academic potential. Working in collaboration with leading universities and education partners, support includes subject-specific masterclasses to stretch and challenge, workshops, tutorials, study guides, higher education advice and guidance, and mentoring. Opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential opportunities to visit London, Cambridge and Oxford Universities • University visits e.g. Birmingham, Liverpool and Lancaster • Medics Programme • Dentistry Programme • Personal statement workshop from Cambridge and Bangor Universities • Personal statement advice • Advice and guidance on applying for scholarship programmes • Advice on future careers • North Wales University and Career fair including access to local businesses to promote future opportunities to learners who may want to come back to their local area after university. • Communication workshops • Interview preparation and practice <p>Medics Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with Wrexham Maelor Hospital for year 12 and 13 students who want to pursue a career in medicine. • The programme is delivered over 8 weeks in year 12 and a week of work experience is offered to students who complete. • Year 13 follows a 5 week programme focused on making applications and preparing for interviews. • The programme includes admission test preparation, mentoring from a team of junior doctors, interview preparation, focused debates and presentations on a range of relevant topics, personal statement advice and work experience. 	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>Professional Development sessions for teachers are offered by University of Cambridge.</p> <p>In September 2023, there were 1625 Flintshire and Wrexham learners enrolled in the Seren Academy. 196 of whom were pupils from Welsh medium provision and 134 Learners who are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) or Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).</p> <p>In 2023, 58% of Flintshire learners enrolled in the Academy gained a place at a Russell Group University. In 2022, it was 67% of students and 60% in 2021. WG did not collect the data for SEREN for 2020 due to the pandemic. Nearly all other students took up a place at other universities or on specialist courses. It may be that some students also achieved places at Russell Group Universities but didn't register for SEREN. Some students will also have accessed SEREN provision through the Deeside Sixth provision provided by Coleg Cambria.</p>	
<p>VB</p>	<p>Work effectively across the service to ensure high standards of school performance and learner outcomes through support and challenge</p> <p>As a result of changes to the assessment and accountability framework for schools, schools are no longer required to undertake or record final assessments at foundation phase and key stage 2. There was no comparative data for school performance measures at key stage 4 for 2022 examinations. In 2023, Welsh Government restarted the reporting of key stage 4 outcomes at a school level using the approach adopted prior to the pandemic in 2018/2019. This approach saw the introduction of transitional interim measures for secondary schools that looked to ensure a greater focus on raising aspirations for all learners.</p> <p>For key stage 5, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were also transitional. In 2022/23, Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.</p> <p>Welsh Government determined in 2019 that performance data traditionally aggregated for comparison at local, regional and national level be removed. All benchmarking, comparisons with other establishments, and the placing of schools and local authorities in rank order is no longer acceptable or possible. The only comparative data available to local authorities in these key stages are the national averages. There is now a greater focus on the use of data by schools in their self-evaluation processes rather than for public comparison. In this context, data should be analysed on a local level and as a starting point to inform local priorities.</p> <p>Estyn resumed inspections for schools from April 2022. Inspections in the school sector began again in summer term 2022, with 33 Flintshire primary schools, 6 Flintshire secondary schools and the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit (PPRU), inspected to date.</p> <p>Inspection performance across the school sectors overall is generally strong. Two secondary schools are in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement' and one secondary school and one primary school are in Estyn Review. In nearly all cases, there is a strong record of close correlation between the Council's pre-inspection reports and Estyn findings. The Council has a very good track record in effectively supporting schools to be swiftly removed from Estyn categories. Powers of intervention, including the use of Warning Notices are used effectively where schools cause concern, to ensure challenge and support is timely and effective. Interim Executive Boards have provided successful challenge and intervention to schools in serious categories of concern. This has helped to increase the pace of change and ensure robust accountability for standards and progress.</p> <p>The primary school inspection profile for Flintshire has been continuously strong.</p>	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>Between April 2022 and July 2024, 33 primary schools in Flintshire were inspected. Judgements are no longer given by Estyn for the five inspection areas but 31 of those schools inspected required no follow up by Estyn and 6 schools were invited to submit a case study/ cameo for Estyn which is an indicator of highly effective practice. One of those schools was invited to submit 2 case studies. Case studies were linked to effective pupil leadership, strategic development of support staff skills, health and wellbeing provision for vulnerable learners, family engagement, developing a Welsh ethos and culture, outdoor learning and ensuring rapid progress for pupils following the pandemic.</p> <p>One primary school was placed in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement' in September 2022. A comprehensive package of support provided by the LA and GwE was put in place for the school, and it was successfully removed from this category in February 2024. At the end of this current inspection cycle therefore, there are no primary schools in the statutory categories of Special Measures or Significant Improvement and only one placed recently in Estyn Review.</p> <p>During the last academic year, the local authority, in partnership with the regional school improvement service has guided seven primary schools through a 360-degree plan with four of these schools subject to the school performance monitoring process. These schools have made considerable progress over the course of the academic year. Three have been inspected during the year and deemed as not requiring follow up and one has been successfully removed from significant improvement. All seven schools have made timely progress in the areas identified as needing improvement.</p> <p>Overall, the inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is satisfactory. Of the 11 secondary schools in the local authority, two are in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement. One school was inspected during the 2022 -2023 academic year and one in 2023- 2024. One other secondary school was placed in the non-statutory category of Estyn Review during 2022 -2023. No secondary school is in the statutory category of Special Measures. All secondary schools have bespoke support plans in place to ensure continued improvement. Schools causing concern are subject to robust monitoring. There are 360° action plans in place for two schools with focused support provided by both the Regional School Improvement Service, GwE and the Local Authority. One school is currently subject to the school performance monitoring process.</p> <p>The inspection profile for Flintshire non maintained settings is strong. Seven settings were inspected during the 2022-23 academic year and a further 5 in 2023 -2024. There are currently no registered non-maintained EE providers in a follow up inspection category.</p>	RAYG
VB	<p>Support the ongoing development of schools as learning organisations through the Alliance model</p> <p>The Secondary Alliance model is embedded and has led to improved levels of collaboration between schools in sharing practice at senior and middle leadership level and in standards of teaching and learning. The Middle Leadership professional development programmes have been successful in improving the quality of leaders in core subjects, literacy and numeracy and in the foundation learning phase through development of skills and knowledge. Bespoke approaches have been tailored to meet the requirements of individual schools; coaching programmes for groups and individuals have been delivered in several schools and had a clear impact on the work of leaders. Shortages in key personnel have also been supported through the deployment of expertise from neighbouring schools.</p>	RAYG

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
VB	<p>Hold schools effectively to account for their performance through SPMG meetings where required</p> <p>As a result of national changes, there was a need to review how schools are identified as requiring monitoring by the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG). This was part of the national and regional discussions on evolving regional processes to support schools on their self-improvement journey. Engagement with schools should facilitate the early identification of schools that are in need of support, to prevent them becoming a school causing concern.</p> <p>Through the work of the SPMG, elected members and officers have reflected that the process continues to be effective in contributing to an improvement in primary and secondary school outcomes over time, particularly in schools where there are significant and long-term challenges.</p> <p>When Estyn inspected the local authority in the summer of 2019, they recognised that the portfolio’s arrangements for identifying schools causing concern work well, and in most cases lead to effective actions. The inspection identified that “Officers and elected members in Flintshire know their schools and settings well and can outline clearly the relative strengths and areas for improvement. They recognise specific issues facing individual schools causing concern and act in a timely way to put in place the most appropriate support in collaboration with GwE”.</p> <p>In the summer term of 2022, the Welsh Government published a new school improvement framework, ensuring that learner progression and well-being is at the heart of all efforts to deliver high standards and aspirations.</p> <p>Since 2019, 6 primary schools and 3 secondary schools have been subject to monitoring by the SPMG. The challenges of the pandemic have resulted in understandable delays to the process as schools focused on firstly providing emergency childcare in the first period of lockdown and then subsequent periods of remote learning. At the end of the summer term 2024, there were 5 schools under monitoring by the SPMG. The small number of schools reflects the very positive Estyn profile for schools in Flintshire.</p>	RAYG
<p>R2: Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools</p>		
JW/ CS	<p>Amendments to the Exclusions Policy / Substance misuse policy to promote the use of diversionary options for young people at risk of exclusion</p> <p>Work has been underway to update the draft policy following consultation with Flintshire Sorted (Drug and Alcohol Team). A revised policy has been drafted, consulted upon with the secondary Head Teachers Federation and will be launched in September 2024.</p>	RAYG
JW	<p>Development of diversionary activities for young people at risk of exclusion through substance misuse or anti-social behaviour</p> <p>A draft 5 day programme has been devised and has been tested in 2021 with a small cohort of young people who were at risk of exclusion. The pilot has resulted to the programme. However, the programme has not been extended further due to delays in agreeing an overarching policy linked to Substance Misuse with Secondary Headteachers and due to capacity within the Sorted Education Practitioner team. The revised Substance Misuse Policy will be rolled out from September 2024 and further discussions held with the Secondary Headteacher Federation in relation to the diversionary programme in the Autumn Term 2024.</p>	RAYG

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
JW	<p>Application through the Youth Endowment Fund for a Regional Youth Violence and Exploitation Prevention Officers and secure pathways for support for young people at risk of exploitation.</p> <p>A regional YJS bid was submitted in 2021 to enable all 4 YJS areas to recruit Youth Violence and Exploitation Prevention Officers utilising resilience interventions developed as part of a PhD study completed within Gwynedd & Ynys Mon. Whilst we were successful in the early stages of our bid, we did not proceed to the final round and did not receive funding for the project. Whilst we have been unable to secure individual practitioners, in 2023-24 we secured funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund to commission Sidestep through Action for Children which aims to support children and young people at risk of exploitation. However, funding is only secured until December 2024. In addition we have accessed funding through the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to develop serious violence interventions with an organisation called Little BlackBird in 2024-25. We are developing these interventions with colleagues from Education and Youth Services in order for these resources to be delivered in a number of different settings and will be informed by feedback from organisations and current statistical data linked to youth violence. The interventions will have a specific focus on promoting and improving emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	RAYG
JW	<p>Implement any actions resulting from Extended Learning Reviews</p> <p>The YJS continues to operate a local Community Safeguarding and Public Protection Framework in addition to the mandated framework from the Youth Justice Board. All actions form part of an ongoing Action Plan which is monitored through the YJS Delivery Group and Executive Management Board.</p>	RAYG
JR	<p>Embedding the revised processes and procedures in relation to attendance and exclusion, using data to better inform and target interventions at both a pupil and school level</p> <p>The structure of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) was reorganised from September 2022 to differentiate the roles between the Education Support Officers (ESO) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with regards to attendance matters. ESOs have been allocated all of the primary school referrals leaving more operational time for the EWO staff, based in the secondary schools, to respond to more complex issues. The service has been further enhanced by the allocation of temporary Attendance Support Officers (ASO), funded by a WG grant. These officers have been targeted at particular schools with low overall levels of attendance and high levels of eFSM. The addition of the ASO role has been positive in supporting an improvement in attendance as demonstrated by an initial performance review with one of the schools outlined below:</p> <p><i>“ASOs have completed over 300 home visits, to over 140 students. Just over half (52.5%) of these students have improved their attendance since the first ASO visit. On average, 13% of students return to school on the same day as an ASO visit, and 65% of students are back in school the following day”.</i></p> <p>A revised model policy for attendance was issued to schools in September 2023 to support a more consistent approach across the county. A focus was placed at the start of the year on 3 primary school geographical areas with officers contacting schools to offer regular attendance review meetings and advice on implementation of the policy; post-intervention review indicated a positive impact of the activity undertaken with the majority of schools showing an overall improvement of at least 0.5% in levels of attendance.</p>	RAYG

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>A RAG rating of all schools’ procedures in relation to attendance and their engagement with the EWS was also undertaken by the service to further inform the identification process of those in need of support and challenge. Actions were identified in relation to the rating, with officers following up with schools. This activity has provided the service with a further mechanism for monitoring and identifying areas for improvement in terms of process, along with the other activities such as attendance data profiling and regular meetings with staff and parents.</p> <p>The service has continued with the implementation of fixed penalty notices (FPN) and court proceedings as appropriate, following the Welsh Government guidance. A designated ESO has been allocated to administer the FPN process to ensure compliance; any unpaid fines were referred for legal action and resulted in fines ranging from £170 to £660. Schools are increasingly seeing this process as an integral part of their graduated response to education (99 issued in 2022/23), which can be utilised as a last resort where other actions have not been successful. The impact of this action on attendance remains variable but the improving overall trend of attendance suggests that it is supporting a greater awareness and understanding of parental responsibilities in terms of attendance.</p> <p>The use of data and information to target and inform intervention has continued over the year at an individual, cohort and school level. This has however been hampered by the move to a new Portfolio database and changes in the schools’ information management systems which temporarily prevented access to data. This practice will be resumed once the issues with the new system are resolved.</p>	
JR	<p>Implement the Community Focused Schools initiative in the designated schools</p> <p>Flintshire has continued to receive WG funding to support the implementation of the Community Focused Schools initiative. The centralised service targeted 3 communities initially, selected on the basis of levels of eFSM, attendance data, index of deprivation and exclusion rates; this has now been expanded to 5. The service delivery model has evolved to a commissioning approach which allows for planning and agreement on delivery expectations between the service and school management and there has been a positive response from the schools where this has been established so far.</p> <p>Key pieces of work this year have been to support the Food and Fun programmes over the summer holidays in the designated areas which provided key opportunities to not only deliver the programme objectives, but to provide additional transition support for some of the county’s more vulnerable learners. Working alongside designated school staff, children accessed a range of important skills through the activities and also started to experience and build their knowledge of the new school building and importantly, build relationships with staff they would encounter in the new school year. A positive outcome of this, alongside engagement is that some participants have the confidence to return to support the project as year 7 buddies. Other community activities have included community lunches based in the schools where participants’ comments were positive, indicating that they were feeling part of the school community again, something which had been lost during Covid. The team have also been instrumental in delivering food wellbeing boxes as part of the Children’s University/ Dylan’s Restaurant initiative, engaged in Community Conference Meetings and facilitated delivery of the Safer Streets 5 projects. The beginnings of a Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) type group has also been established at a school along with delivery of a number of parental engagement sessions in partnership with the Health Improvement Team.</p> <p>Alongside the wider community work, the team has delivered interventions to individuals and small groups. This has included support for transition for pupil who</p>	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>were identified as having persistent levels of absenteeism in year 6. Through this process it became clear that parents were not always contacting the school as required, and that some pupils had inaccurate views in relation to attendance, e.g. believing that 65% was an acceptable attendance level. Other pupils have engaged with support offered during lunch times to support them to maintain their presence in school for the full day and others have accessed courses to develop self-esteem, confidence and practical skills; one pupil accessing the support has gone on to be the first person in his family to attend college. Mechanisms for further evaluating service impact are under development, utilising the Outcome Star programme.</p>	
JR	<p>Promote and develop Trauma Informed Practice across services and schools</p> <p>Officers across the portfolio have been supported to access a range of awareness raising sessions to improve knowledge and understanding of Trauma Informed practice. Additional training for schools and officers was commissioned by the Council with 24 participants completing the 11-day Trauma Informed diploma. A secondary Trauma Champions group has been established and met regularly over the year to review and share effective practice across schools. A Trauma Informed support group has been established for practitioners, led by the Council to provide peer support and guidance for those delivering interventions. The role of the Nurture Outreach Service is under review to ensure consistency of message and approach.</p>	
JR	<p>Engage with health regarding suitable review processes for pupils on long term home tuition packages</p> <p>Initial conversations have taken place with local health colleagues with regards to medical authorisation for access to Home Tuition. This remains a challenge due to variety of health professionals involved. The policy has reverted back to require consent from more senior/specialist medical staff (this was relaxed during the pandemic given the pressure on the Health Service) to ensure the correct decision is made for the pupil. The process of review will be an ongoing action.</p>	
	<p>R3: Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work</p>	
	<p>JW Improved monitoring for Youth Justice Service (YJS) Cohort excluded from education or not accessing education provision</p> <p>All children and young people referred to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) are subject to a Triage Assessment by our Education Officer. Any young person not receiving their full entitlement of Education/Training/Employment (ETE) is discussed as part of our monthly ETE Panel and plans to address exclusion and attendance are discussed between YJS and Inclusion Service. The YJS is a standing member on the Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Panel which helps to escalate cases of concern or persistent non-engagement. The introduction of new Key Performance Indicators will require additional oversight of our cohort through our Management Board. Following our statutory inspection in March 2024 by His Majesty's Inspectors of Probation (HMIP), we will review our processes to reduce the administration function of our Education Officers to allow them more time to engage with children and young people who are in unsuitable education.</p>	

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
DMT	<p>Identify datasets for use as Portfolio/services within evaluation processes</p> <p>A protocol has been developed between the Workforce Sub-group of the Welsh Education Strategic Forum and the School Management Information Team (SMIT) to review the data generated by the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) data related to number of staff with Welsh language skills and their level of fluency. This information is used to develop the forward work programme for this group each year, linked to the 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The focus is to effectively target professional development for the Welsh language with staff in schools to improve the quality of teaching of Welsh in schools and increase the numbers of staff who are competent and confident in their use of Welsh.</p> <p>Core attendance and exclusion data is now generated on a half-termly basis and shared across all managers in the Education Portfolio to support targeted intervention in schools.</p>	Yellow
JR	<p>Ensure appropriate monitoring systems and tools are in place to support evaluation and intervention in identified services</p> <p>Services have been supported to review the data available to them and the relevance of this in monitoring and evaluating service impact. The importance of this has been promoted through management meetings and there is evidence of improvement in this area through service self-evaluation documentation. The shift away from producing nationally published data has impacted on this process and required managers to really consider their purpose and the information which will demonstrate the impact of their services. This is an evolving process with managers and teams being at different stages in their development of embedding processes and continues to be a priority.</p>	Yellow
VB	<p>Review of local authority quality board meetings with GwE - new model for implementation from September 2021</p> <p>The Review was completed by the required deadline for implementation. An additional series of meetings was added to discuss all phase items with a particular focus on 360° support plans. The revised model is well embedded.</p>	Green
<p>R4: Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively</p>		
	<p>Ensure there is close monitoring of primary schools where budgets place them at risk of financial deficit without prior action</p> <p>This is a now regular agenda item at Portfolio Finance Meetings. Detailed analysis has been completed by the schools' Finance Team to RAG schools' risk level over the medium term. The significant number of grant streams for schools over time has added to the complexity of budget forecasting and so, as appropriate when supporting individual schools, analysis has been completed with and without grant funding expenditure to highlight over reliance on temporary funding sources to individual schools. The Senior Primary Learning Adviser has been working closely with those schools identified at increased risk to support them e.g. in the review of planning for class sizes and curriculum provision. Headteachers have been supported where required, including with specialist HR advice, to make appropriate and timely decisions to avoid financial deficit.</p> <p>The financial landscape continues to deteriorate generally for the Council, and this resulted in a 3% reduction to schools' delegated budgets for both the 23-24 and the 24-25 financial year. The impact of this is that many more schools will face significant</p>	Yellow

Officer	Evaluation of Key Actions	RAYG
	<p>challenges in setting a balanced budget in the year ahead and school balances, which have previously provided a level of protection, are rapidly reducing.</p> <p>At the closedown of accounts 16 schools finished the 23-24 year in a deficit position; 2 secondary and 14 primary (1 of the 14 had a small negative balance - that is under £5,000 or 1% of budget) and therefore is not classed as requiring a licensed deficit. The remaining 13 were above that threshold, however licensed deficit applications were either not received, as required under the Protocol for Schools in Financial Difficulty, or the agreed limit was breached, in all but one of these cases. The Council has written to all of the governing bodies concerned to remind them of the requirements of the Protocol. This compares with prior year information as follows - 15 schools were in deficit at the end of the 19-20 financial year (9 primary, 6 secondary), 5 schools were in deficit in 20-21 (4 secondary, 1 primary), 2 schools in 21-22 (both secondary) and 8 were in deficit in 22-23 (2 secondary, 6 primary).</p>	
VB	<p>Continue to robustly scrutinise any recruitment requests for schools in deficit</p> <p>The Portfolio's policy with schools for managing budget deficits is robustly managed. Any requests are discussed with Finance, HR and Inclusion colleagues as relevant and taken to DMT/ Portfolio Finance meetings for review and for final decision. In the main, requests over the year 23-24 have come from 2 secondary schools who are in a licensed deficit position.</p>	

Self-Evaluation of Education Services 23-24

Inspection area 1: Outcomes

1:1 Standards and progress overall

Estyn suspended inspections of education providers maintained by local authorities in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and no further inspections were carried out in 2019-2020 or 2020-2021. Inspections in the non-maintained settings began again in spring 2022 as well as pilot inspections for schools. Inspections in the school sector resumed in summer 2022, with 33 Flintshire primary schools, 6 Flintshire secondary schools and the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit (PPRU), inspected to date. All schools have now been inspected in this current Estyn inspection cycle. Estyn's new 6-year cycle begins in September 2024.

Inspection performance across the school sectors overall is generally strong. Most schools have no level of follow up. Two secondary schools are in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement' and one secondary school and one primary school are in Estyn Review. In most cases, there is a strong record of close correlation between the Council's pre-inspection reports and Estyn findings. The Council has a very good track record in effectively supporting schools being removed from Estyn categories. Powers of intervention, including the use of Warning Notices are used effectively where schools cause concern, to ensure challenge and support is timely and effective. Interim Executive Boards have provided successful challenge and intervention to schools in serious categories of concern. This has helped to increase the pace of change and ensure robust accountability for standards and progress.

The primary school inspection profile for Flintshire has been continuously strong. Between April 2022 and July 2024, 33 primary schools in Flintshire were inspected. Judgements are no longer given by Estyn for the five inspection areas but 32 of those schools inspected required no follow up by Estyn and 6 schools were invited to submit a case study/ cameo for Estyn which is an indicator of highly effective practice. One of those schools was invited to submit 2 case studies. Case studies were linked to effective pupil leadership, strategic development of support staff skills, health and wellbeing provision for vulnerable learners, family engagement, developing a Welsh ethos and culture, outdoor learning and ensuring rapid progress for pupils following the pandemic.

One primary school was placed in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement' in September 2022. A comprehensive package of support provided by the LA and GwE was put in place for the school, and it was successfully removed from this category in February 2024. At the end of this current inspection cycle therefore, there are no primary schools in the statutory categories of Special Measures or Significant Improvement and only one placed recently in Estyn Review.

Overall, the inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is satisfactory. Of the 11 secondary schools in the local authority, two are in the statutory category of 'In Need of Significant Improvement. One school was inspected during the 2022 -2023 academic year and one in 2023- 2024. One other secondary school was placed in the non-statutory category of Estyn Review during 2022 -2023. No secondary school is in the statutory category of Special Measures. All secondary schools have bespoke support plans in place to ensure continued improvement. Schools causing concern are subject to robust monitoring. There are 360° action plans in place when needed and highly focused support provided by both the Regional School Improvement Service, GwE and the Local Authority.

1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups

Early Education Funded Provision for 3-year-olds (Early Entitlement)

Over the last three years Flintshire has averaged 635 three-year-olds per month accessing early education, known locally as Early Entitlement (EE) through a mixed provision of mostly playgroups, private day nurseries and schools. There were 447 children funded in playgroups or private day nurseries and 169 funded in schools during the last academic year.

Pupil level data on standards achieved by three-year-olds is not collected by the Local Authority. The quality of provision in the non-maintained sector is monitored regularly by the Early Entitlement Advisory Team (EET) and is quality assured by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

The inspection profile for Flintshire non-maintained settings is very strong. 5 settings were inspected during the 2023-24 academic year. No settings were placed into follow up and there are currently no non-maintained EE providers in a follow up inspection category. The Local Authority has demonstrated a positive track record in supporting the very few settings in follow up over the last 5 years to be removed quickly.

Post-16 Learners

In September 2023, there were 1625 Flintshire and Wrexham learners enrolled in the Seren Academy. 196 of whom were pupils from Welsh medium provision and 134 Learners who are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) or Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

In 2023, 58% of Flintshire learners enrolled in the Academy gained a place at a Russell Group University. In 2022, it was 67% of students and 60% in 2021. WG did not collect the data for SEREN for 2020 due to the pandemic. Nearly all other students took up a place at other universities or on specialist courses. It may be that some students also achieved places at Russell Group Universities but didn't register for SEREN. Some students will also have accessed SEREN provision through the Deeside Sixth provision provided by Coleg Cambria.

1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Judgements are no longer given by Estyn for inspection areas. Between April 2022 and July 2024, 33 primary schools and 6 secondary schools in Flintshire were inspected. 92% of those had no area relating to 'wellbeing and attitude to learning' identified as a recommendation for improvement and Estyn identified many strengths. One primary school had a recommendation around identified safeguarding issues. One secondary school had a recommendation to improve strategies to address the poor behaviour of a few pupils and its impact on other pupils. One secondary school had a recommendation to strengthen processes to track and monitor pupils' well-being and the quality of provision for ALN. Two secondary schools and the Portfolio Pupil Referral Unit had recommendations around improving pupil attendance. This is a reflection on the challenges still being experienced by learners in the secondary sector engaging with education following the Covid-19 pandemic and this is not an issue exclusive to Flintshire - it is a national issue.

Three schools were invited to prepare case studies for Estyn's website which indicates highly effective practice worthy of being shared across Wales. One case study focused on how the school addresses the needs of the school community by engaging families through provision of enriching activities that support parents to develop their children's learning and wellbeing, another was on the school's health and wellbeing provision that has a highly positive effect, especially on the most vulnerable pupils and a third on the strategic development of support staff skills and its impact on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Attendance

It is recognised that improving attendance to pre-pandemic levels remains a challenge, not only for Flintshire but on a national basis. The table below shows attendance levels for both primary and secondary schools. Primary attendance shows a slight reduction (0.3%) with secondary overall attendance improving by 1.2%. The figures remain comparatively low however, they show more of a favourable comparison on a national basis, with primary attendance ranking as the 5th highest nationally and secondary ranking as 3rd highest; this compares with 16th place and 20th respectively for 2018/19, the period pre the pandemic. Illness remains the primary cause for absence across both sectors. Holidays account for the second highest level of absence within the primary sector, 16.9% although this has decreased from 19.6% in the previous year; this accounts for 4% of absence in the secondary sector. A further 4% is lost to exclusion in the secondary sector, this accounts for 0.25% in primary schools.

Table 1: Flintshire Schools’ Attendance

	Attendance (%)				Unauthorised Absence (%)			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*
FCC Primary Schools	92.1	92.4	91.2	93.2	0.94	0.95	0.89	0.85
FCC Secondary Schools	89.0	87.8	88.5	91.6	3.05	3.19	2.56	1.87

The levels of unauthorised absence have remained steady over the last 2 years with primary schools seeing a slight reduction of 0.01% leading to 0.94% this year and a reduction of 0.14% for secondary schools which had levels of 3.05%. Schools have been reminded of the need to consider the reason presented for the child’s absence and that they have a choice as to whether to accept this or not: unauthorised absence is coded where a reason has either not been provided or one that has not been accepted. The Council has re-instated the use of other tools such as Fixed Penalty Notices to improve attendance and this is referenced in section 2 of the report.

Table 2: Spread of attendance figures

Attendance (%)	Primary				Secondary			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*
<90	16	10	6	4	7	9	7	0
90.0-90.9	7	6	6	0	4	0	1	0
91.0-91.9	4	7	5	4	0	2	1	1
92.0-92.9	8	10	9	5	0	0	1	3
93.0-93.9	11	12	10	12	0	0	1	3
94.0-94.9	9	16	15	19	0	0	0	3
95.0-95.9	6	3	6	15	0	0	0	1
96.0-96.9	3	0	7	4	0	0	0	0
97.0-97.9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
98.0-98.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
99.0-100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Reasons for authorised absence

Reason for Absence	Primary (%)				Secondary (%)			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20*
C	10.35	10.73	39.72	11.8	19.60	20.8	28.43	17.05
F	0	0	0	0.03	0	0	0	0.02
H	16.86	19.61	11.02	15.75	3.99	3.52	1.95	4.81
I	64.73	61.99	42.69	62.02	64.33	52.39	48.07	66.29
M	4.76	4.5	3.77	5.23	6.26	5.89	4.45	7.92
S	0.01	0	0	0	1.08	13.36	13.66	0.01
E	0.25	0.31	0.25	0.41	4.33	3.39	2.68	3.21
R	0.10	0.05	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.06	0
T	2.97	2.81	2.47	4.73	0.34	0.61	0.7	0.68

*Figures for 1/09/19 to 20/03/20 when lock down commenced

C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description)	M	Medical or dental appointment
F	Agreed extended family holiday	S	Study leave
H	Agreed family holiday	E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
I	Illness	R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
		T	Traveller absence

The improvement in secondary attendance is positive but the overall low levels remain a concern. Data is shared with secondary school pastoral representatives as at termly forum to facilitate comparison and discussion in relation to effective practice. Data is also shared with service managers to support awareness and pupil targeting and also discussed at Directorate Management Team (DMT) meetings to facilitate wider portfolio discussion in relation to strategic approach. The transition to a new school data system in the reporting period has impacted on the availability of data and as a result, the activity that could be undertaken in response.

Exclusions - Permanent and Fixed Term

Whilst a reduction in the levels of exclusion across Flintshire schools remained a priority for the year, this was not achieved with the levels of both permanent and fixed term increasing, particularly within the secondary sector.

Table 4: Number of Permanent Exclusions from Flintshire Schools

	No of permanent Exclusions			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Primary	1	0	0	1
Secondary Schools	30	27	10	19

The main reasons for exclusion remain physical assault against a pupil, verbal/threatening behaviour against an adult, persistent disruptive behaviour and 'other'. The data suggests there is an increasing level of verbal/threatening behaviour against adults with a higher percentage of exclusions attributed to this. There is also a notable increase in the percentage of permanent exclusion attributed to substance misuse within the secondary sector. The Council's Substance Misuse Policy has been reviewed in response and has undergone consultation with schools, with the updated policy due for publication in September 2024. Officers were using individual pupil data to support the profiling and identification of those at risk

of permanent exclusion with the aim of intervening at an earlier stage. The transfer to a new education database has resulted in significant data access issues which has impacted on the ability of officers to maintain this activity and it will be reinstated once the system issues have been resolved.

The Council was successful in its bid for UK Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) securing additional funding to support engagement. The project 'LEAP' was implemented in September 2023 and has provided access to a range of additional group and 1:1 support for individuals at risk of disengagement with the aim of reducing barriers to education and employment. The project is due to run until December 2024 when the overall impact will be determined.

Table 5: Fixed-Term Exclusions

	Fixed Term Exclusions			
	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
	Number of incidents (Number of Pupils)	Number of incidents (Number of Pupils)	Number of incidents (Number of Pupils)	Number of incidents (Number of Pupils)
Primary 5 Days or Less	123 (58)	158 (18)	99 (55)	144 (70)
Primary Over 5 days	8 (6)	7 (7)	13 (12)	1 (1)
Secondary 5 Days or Less	1885 (807)	1446 (716)	902 (490)	879 (405)
Secondary Over 5 days	80 (70)	66 (53)	22 (20)	19 (18)
Rate of exclusion per 1000 pupils (Primary & Secondary Combined)	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
5 days or Less	86.5	73.4	54.5	43.4
Over 5 days	7.6	6	3.2	0.8

The number of managed moves across Flintshire, a strategy to give learners a fresh start in a different school, has remained relatively low with 37 being undertaken in 2022/23. The vast majority occurred within the secondary sector and success rates of these remains low, with 38% proving to be successful; the challenging and often complex needs of pupils identified for Managed Moves impacts on the success of this process, along with the availability of additional resources to wrap around the individual in the new setting. Work has been focused on developing a Fair Access process to support timely admission across the secondary school network and this is due to be implemented in September 2024. The Managed Moves Policy and associated processes will be further reviewed in line with that development in the coming year.

Outcome 1: Standards and Progress Summary

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability

- Maintain focus on strategies to improve attendance rates
- Maintain focus on strategies to reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions
- Maintain positive inspection outcomes across all sectors - early years, primary, secondary and specialist provision
- Support the very few of schools in follow up or statutory category to make rapid and sustained progress against their recommendations

Inspection area 2: Quality of Education Services

2.1 Support for School Improvement

School Improvement Processes

The Council knows its schools very well. There are clear strategies, policies and processes that are understood by those involved and give a clear shape and direction to the Education Service.

The relationship and collaboration between Flintshire and the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) is very good and similarly, relationships between GwE and schools in Flintshire are positive. Through this relationship, the Council has quality information about its schools and provides them with robust and appropriate challenge but also support and intervention. As a result, schools benefit from a diverse regional professional learning offer and bespoke support at individual school and cluster level. This can be evidenced by the improvement dialogue with schools and the strong inspection profile.

Improving performance in Key Stage 4 continues to be a priority following the last inspection. As a result, each secondary school has an agreed programme of support that helps deliver the identified priorities within a school's improvement plan. The school support plan clearly defines how school improvement resources ensure targeted improvements in key priority areas. Where required, schools are also supported by a 360° support plan which identifies enhanced support needs through LA services and GwE. These plans are monitored through the Council's Quality Board.

The Council, in partnership with GwE, has effective procedures to support schools in their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Schools are robustly challenged on the quality of their self-evaluation processes.

Schools have made effective use of the milestones provided by GwE for the reform of the Curriculum for Wales. This allows schools to reflect on their current position with regards to the reform journey and provides clear next steps for their consideration. Cluster work is enhanced through collaborative work and the sharing of priorities and dialogue helps capture the level of support required by schools and collaborations of schools.

Senior leaders within the service use a range of data and intelligence effectively to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information are scrutinised robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, the Council is effective in challenging schools where needed and allocating specific support for those schools.

There is a comprehensive and well embedded professional learning offer for all schools in Flintshire and this is enhanced by what is being offered at local level by schools and between schools. There are high levels of engagement by Flintshire schools in professional learning. The offer supports school leadership at all levels across the county and has been strengthened by a range of strategies including access to regional and national development programmes. The local authority has supported the development of leadership in Flintshire schools at various levels. Subscription to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and Aspiring Heads course has been strong while existing and recently appointed headteachers are very well supported through the New and Acting headteacher programme. The impact of this has been demonstrated in the good recruitment levels at senior leadership level across Flintshire schools, even within the overall context of national challenges to recruitment and retention.

There has been a clear focus on improving teaching in Flintshire schools. The impact of this focus can be evidenced in the evaluation of practice at school and regional level and through the continued improvement

in Inspection Area 3 of the Flintshire Estyn profile (Teaching). All schools have been involved in the ongoing professional development and support programme for the implementation of the new curriculum.

Primary and Secondary networks and peer-to-peer work has strengthened collaboration and led to a stronger shared understanding of effective practice. The Secondary Alliance model is embedded and has led to improved levels of collaboration between schools in sharing practice at senior and middle leadership level and in standards of teaching and learning. The Middle Leadership professional development programmes have been successful in improving the quality of leaders in core subjects, literacy and numeracy and in the foundation learning phase through development of skills and knowledge. Bespoke approaches have been tailored to meet the requirements of individual schools; coaching programmes for groups and individuals have been delivered in several schools and had a clear impact on the work of leaders. Shortages in key personnel have also been supported through the deployment of expertise from neighbouring schools.

Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. The Council supports strong and effective communication and a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges. Good practice is shared and local expertise nurtured.

Schools in Flintshire are continuing to engage positively with the National Reform Journey and in developing themselves as Learning Organisations. All primary schools in Flintshire implemented the new curriculum from September 2022 and all secondary schools from September 2023.

Post-16 Education

There are six high schools in Flintshire with sixth forms and a Council partnership with one Further Education (FE) college with a dedicated A level centre. Two high schools merged their sixth forms to create Flint 6th. In 2023 - 2024, there were 1,005 learners in Years 12 and 13, compared to 1,041 in 2022 - 2023 and 1,152 in 2021-2022. This included 72 post-16 learners studying through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Maes Garmon in 2023- 2024, 62 in 2022-2023 and 62 in 2021-2022. All school sixth forms offer the Welsh Baccalaureate, however, the number completing the full qualification differs between schools and years.

The Council continues to work closely with its six post-16 providers and in partnership with Coleg Cambria to shape post-16 provision for students and to ensure clear pathways to professional and technical routes to employment, alongside robust academic routes. The appointment of a Post-16 Learning Adviser has added additional capacity to the portfolio's work. Regular meetings of the post-16 network of schools are held to agree and review curriculum planning and local delivery. Annual plans are submitted to Welsh Government for scrutiny. The portfolio engages with the Regional Skills Partnership Board who are keen to work with schools, particularly around developing apprenticeships.

Welsh Language Advisory Service

The portfolio's Welsh Language Advisory Service works in English and Welsh medium primary schools. Under the Welsh Government's new language categorisation policy, all 59 English medium schools are defined as Category 1 schools and all 5 Welsh schools are defined as Category 3 Welsh-medium primary schools.

The Team's main objective is to contribute to Flintshire's Welsh in Education Strategy by ensuring progress in Welsh in Category 1 and Category 3 primary schools. They work in partnership with schools to improve the quality of teaching and develop the language and methodology skills of the education workforce.

School Workforce Annual (SWAC) data for 2023 shows that 13% of the primary workforce (teachers and teaching assistants) have no Welsh language skills. This is a 2% improvement from 2022.

Through a range of strategies, a targeted approach is used that includes the direct training of teachers and teaching assistants through intensive language and methodology courses and by working collaboratively with other key partners e.g. GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr (providers of the Sabbatical courses), Urdd and Menter Iaith.

The informal use of Welsh in all schools is a strategic priority. It is delivered by an appointed coordinator for Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter) in Welsh medium primary and a designated person leading and co-ordinating Cymraeg Campus in English medium primary schools. All five Welsh medium primary schools in Flintshire have achieved their Gold Siarter Iaith award. All English medium primary schools in Flintshire have embarked on their journey with Cymraeg Campus. During the last academic year, 15 schools have been verified for the Efydd (bronze), 2 for the Arian (silver) and 3 for the Aur (gold). In total 42 schools have now achieved the Efydd (bronze) award, eight schools achieved the Arian (silver) Award, and 4 have achieved the Aur (gold) Award. Six secondary schools are now working towards Cymraeg Campus Efydd (bronze).

Between April 2019 and March 2020, 8 English medium primary schools were inspected and 4 (50%) received a recommendation to improve pupils' Welsh language skills. Following the re-introduction of inspections in April 2022, 13 schools were inspected and 7 (54%) received a recommendation to improve pupils' Welsh language skills, reflecting to some degree the impact of the pandemic, particularly on learners in English speaking homes who were not being exposed to the Welsh language in school during the periods of closedown. The team adjusted their programme of professional development for schools and their targeted bespoke provision to address the concerns identified. Since April 2023, 21 English medium primary schools have been inspected and only 5 (24%) have received a recommendation in relation to Welsh language, demonstrating the positive impact of the advisory team.

In the summer term of 2024, the Welsh service again organised a jamboree for foundation learners. 53 primary schools, including the primary special school, attended the singing festival over three days with 1,479 pupils attending.

Flintshire schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for staff to further their language training through the Welsh Government funded sabbatical courses. Numbers attending from Flintshire have been consistently high on courses across the North Wales region. Between 2020 and 2024, 27 teachers have accessed the sabbatical programme: Cymraeg Mewn Blwyddyn (Welsh in a year) – 9 teachers; Sylfaen (Foundation) – 5 teachers; Canolradd / Uwch (Intermediate/ Advanced) – 6 teachers. They continue to receive post-course support from the Welsh Advisory Service to embed their practice within their school. For September 2024, a further 4 Flintshire teachers have been allocated places on the Cymraeg Mewn Blwyddyn course; 15 applied but course places are limited. 11 teaching assistants attended Cwrs Mynediad in the summer term of 2024 and will receive post-course support from September 2024. The Welsh Advisory Service works closely with the course providers, delivering methodology sessions during the courses and provides focused support to staff on their return to school, with a particular aim of supporting embedding of practice across the whole school e.g. delivering training sessions to teaching assistants within their schools, becoming Flintshire verifiers for Cymraeg Campus and in some instances, becoming the cluster lead for Welsh.

One member of the Welsh Advisory Team works with Welsh medium primary schools for any newcomers who arrive in the 8-11 age group. An accelerated programme of language intervention has been developed in conjunction with the Welsh medium schools. A representative from each school has been trained

to deliver the programme effectively. In 2022-2023, 15 newcomers completed this programme and in 2023-2024 5 newcomers completed. A member of the team also works closely with the Welsh secondary school supporting the 'Trochi' (Immersion) programme for Year 6 learners who transfer from English medium primary school into Welsh medium secondary, including delivering language and methodology sessions during the 4-week period in the summer term before transfer to secondary school. 18 pupils joined the 'Trochi' programme in September 2023. In September 2024, 16 pupils are due to join the programme (13 in Flintshire and 3 in a neighbouring authority). The service has made effective use of the additional funding stream for Latecomers to Welsh medium education. This included a range of projects for Foundation Learning, 8–11-year-olds and Key Stage 3. Plans are well underway to provide learning facilities for the Trochi programme to operate out of the new build for Ysgol Croes Atti in Flint.

Members of the team continually evaluate their work to ensure schools receive a high-quality service, refining methods accordingly and using evidence-based practices to inform improvements, e.g., by identifying language support required as a result of the Welsh language skills section of the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC), creating working parties of teachers refining curriculum planning for schools, identifying schools to share good practice. The team produces a monthly bulletin that provides information on professional development opportunities, celebrates success and expectations for Welsh as well as including relevant external stakeholder input. Through the highly effective cluster work for Welsh, the service can facilitate and support schools in striving to build capacity within their own settings. 1 Welsh medium and 2 English medium schools were invited by the regional school improvement service, GwE, to showcase their effective practice to teachers from across North Wales. The focus was on how Welsh language is developed within the Curriculum for Wales. These schools offered an insight into their vision for developing the Welsh language and exemplified their provision. Flintshire schools engage positively with the support offered and provide regular feedback, which informs the ongoing work of the Service.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Forum

The 10-year Flintshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 was approved by Welsh Government following a period of public consultation and endorsement by the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny process. Subsequently, a 5-year action plan was also approved by Welsh Government. The implementation of the WESP is driven and monitored by the Flintshire Welsh Strategic Forum made up of officers, elected members, school representatives and other organisations linked to the development of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. A representative from Welsh Government regularly attends meetings of the Forum. The Forum is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture.

The Forum works very effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language through all formal and non-formal education settings such as schools and youth settings. Most members of the Forum sit on one or more of the three sub-committees – Provision, Standards and Workforce. These meet regularly during the year to work on their specific actions within the 5-year plan and provide feedback on their progress in the following termly Forum meeting.

The Forum is robust in holding the Council to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it. The Forum's terms of reference and membership are regularly reviewed. Reports on the progress of the WESP are routinely presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Flintshire remains committed to build additional capacity in the Welsh Medium school network to support the WESP. Significant capital investment has been made through the Council's capital

programme and through the Sustainable Learning Communities funding to improve facilities and increase the number of Welsh medium places available.

Advanced planning is underway to review further opportunities for growth in Welsh medium schools including a new build for an existing Welsh medium school in Flint and a new start up Welsh medium school in the Buckley/Mynydd Isa area. This would deliver on the Council's key objective of having Welsh medium early years and primary school provision in every major town across the county.

School Governance Support

The governor support role within the Education Portfolio (0.2fte) sits with the role of Senior Manager for Business Support. The part time provision and support provided to governing bodies is enhanced by access to the dedicated web subscription resource and helpline provided by Governors Cymru. Exemplars of good practice/case studies from governing bodies in Flintshire can be referenced on the website.

The key functions of the service relate to supporting governing bodies, as necessary, in the following areas - Schools Causing Concern procedures; School Federations; Accelerated Improvement Boards; Interim Executive Boards; training and development, either through commissioning or direct delivery; administration of the Flintshire Governors Association; appointment of Local Authority governors to governing bodies, and securing governor nominations to the Schools Budget Forum and Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Council continues to remain compliant with the statutory duty to offer the regulatory school governor training programme. The Welsh Government statutory governor training modules are available online with a commissioned external provider. This online training portal during 2023/24 registered 230 new log-ons during the year suggesting a good level of engagement with statutory training is being maintained. Governing Bodies can monitor virtual attendance of their governors through the portal and are responsible for monitoring the impact of training on the discharge of their duties.

There continues to be commissioning of virtual training from external partners on the role of governors in safeguarding and in data protection.

The network of North Wales Governor Support Officers continues to meet virtually each term with the GWE lead for Governor Support. The network continues to share approaches and resources to support governor development. GWE offers support to individual governing bodies, when requested, through their professional learning offer. Similarly, there continues to be representation at the ADEW National network of Governor Support Officers who meet termly with representatives of Welsh Government. The Governor Development Manager (Senior Manager for Business Support) is currently the Chair of the ADEW GSO (Association Directors Education Wales, Governor Support Officers) national network, and contributor to a Welsh Government working group on the refresh of a self-evaluation resource for governing bodies.

Meetings of the Schools Budget Forum, Education and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Welsh in Education Strategic Form are held virtually and there remains consistent representation by governors.

Although there are approximately 1250 governor positions within the Authority, the Council only has responsibility for administering the nomination of Local Authority governors (circa 200) to school governing bodies. There have been no concerns raised by schools arising from governor vacancies.

2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners

Flintshire provides a suitable range of services to promote social inclusion and support for learners with ALN through a combination of internal and externally commissioned services and provision. The Council meets its statutory duties well as demonstrated by the low levels of appeal to the Education Tribunal and the low levels of young people becoming NEET. Council expenditure remains higher for those pupils presenting with a range of behavioural, social and emotional needs as this continues to be the most significant area of presenting need.

Services across the Portfolio continue to work in collaboration to meet the needs of these individuals and this has supported the improvement in overall attendance noted in section 1, with the overall attendance across Flintshire schools being within the upper quartile nationally. The Portfolio proactively looks for additional opportunities to support vulnerable learners and families and successfully bid for Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) with projects supporting an improvement in engagement, improvement in numeracy skills and additional support for those within the criminal justice system.

Flintshire has operated a model of delegated funding for pupils with special educational needs/additional learning needs for several years now. The models differ for delegation to Primary and Secondary schools and are under review following the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET). The greater autonomy brought about by the models is welcomed in the main, however, the overall level of funding available to schools to meet the presenting needs has been identified as a challenge and work has been identified to gain a better understanding of the level of need.

The challenges of recent years continue to impact on learners and the Council's and schools' ability to respond to these. Schools continue to be as creative as possible in their offer to engage learners, but the financial climate is starting to impact on the sustainability of the range of the support and provision available. The number of children who still require individual home-based tuition as directed by medical professionals remains relatively high. Capacity within the specialist provision, both internally and externally, has been a challenge this year, with this being the first year that a waiting list for provision had to be established. Additional funding has been allocated to mainstream schools to support the maintenance of placements for children with increased levels of need and to also increase the capacity within the specialist Resources where necessary; the Resources inspected during the year and were deemed to be effective in meeting the needs of the designated cohorts. Short, medium and long term proposals for increasing the capacity of Flintshire's specialist provision, including Welsh Medium are being developed and a Strategic Outline Plan for capital investment for ALN provision has been submitted to WG in relation to this.

Plas Derwen Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) transitioned into its new purpose-built facility in September 2021. A new headteacher took up post in September 2022 following the retirement of the previous post holder. The provision was inspected in October 2022 and was placed into Estyn Review. The Council worked closely with GwE and the headteacher over the year and the revisit in February 2024 indicated that pleasing progress had been made in all the recommendations. Destination data for year 11 pupils leaving Plas Derwen in 2023 indicated that 98% went on to further education, employment or training, an increase on the 94% of the previous year. The wider role of Plas Derwen in relation to supporting children with behaviour, social and emotional needs across the county is being considered and reviewed along with the remit of the Nurture Outreach service which operates out of Plas Derwen to ensure alignment in relation to need and other service areas.

The focus on trauma-informed practice to support greater understanding of presenting needs and how to support individuals remains a priority for the Council and training on the 11-day diploma was provided from

September 2023. The secondary Trauma Informed Forum has continued to meet and is developing as a useful forum to discuss and share strategies for implementation across the schools. This is feeding into the work on the Belonging Strategy which is in its early stages of development.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Additional capacity was allocated to the ALN team in response to the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET). The team comprises of six Learning Advisers, including the Early Years ALN Lead Officer (EYALNLO) and dedicated ALN officers for Post 16 and for children who are looked after (CLA). The team is further supported by a seconded school Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo). The service also has a fluent Welsh speaker as part of the team. The Senior Learning Adviser for ALN manages the team and leads on the implementation of ALNET.

The Learning Advisors meet the statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with special educational and additional learning needs (SEN/ALN). Each of the core officers has a cluster group of schools and follows the pupils from entry into primary school and transition to secondary school. The change in the Council's duties in relation to Post-16 learners under ALNET led to the development of a designated officer role to lead on the development of policy and process. The post holder is also the designated officer for all Post-16 individuals with ALN. The department works within clear protocols and decision-making processes to assess and make decisions regarding placement and provision for learners with ALN to ensure an equitable approach. The team works in close collaboration with other internal service areas and are active with outside professional partners to ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach is in place.

Under ALNET, health professionals have a duty to notify the LA of children who are likely to have ALN. The relationship with the local health board Designated Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) continues to strengthen and has resulted in an ongoing review of processes to ensure that children are accurately and appropriately identified. A total of 82 referrals were received during the reporting period, compared with 73 (2022-23) and 97 (2021-22). Of these, 29 transitioned into school with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) in September 2023, 10 of which went into specialist provision. Enhanced transition from pre-school settings into school remained a focus during the year to give the children the best possible start to their formal education. Parents of early years children continue to report that the ALN system is a parent/child friendly process, and the use of Vanguard principles are guiding and improving practice in this area.

The decision to create a designated Post-16 role within the service has been beneficial in ensuring a focus on the development of systems and processes along with improved collaboration and understanding in terms of the ALNET requirements both within the Council and with external partners. The Post-16 Steering Group, comprising of membership from Education and Social Services has continued to meet on a monthly basis and has agreed changes to the Council's Transition Protocol in readiness for publication as part of the strategy for post-16 learners, one of recommendations from the Estyn thematic report - The new Additional Learning Needs system.

Over the year, meetings were held with high school ALNcos to discuss Year 11 learners that might require additional support with transition to college. Coleg Cambria have appointed an IDP Transition and Review Specialist and monthly meetings are now held with the college to discuss learners with IDPs who have made college applications and who have consented to information being shared. The college reports that they have good links with secondary colleagues and that information is being shared in a timely manner, with college representatives being invited to reviews where appropriate which is supporting a more effective transition into further education.

The Post 16 officer is also a member of the Transition Panel coordinated by Social Services. This supports the identification of young people who will potentially require high level of support from Child to Adult Team and may need specialist education provision post 16. This is very effective multi-agency approach to monitor and track potential pathways ensuring the holistic needs of learners are known and understood at the earliest point. The Council's duties for Post 16 under ALNET commenced September 2023, with current Year 12s being the first cohort that the local authority may remain responsible for. Careers Wales advisors continue to attend reviews and provide advice and support. In September 2023, 9 learners with a local authority IDPs transitioned into FEIs, 7 of which maintained their placements, with the IDPs being ceased for 2 students. The remaining 2 individuals withdrew from the courses with 1 moving onto the Jobs Growth Wales programme. Two additional learners accessed specialist provision.

Officers have continued to be involved in the work as part of the regional response to the Welsh Government (WG) proposal to passport financial responsibility for the funding of specialist Post-16 provision to Councils. Concern had been expressed by 4 authorities within the North Wales region in relation to the suitability of the formula for funding allocation, which modelling suggested would result in a significant deficit. The processes outlined above have supported the early identification of potential need and the data shows that around 50% of the cohort leaving Ysgol Maes Hyfryd specialist school in the next 3 years, may not be able to access suitable courses within local further education institutes, resulting in a significant financial challenge for the Council if the proposed WG financial model is adopted.

Table 6: Number of pupils leaving specialist school potentially requiring specialist post-16 placements

Flintshire	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Total leaving specialist school	14	15	20
Potentially requiring specialist provision	7	8	9

The Council commenced the conversion process for Statements of Special Educational Needs to Individual Development Plans (IDPs) as per the WG timetable in September 2022. WG amended their orders for September 2023, only mandating years 6 and 10 for conversion in the academic year 2023/24, with schools and Councils being free to determine their own year groups for conversion in 2024/25. At the start of the implementation process, the Council had 830 Statements to convert, with 200 being converted within the reporting period. A further 93 are in process to be completed by the end of the 2023/24 academic year, leaving 174 for completion in 2024/25. This has been a significant achievement by the team who committed to attending as many meetings as possible to support consistency of approach and person-centred practice. This effort has supported schools and parents as evidenced by the very low level of appeals to the Education Tribunal during this period; there were no cases of formal disagreement resolution and the 1 case lodged with the Tribunal was closed through a consent order prior to the hearing. A meeting involving the Chief Officer, Senior Manager and Senior Learning Adviser was also undertaken with the parental support group STAND which served to build relationships, provide accurate information in relation to ALNET and the Council's services and processes and to share the ongoing challenges from a parental perspective. One of the actions agreed following the meeting was to review the format and content of the Council's website in relation to ALN which will be undertaken in the coming year. Feedback to officers in relation to parental contact with the ALN team is very positive, with parents feeling listened to and indicating a high level of satisfaction with regard to officer professionalism and the quality of communication.

Support for schools remains a priority during the implementation period and this is delivered via the half-termly ALNCo Forums, cluster work and individual school monitoring visits. The feedback on these has been positive with ALNcos reporting feeling supported in their roles, with access to advice and support in relation to processes and resources. Schools are benefitting from the support; all Estyn reports during the reporting period have captured positive comments about ALN, including comments in relation to implementation, child progress and provision. Through these, the team is also working to address the issues of inconsistency in relation to process and the variation in terms of IDP content.

In the absence of full pupil outcome datasets, the service has worked on a mechanism for monitoring the progress of pupils with ALN and the use of a RAG rating system is being piloted based on Annual review meetings/documentation. This has enabled officers to consider whether progress is in line with expectations and those that are deemed not to be, are identified for further monitoring; discussions with school in such instances have taken place to ensure the best strategies and interventions are being utilised, factors such as changes in family circumstances or the health of the child were also noted as reasons impacting progress.

As of 31st March 2024, the Council has 265 local authority IDPs in place, the majority of which relate to the following areas of need: Autism (66), Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (77) and speech, language and communication difficulties (62). These have consistently been the areas of need and the data is informing the development of a revised specialist provision strategy. Access to specialist provision is a significant ongoing challenge for the Council with internal provision at capacity in the main areas of need and external provider having limited availability for placements to be made. Plans are being drawn up for both short term and longer-term solutions, including the provision for Welsh medium ALN and reorganisation of secondary school resource provision. Additional challenges are managing parental and pupil expectations in terms of individual needs as opposed to wants and wishes and a perceived lack of sufficient funding available in schools to meet the level of demand; an exercise is underway with schools to capture further detail in relation to this to better inform the Council's financial decision making.

Education Psychology Service (EPS)

The Principle Educational Psychologist (PEP) has continued to focus on recruitment and development of the Education Psychology Service. The Education Psychologist (EP):pupil ratio for Flintshire remains less favourable as compared to other parts of the country however, the investment in trainees and Assistant Educational Psychologists (AEPs) appears to be having an impact with Flintshire being seen as a desirable authority to work for; two trainee EPs have been appointed to commence roles as fully qualified EPs in September 2024 with other trainees who had accessed placements within the authority, enquiring about the availability of future posts.

The Group Consultation model continues to be implemented in the Primary sector and facilitates a half-termly link with every primary school in Flintshire. This forum serves to allocate the time for individual and direct work, and also serves as an adult solution circle that allows for the merging of 'expert' EP and teacher advice to generate workable and creative person-centered plans for identified children. A total of 72 meetings were held over the year, with 248 pupil consultations taking place during the group sessions. The sessions also provide an important forum for staff development and training/support has been offered across a wide range of topics including – social communication, emotional literacy, sensory support, sleep, literacy & numeracy, trauma informed practice, Emotionally-Based School Avoidance (EBSA), measuring progress for children not following the Curriculum for Wales and transition. The feedback from schools (45 respondents) is that the consultation meetings are generally viewed as positive and productive as indicated by the key findings below:

- 100% agreed that attending Group Consultation had increased their knowledge and understanding of strategies to address and support ALN
- 100% agreed that attending Group Consultation had helped the attendee to support colleagues in school and/or families
- 96% agreed that over time, the meetings had helped pupil progress in their school
- 93% agreed that the sessions had helped the attendee to draw up an action plan to address the needs of targeted pupils

When asked to comment on which aspects of the Group Consultation were found to be most useful a number of comments were received including the following:

“Having the opportunity to talk to EPs and other schools about strategies and support. There have been useful strategies and programmes recommended and usually staff from other school have similar experiences that they share.”

“Being able to share good practice from other schools”.

“The follow up actions are effective, from EP and assistant EP, whether it’s resources emailed, observations and parent /school meetings arranged or reports sent to further cases. What a team! Thank you!”

“The support network from other ALNCoS. Advise from EPs and Assistants. Opportunity to talk about complex children.”

Comments to support an improvement in the process included being able to discuss more than one pupil per school and encouraging wider participation where meetings are not well attended. In addition to Group Consultation, schools were offered structured conversation sessions with the AEPs. A total of 26 ‘conversations’ took place providing advice and support to classroom staff on a range of less complex matters. The Welsh language skills of the AEPs allowed for this offer to be fully accessed through the medium of Welsh by our Welsh medium settings.

Training remains a key strand of the service model which has enhancing the knowledge and skills of adults closest to children and young people to enhance relationships and organisational capacity and bring about lasting positive change as one of their main objectives. As Chair of the Portfolio’s Emotional Health & Wellbeing Steering Group, the PEP is well-placed to understand the needs of children and young people and the challenges this places on educational establishments. Flintshire has continued to see an increase in the number of pupils presenting with anxiety and emotional reasons that prevent them from attending schools and this has guided the decisions about the nature of the training to be offered. The Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme has continued to be supported both through access to the ELSA training and ongoing supervision for trained ELSAs. A total of 120 ELSAs were trained with supervision being offered on a half termly basis. ELSA line manager sessions were also offered to help secure an understanding of the role and the support required to ensure smooth and effective delivery in school. ELSAs who have participated in the supervision sessions were asked to comment on the impact of their intervention and the following was noted by 50 participants:

- 78% strongly agreed that delivering the ELSA programme had a positive impact on pupil wellbeing, with 22% agreeing
- 55% strongly agreed that ELSA had a positive impact towards whole school wellbeing, with 37% agreeing and 8% neutral

A number of challenges were identified in the ability of schools to continue with the delivery of the ELSA programme and these included the ability to build up the required resources due to time and funding constraints, difficulties attending supervision as it took staff away from their other duties and schools were struggling with supply cover in terms of cost and availability. Supervision sessions have now been moved to the end of the day in an attempt to resolve the staff cover issues.

Other examples of training offered by the EPS have been EBSA, Emotion Coaching, Developing Relational Practice, Circle Solutions, Intensive interaction/'May I Join You?', Precision Teaching and Moving Up Transition Training. Where suitable, these have been developed as E-learning modules which provide a high-quality professional development opportunity for anyone who missed the live training. This training serves as a first stage intervention, bringing consultees up to speed on a topic in an accessible way. Subsequent consultation can then be more focused and directed towards using the knowledge from the E-learning course to address individual needs freeing up EPs/AEPs for other activities.

The increase in EBSA led to the piloting of a 6-week intervention devised and led by the EPS to support pupils back into a setting. EPs/AEPs worked directly with 36 pupils as part of the pilot, alongside staff from the educational setting, the family and other relevant services. The pupils involved were able to re-engage with an appropriate form of education following the intervention.

The EPS is an integral part of the Council's response to duties under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 (ALNET). Whilst the legislation doesn't place a time expectation on the completion of EP reports (previous legislation allowed for 42 days), there are timescales for the Council to work to - 7 weeks for a reconsideration of a school decision or 12 weeks for a decision on whether a child has additional learning needs (ALN). The average completion time for EP reports in this reporting period was 40 days. Whilst the timescales allocated for the Council processes do allow for exceptions, they are proving challenging to meet given the complex nature of the children and young people who would be referred for this process; this has been raised with Welsh Government as a concern. Additional capacity would be required to secure an improvement in EP response time through the appointment of EPs to dedicate time solely to requests for assessments that come from the Council's ALN Panels. This would prove difficult to recruit to and/or expensive. It would be better to provide additional EP time to schools and settings to enable them to:

- a) meet the need of learners in a timely manner and without recourse to LA ALN consideration,
- b) support settings in building capacity to meet the increasingly complex challenges faced

Support for the wellbeing of portfolio and school-based staff was a priority identified via the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group. The EPS has provided supervision to Plas Derwen PRU and teams within the Inclusion & Progression Service. This intervention and support has been well received and resulted in staff feeling supported, valued and better able to complete their role.

Young Person's Counselling Service

The Young Person's Counselling Service is an integral part of the Council's support mechanism in relation to emotional health and wellbeing. All secondary schools, including the specialist school Ysgol Maes Hyfryd and Plas Derwen (PRU) are allocated designated counsellor time. Referrals are also taken for pupils in years 5 and 6 in primary schools and there has been increase in focus on supporting children not accessing education. The broader therapeutic offer including dog therapy, creative therapies and play therapy has been welcomed and been successful where talking therapy has not been the most suitable form of engagement. The ability to offer counselling across a number of digital formats has enabled the service to work more proactively, particularly through the holidays with more children than usual taking up the offer of continuing to engage with counselling through the holidays.

The service offer has been further expanded this year in response to the presenting need. One of the counsellors has an area of specialism relating to girls with Autism having written articles and recorded podcasts in relation to this. She has used this knowledge and expertise to deliver training and support to school in this area alongside offering counselling to individuals. Support has also been offered to families in relation to the neurodevelopmental (ND) assessment through the health service and also providing advice to the parents on understanding Autism and how to manage demand avoidance and maintain social boundaries as examples. This has proved to be very successful in supporting parents to manage and support their children as their knowledge in the condition and confidence grows.

The table below outlines the level of engagement of the service over the year. The level of engagement can be seen to have increased significantly. This is mainly due to the change in recording methodology which now includes any form of contact including the initial triage meeting which serves as a form of support in itself; previously, pupils were only included if they went on to receive the full complement of therapy sessions. The service also supports placement for counselling students which increases the capacity somewhat; this is deemed to be an important role for the service in supporting the profession and developing the local supply of trained counsellors. Family issues has moved to the main area impacting on those engaging with the service and is thought to reflect a number of factors, e.g. impact of the cost of living, smart phone and technology usage and the changes in discipline regimes at home following the pandemic. Interestingly, academic issues featured in the top 3 of issues and appears to reflect the reducing levels of support available in schools as the financial challenges are starting to impact. It was also noted that pupils in Year 10 constituted the largest number of any of the year groups engaging with the YPCS, totally 192, followed by 177 in year 9 (the year group which tended to dominate the referrals) and 151 in both years 8 and 11. Online safety, bullying and friendships are areas in which the service is providing additional support to schools.

Table 7: Number of clients and presenting issues

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Number of Clients	963	547	308
Presenting issues on referral (3 most common in rank order high to low)	Family Anxiety Academic Issues	Anxiety Family Anger	Anxiety Family Bereavement

All young people engaging with the Counselling service undertake an initial assessment (YP-Core) and this is repeated at the end of the intervention to measure impact. The information below shows that on average, the young people acknowledge a positive outcome following engagement with the sessions.

Table 8: Impact of the Young Person's Counselling Service

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Changes in the average result of the Young People's Core Score - Start of Episode	18.48	20.84	18.57
Changes in the average result of the Young People's Core Score - End of Episode	10.80	11.81	9.57

Additional funding was secured to continue to provide extra support to educational staff; this was identified as a particular area of ongoing need via the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group. The offer included direct 1:1 counselling check ins and coaching; the coaching is commissioned and delivered via a qualified coach who had previously been a headteacher within the authority and as a result, brings a wealth of background knowledge and expertise to the experience. A total of 18 individuals have been supported over the year. The feedback from these individuals supports the ongoing need for such a service, in some cases enabling individuals to deal with past and present issues to enable them to address these and continue in their roles more effectively. With others it has served to boost self-esteem and reaffirm their leadership skills and for some, helped to prevent them from undertaking catastrophic actions in response to the challenges they are experiencing.

Autism and Social Communication Support Service

A budget pressure was submitted as part of the Council's financial processes to secure additional capacity within the Education & Youth Portfolio, specifically within the Inclusion & Progression Service to increase the capacity to respond to needs of individuals presenting with a social communication/Autistic profile. This was in response to the increasing level of support requested from schools and families around this particular area of need. A Learning Adviser for Autism was appointed in February 2023 and took over responsibility for the Inclusion Outreach team from the Education Psychology Service creating a dedicated service. The Learning Adviser provides advice, support and intervention for children and young people across the county. Pupil observations are an integral part of the work which leads to a report outlining suitable strategies which are modelled as part of the observation process; guidance is also provided in relation to the learning environment. On average, 10-12 schools are visited per week to provide initial visits/observations or follow up work. Training is an important part of the service offer and 10 schools have taken up training around Autism awareness, the SPELL framework and Inclusive Classrooms. Additional support and guidance has been requested by 20 schools in relation to setting up their own small group provision for children who require more specialist intervention; in some cases this is in direct response to the lack of availability of specialist provision, for others it will be about developing a more efficient way to educate the children on roll. The monitoring of specialist Resource Bases is also an integral part of the role and the Learning Adviser has had a key remit in reviewing and supporting improvement across the specialist provision.

The Inclusion Outreach team comprises of 2 Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) who provide direct interventions to children as well as advice on strategies for adults working with children to employ. Over the academic year, 24 schools have engaged with the service with up to 42 children accessing support at any one time. The team offer support in relation to emotional regulation, neuro-positive engagement strategies, Lego therapy, modelling of support strategies for teaching assistants alongside working with parents and other professionals.

The capacity of the service was further increased through a successful bid to the regional Neurodivergent Improvement Project (NDIP), which secured additional funding to second a teacher to the service. This was initially for a term, from January to March 2024 but has now been extended until April 2025. The focus for the postholder is to work in collaboration with health colleagues in the Neurodevelopmental service, in particular, working with children on the ND diagnosis waiting list. This work has been well received by health colleagues along with schools and families and is supporting changes in the ND assessment process to help reduce the waiting times; work to date has supported with reducing replication of reports and also worked to bring documentation in line with ALNET.

Qualitative reports from schools indicate that the service is valued, with all primary schools having engaged with the service and an increasing number of secondary schools; a notable proportion of the work has been with children in nurse and reception. Schools value the speed at which the intervention and support can be accessed, the quality of the reports in terms of clear recommendations and modelling of these, and also the availability of staff for individual pupil discussion outside of visits and revisits to monitor progress.

Sensory Service

The North East Wales Sensory Support Service (NEWSSS) is hosted by Flintshire but offers a service to Conwy, Denbighshire, Wrexham alongside Flintshire. The service has continued to support schools to meet the educational and emotional needs of Flintshire's sensory impaired pupils, working with 47 different schools to meet the needs of 119 children and young people with hearing impairments (HI) and 32 schools in support of 67 individuals with a visual impairment (VI). Whilst the number of children with HI reduced in comparison with last year (125 pupils), the number of visits required to support the learners increased significantly to 1069 over the year; this was due in part to the level of individual need and also the number of children who were at a point of transition. Support for families of pre-school children remained a key priority for the service during the year. There were 5 pre-school children with HI and 2 with VI provided for by the team. The service has continued to use national eligibility criteria (NATSIP) to determine the level of involvement.

A target for improvement following the last year's self-evaluation had been to improve the response times for contact to be made with parents of new referrals. This has now been significantly reduced with the average time for a response in relation to HI being less than 4 days and less than 7 days for VI. The reason for the additional time for VI was the need to establish a triage panel to review the referrals made; the team had been receiving inappropriate referrals for conditions not considered to be in the remit of the service, e.g. squints, and the panel has served to review the requests and ensure the correct children are receiving access to the intervention. Training is now being offered to referrers to consolidate their understanding of the remit of the service and what constitutes an appropriate referral. It is anticipated that this will in time further improve the response time.

As with other services, NEWSSS has been working on developing and implementing appropriate monitoring systems to measure impact. This has been designed to measure the direct impact the service has on an individual's access to a number of core areas of their education, namely:

- Curriculum
- Environment
- Extra-curricular
- Equipment/technology
- Transition activities
- School trips and school events.
- Assessment and examinations

These were drawn from the NATSIP criteria, curriculum framework and guidance published by the Guide Dogs Association. As part of a trial of the system, the teachers within the service were asked to score the elements of Curriculum and Environment from 1 to 5 (1- no access, 5 - excellent access) on their initial visit and on a return visit in response to the advice, strategies, planning, training and equipment/resources that the school/pupil had received as part of the initial visit. For the 17 individuals who were involved in the pilot, the following results were noted:

Table 9: Impact of the sensory service on relation to access to the environment/curriculum

Environment	1 (No access)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent Access)
Initial visit	1	7	9	0	0
Return visit	0	0	1	11	5
Curriculum	1 (No access)	2	3	4	5 (Excellent Access)
Initial visit	0	4	9	4	0
Return visit	0	0	2	8	7

The data indicated in terms of access to the Environment, 29% of pupils had improved by 1 level, 65% had improved by 2 and a further 6% had improved by 3 levels. With regards to Curriculum access, 12% had not moved, 53% had improved by 1 level, 29% by 2 levels and 6% by 3 levels; the children who had not shown any movement were accessing the curriculum at level 3 and 4. The team are looking to build on this initial pilot in terms of methodology and also consider how this will be shared sensitively with settings.

Training remains an integral part of the service offer, with the aim of building capacity within schools/ placements in supporting children and young people with a sensory impairment. Over the year, training has been provided to ALNCOs via the county forum and to 12 settings across Flintshire. Participants were asked to respond on the following:

- Suitability/usefulness of content
- Quality of presentation and materials
- Skills and knowledge developed

All respondents gave full marks in response to the 3 areas and additional comments provided further insight in relation to the impact on overall awareness raising, the importance of considering the whole school site for children with sensory impairment and appreciation for the ongoing service input.

Stakeholder surveys have been undertaken with pupils, parents and schools in relation to the work of the service. A total of 24 learners provided feedback on the service, indicating that they found staff friendly and easy to talk to, that they were listened to, supported to become more independent, received advice in relation to school/home and that worries were addressed quickly. All but 1 indicated that they felt the teacher understood what helped them to access their lessons.

A further question asked them to rate the Sensory Service from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). There were no scores of 1 to 3, with 17% scoring the service as a 4 and 83% scoring 5. When invited to expand on the scores of 4, a desire for an increase in the frequency of visits was found to be the reason.

Schools were asked to rate the service in relation to the suitability and quality of training, quality of written reports, quality and promptness of communication between the service and school, support for the school/ learner to facilitate access to the curriculum and the management of equipment. The 13 school that responded to the survey all either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

Parents were asked to comment on the impact of the service on their child's learning & wellbeing; child's inclusion in school life; feeling their views and opinions were valued; the response of their child to the intervention; contact with the service and the quality of reports. Parents scored each of the statements between 1 (low) and 5 (high); all responses were either 4 or 5. Where comments were provided in relation to improving the service, e.g. more regular feedback, the service has looked into facilitating this.

The service works closely with a range of health professionals across a range of boards and trusts. The survey identified that all professionals found the reports provided by the service to be informative, that the communication with the service was effective and that staff acted in a professional manner. A small number of respondents indicated they were not clear on the roles of the staff and also a number of challenges with the referral process/forms. These matters are being explored to identify how/if they can be addressed. Communication & Language Advisory Support Service (CLASS) .

Supporting the development of language and communication skills for Flintshire pupils remained a priority for the year. The service comprises of a Learning Adviser and Language Outreach workers who work in close collaboration with speech and language therapists from the local health board. A team of Language Development Assistants (LDAs) are also employed to operate as planted adults in schools, working with mono-lingual children or those with English as an additional language up to year 2.

A review of the annual Welsh Government (WG) census collection PLASC, indicated that Flintshire had numbers of children identified by schools as having speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) below the Welsh average, with 900 children identified as compared with 950 for the whole of Wales. The number of referrals to the service reduced this year from 54 to 47 and it is considered that the ongoing programme of training is enabling school-based staff to more accurately identify needs and put appropriate interventions in place, which is supporting this reduction. The reduced level of referral has impacted positively on the waiting time for access to the service which is a maximum of 2 terms following the intervention and specialist assessment by a speech & language therapist; children continue to access support from the health board’s mainstream therapists whilst waiting for this more specialist intervention. During the reporting period, a total of 47 children accessed the service, 20 of which were discharged with 7 no longer requiring specialist input due to the progress made, 4 moving on to specialist Resource provision and 9 moving back to the mainstream or an alternative therapeutic intervention in response to need.

As indicated, the Language Development project delivered by the LDAs has also continued to operate. This is a centrally funded time limited intervention lasting a term and a half. Schools were asked to rate the impact of the service over that period. A total of 135 pupils were supported across 16 schools in the reporting period. The following average ratings were received regarding the impact of the intervention (scoring 0-5, with 5 being the maximum):

• Effectiveness of planted adult model	4.71
• Impact on pupils’ language and communication skills	4.55
• Impact on staff understanding of how to support skill development	4.45

The project uses a 10-point scale to measure pupil progress. During this period the average starting score of pupils was 3.76, whilst the average post project score was 5.52, demonstrating the positive impact of the strategy.

The delivery of the Talkboost and Early Talkboost training has continued this year. As of March 2024, 60 primary schools have received training in one or both interventions, 57 in Early Talkboost (163 staff) and 52 in Talkboost (258 staff). Flintshire was the first Council to roll this out across the whole authority and discussions have taken place with WG with regards to the impact and the suitability of translation to the Welsh language. Schools are asked to report pre and post data for pupils in relation to the intervention and the Learning Adviser has continued to work with ‘I Can’ on a pilot to support data capture. A total of 27 schools are now sharing their impact data with the Learning Adviser, with information available for 555 pupils which has increased from 193. For this cohort, prior to the intervention, 55% were rated as amber (below age expected skills) and 41% were rated as red (significantly below). After the 9/10 week

intervention, only 13% were still deemed to be red, with 36% considered to be green, i.e. having achieved age expected skill levels. The tables below show the impact in specific areas of development:

Table 10: Early Talkboost Impact

	Attention and listening	Understanding words & sentences	Speaking	Personal social and emotional skills
% at expected level before intervention	15	31	15	6
% at expected level after intervention	28	49	28	26

The social impact of the pandemic is still evident through the low initial scores in the areas of social skills, along with the other more formal skills associated with academic development, i.e. sentence structure and storytelling. It is pleasing to see that all areas demonstrate a positive impact following the targeted intervention.

Table 11: Talkboost Impact

	Understanding spoken language	Understanding & using vocabulary	Sentences	Storytelling & narrative	Social interaction
% at expected level before intervention	27	35	29	3	12
% at expected level after intervention	63	67	61	36	49

Alongside the Talkboost training, two-day Language Development training is offered to all schools. A total of 25 schools took this up with 38 school-based staff accessing it. The feedback indicated that staff levels of knowledge and understanding had improved as a result of the training and that the strategies covered would be beneficial to learners and could be implemented in their schools.

Support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy Travellers

The number of pupils identified as EAL continues to rise with a further increase of 111, taking the total this year to 1683 compared with 1572 last year. All pupils are assessed against a 5-point scale (A – E) with regards to their language capabilities and appropriate support allocated either on an individual or group work basis. Those identified as being at stage A are new to English/Welsh whilst those at stage E are deemed to be fluent. Those at stages A and B are prioritised for direct intervention from the service and the following table shows the number of pupils over the last 3 years:

Table 12: EAL Stage A & B Overview

Pupils at Stage A & B	2024	2023	2022
Primary	701	631	625
Secondary	60	104	100
Total	761	735	725

The number of languages spoken across the county has increased from 57 to 68. This year there has been a change in the countries children have moved from, with a notable reduction of families coming from Ukraine. India is now the predominant country with 20 children in total; this reflects the movement of families to work in the care sector.

Children with English as an Additional Language are dispersed across the county and the service is supporting pupils in 10 secondary schools, including our Welsh Medium setting, 57 primary schools, Plas Derwen PRU and both specialist schools. The service provides support and guidance to schools to enable them to successfully education children with EAL in their setting. A recent Estyn inspection of a Flintshire High School with the highest number of children with EAL identified the following in the inspection report:

The school provides beneficial support for pupils with English as an additional language. A designated team provide individual and group sessions for these pupils to develop their language skills. This has a positive impact on their ability to access the curriculum and communicate confidently with their peers.

The Welsh Government has a National Assessment Framework against which pupil language levels are assessed according to the following 5 stages:

- A. New to English**
- B. Early Acquisition**
- C. Developing Confidence**
- D. Competent**
- E. Fluent**

The expectation is that pupils will move from stage A to B in around 1.5 years but that a move to full fluency can take up to 10 years. There are a number of factors which influence progress and development, including the level of literacy skill in their first language and any additional learning needs. The service prioritises direct involvement for pupils at language stages A, B and some C in secondary schools. When measured against the expected progress markers, 83% of children were deemed to be in line with expectations, with 17% not having achieved this. It was noted that the majority of children not achieving expectations were in Year 3 which can be attributed in the main to the literacy lag which impacts on many children coming into the country; written language is a key part of the assessment and this impacts notable on the assessment of children within this year group given that written skills take longer to develop as oral language develops first.

The monitoring of attendance levels of EAL pupils is integral to the work of the service and available data indicated that the average attendance of this cohort was generally above that for the whole of Flintshire. The service works hard to offer support and guidance for families in terms of expectations in Wales in relation to education. Guidance documents have been generated and this is supplemented by officer involvement where required. This has resulted in 100% of all children with EAL, including refugees, accessing education, the majority within their local community school. All parents of new midterm arrivals have access to advice and support including outreach and interpretation where required. All families are supported to access online forms for Free School Meals, Admissions, Transport and the School Essential Grant. All teachers and support staff of new arrivals have access to advice support and training and where possible, ALN needs are identified on admission to support a successful integration into the school community.

Flintshire schools are proactive and responsive to educating children from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. The EAL service has provided training on anti-racism and also supported schools to implement the following:

- **Creating multi-lingual schools** - pupils are encouraged to learn vocabulary in the home language of new arrivals; singing songs in home language; multi-lingual signage; displays/maps celebrating aspects of the different countries.
- **Celebrating diversity and culture** - Applying for grants to purchase multi-cultural books for the library; celebrating Eid as a school; setting up prayer rooms in schools.
- **Access to emotionally available adults** - all EAL staff have accessed trauma informed awareness training and as such have acted as, and advocated for access to emotionally available adults for the pupils.
- **Identifying strengths and organising/encouraging extra-curricular activities** - Supporting access to local cricket clubs; access to music lessons for an exceptional musician who is due to play at a local festival; supporting access to local play schemes.

A sample of pupils was surveyed in relation to their overall experience in school. The findings were mostly positive and are outlined in the table below.

Table 13: Pupils with EAL - views on school

Question	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are you happy in school?	66%	33%	1%
Do you feel safe in school?	84%	14%	2%
Have you made friends in school?	94%	-	6%
Do you learn in school?	81%	19%	1 person
Do you understand the lessons?	32%	68%	1 person
Do you get help in school?	86%	14%	1 person

Officers followed up on the responses to ensure that all possible steps have been taken to support the child within their setting.

The wider work and approach of the Council was also noted in the Estyn report: Education and support for refugees and asylum seekers 2022-23:

“Flintshire local authority recognise that all families are unique, with their own culture, history and educational experiences as well as housing, medical and social needs. The local authority provides a holistic multi-agency person-centred approach to meet the needs of each refugee and asylum seeker family.

- **Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT)** - brings together senior leaders responsible for education, social services, health, housing, police, communications, fire safety, DWP and finance. This provides educational services with timely information enabling a rapid response to different families' changing needs.
- **Education and Youth Response Team** - supports school admission, transport, play team, youth services, family information services and collaboration from a range of inclusion services, for example English as an Additional Language (EAL) teaching, counselling and ALN.

- **British Red Cross** - provides orientation services for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees.
- **Adult community learning** - provides refugee and asylum seeker parents and other adults with access to education and training.
- **Youth services** - provide a range of community activities for parents and children dispersed across the county to facilitate networking between compatriots”.

The Traveller community in Flintshire remains incredibly transient, with numbers altering on a weekly basis. As of March 2024, the number had dropped from 148 to 142 for the same time period in 2023 with 29 new arrivals during the year. There has, however, been an increase in the number of traveller children attending secondary schools from 23 in 2023 to 28 this year which is positive. The service supported children across 38 settings, including 5 secondary schools, Plas Derwen PRU, both specialist schools and a number of local primary schools.

As with the EAL service, parents have access to a range of advice and support to facilitate engagement with education. Parents of new mid-term arrivals have access to advice and support in relation to admissions, free-school meals, Transport and School Essential grants. Training and advice is also offered to schools to facilitate an effective transition.

Improving attendance of the traveller community remains a challenge, particularly in relation to secondary provision. Of the new children who arrived within the year, 90% are attending school with 2 having chosen to Electively Home Education and 1 awaiting an ALN decision regarding placement. Small group literacy support is provided to all travellers with scores below 85 on standardised tests. When asked about their feelings in relation to school, the following responses were received from 50 respondents

Table 14: Traveller children Views in relation to school

Question	Yes	Sometimes	No
Are you happy in school?	64%	32%	6%
Do you feel safe in school?	92%	6%	4%
Do you get help in school?	88%	10%	2%

Officers followed up on the reasons where a No answer had been returned and these related to a range of issues including not liking work, school being ‘boring’ or sometimes getting bullied which schools were then informed about and links made to the Council’s work on anti-racism. This also featured in the meeting held between a number of Flintshire traveller children and the Children’s Commissioner for Wales in July 2024, where the children had the opportunity to share experiences on Education, Racism/Discrimination and Housing. In her response to the children following the visit, the Commissioner outlined the actions she would undertake in response but also noted the work of the Traveller Service in supporting the children to challenge incident of racism/discrimination.

An alternative curriculum offer is available to vulnerable children including Travellers, children with EAL and children who are ‘looked after’ from year 3 upwards. Staff comments in relation to the traveller children who participated this year indicated that pupils had benefitted from the intervention. This was supported by parental views, which indicated an overall willingness to engage with the programme - 70% of respondents noting an improvement in this area and 100% requesting further support from the Alternative Education Team. Pupil responses indicated that they generally felt happier having engaged with the programme and found it easier to make friends, with 67% indicating that they didn’t worry as they

did prior to engagement, and 75% saying they found it easier to try new activities. An important outcome was that 58% indicated that they liked themselves more and 83% recognised that it was okay to make mistakes. Where possible, culturally acceptable opportunities were sourced for pupils in years 10 and 11 to maintain their engagement, e.g. Hair & Beauty, boxing, cooking and craft. This has served to support increased engagement at secondary level with 2 individuals going on to secure GCSE accreditation. Of the 14 Travellers finishing year 11, 5 continued on to either sixth form or college.

The service has been actively involved in supporting parents, pupils and schools in relation to the Relationships and Sexuality Education element of the Curriculum for Wales. When this was initially introduced, a number of traveller families stated that they wished to withdraw their children from school altogether and there were incidences of children walking out of lessons. The collaborative approach from the Traveller service and Headteachers in response to parental fears has resulted in no children being withdrawn, although elements of the curriculum remain contentious for some Traveller parents.

Support for raising the educational achievement of Children who are Looked After (CLA)

The number of children entering and exiting the care system continues to grow year on year. The total number of children who were looked after at some point during the year is as follows for the past 3 years: 2021/22 - 329, 2022/23 - 359 and 2023/24 - 398. The majority of CLA are educated in Flintshire maintained provision (66%), with the remainder accessing their education in out of county maintained provision or specialist independent settings. This compares with 68% in the previous year. The data for 2023 shows a slight increase in the number of children being taken into care in the nursery age range, with reductions in all other year groups, with the exception of years 10 and 11 where an increase was also seen. Specific funding to support improved outcomes for children who are 'looked after' comes in the form of the Pupil Development Grant which is overseen by GwE at a regional level. Schools are required to operate in clusters and submit bids to GwE for funding. The Council also receives some funding to support wider county intervention or individual bursaries. The following are examples of how the funding has been used to support learners:

- Training for school practitioners on trauma informed practice
- Positive Power of Play training event
- Sand Tray Play training event
- Drawing & Talking therapy
- Dog therapy sessions
- Beauty course
- Transition support
- Additional individual tuition

Attendance data for the CLA cohort is for 2022/23 and was 82.1%, compared with 85.5% for the previous year. Whilst this is slightly down, 72.6% of CLA had attendance levels of above 85% which is an increase on the 64% of the previous year. Exclusion levels saw a significant drop with 14 individuals receiving fixed term exclusions resulting in 102 days lost to education compared with 21 individuals and 229.5 days lost in the previous year. There were however, 2 permanent exclusions for CLA. The focus on trauma informed practice has continued within the Council and it is hoped that this will support a continued reduction in the level of exclusion across the county and for this particular cohort of children. There were 17 CLA school leavers in 2023, 71% went on to a positive outcome, with 5 individuals (29%) becoming NEET. These young people were identified as Tier 2, i.e., those who were unable to engage in employment, education or training due to one having a baby and the others struggling with their mental health.

The Council had engaged with the Welsh Government initiative around the implementation of a virtual headteacher to oversee the education of CLA. Grant funding was available to councils to support the piloting of this post for 3 years with councils being required to submit a bid outlining their proposed model. Despite the work undertaken with colleagues in Social Services around the development of Flintshire's bid, it was rejected by Welsh Government. In the absence of direct funding, further research has been undertaken to review how the model is working in other authorities and to reflect on how existing approaches relating to CLA could be improved, e.g., the agreement to appoint a further education officer to support in the development and monitoring of Personal Education Plans. Welsh Government is currently reviewing the outcomes of the virtual headteacher pilots and we will look to respond to the outcomes of that review.

Engagement Services

The Council has a number of services which support and promote engagement, namely the Education Welfare Service, Progression Team, Community Focused Schools and Home Tuition. Pupils accessing the services are usually at risk of disengagement from their education or are unable to access school on regular basis. Disengagement can be the result of several factors. These may include fixed term or permanent exclusion, social welfare issues or as the consequence of personal crisis. Some pupils may be unable to attend school for medical reasons and others will have selected Elective Home Education (EHE) as an alternative to school-based education.

There are also numerous pupils that access their education via EOTAS (Education Other Than at School) and it is essential that all pupils are safeguarded and supported appropriately. Pupils in these categories are often extremely vulnerable or isolated from their community and may need additional support to enable them to access education. All Engagement services attend the EOTAS Forum which is chaired by the Senior Learning Adviser, along with representatives from the Plas Derwen PRU to ensure that any vulnerable learners are identified and recorded. Service and intervention inputs are recorded on the Synergy system so that any service activity delivered by one Engagement Service can be viewed by all others to facilitate a co-ordinated approach.

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The EWS is unique within the Inclusion & Progression Service, as it is a school-based service. This service is accessible at point of need and is proactive in dealing with issues as they arise. This enables the EWS to provide a service which is based on early intervention. The EWS benefits from close working relationships with schools and partner agencies, as well as within the Inclusion and Progression Service and outside agencies, including the third sector. The EWS provides an important link between school, parents, and the wider community and is key in supporting an improvement in attendance and challenging pupil absence. The welfare of the child is paramount, with child protection and safeguarding being core elements of practice for the EWS; the EWS are the main agency within the Inclusion & Progression Service with operational responsibility for child protection and safeguarding.

The EWS is also responsible for licensing of Chaperones/Matrons for children participating in child performances and entertainment. There is a database of all licensed chaperones/matrons held by the Local Authority. This is actively managed and reviewed with the given timescales. There is a dedicated EWO for Chaperones/Matrons/Child Employment.

The EWS has a duty to investigate child employment which is integral to the child protection and safeguarding role. Children who are employed are required by law to have a work permit which outlines their working hours and specifies the nature of the work they are allowed to engage in. The EWS also has

a key role in monitoring Children Missing from Education (CME) and Elective Home Education (EHE). This is a core element of practice within the child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures. There is a dedicated Education Support Officer for CME and EHE.

The EWS is the primary service that identifies children that are excluded from school. The EWS Manager attends Governor Disciplinary Panels for Permanent Exclusions. The EWS staff attend return to school meetings and are active in supporting pupils that are placed on Pastoral Support Plans (PSP).

The structure of the EWS was reorganised from September 2022 to differentiate the roles between the Education Support Officers (ESO) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with regards to attendance matters. ESOs have been allocated all of the primary school referrals leaving more operational time for the EWO staff, based in the secondary schools, to respond to more complex issues. The service has been further enhanced by the allocation of temporary Attendance Support Officers (ASO), funded by a WG grant. These officers have been targeted at particular schools with low overall levels of attendance and high levels of eFSM. The addition of the ASO role has been positive in supporting an improvement in attendance as demonstrated by an initial performance review with one of the schools outlined below: "ASOs have completed over 300 home visits, to over 140 students. Just over half (52.5%) of these students have improved their attendance since the first ASO visit. On average, 13% of students return to school on the same day as an ASO visit, and 65% of students are back in school the following day".

A revised model policy for attendance was issued to schools in September 2023 to support a more consistent approach across the county. A focus was placed at the start of the year on 3 primary school geographical areas with officers contacting schools to offer regular attendance review meetings and advice on implementation of the policy; post-intervention review indicated a positive impact of the activity undertaken with the majority of schools showing an overall improvement of at least 0.5% in levels of attendance.

A RAG rating of all schools' procedures in relation to attendance and their engagement with the EWS was also undertaken by the service to further inform the identification process of those in need of support and challenge. Actions were identified in relation to the rating, with officers following up with schools in relation to these. This activity has provided the service with a further mechanism for monitoring and identifying areas for improvement in terms of process along with the other activities such as attendance data profiling and regular meetings with staff and parents.

The service has continued with the implementation of fixed penalty notices (FPN) and court proceedings as appropriate, following the guidance on this from WG. A designated ESO has been allocated to administer the FPN process to ensure compliance; any unpaid fines were referred for legal action and resulted in fines ranging from £170 to £660. Schools are increasingly seeing this process as an integral part of their graduated response to education (99 issued in 2022/23), which can be utilised as a last resort where other actions have not been successful. The impact of this action on attendance remains variable but the improving overall trend of attendance suggests that it is supporting a greater awareness and understanding of parental responsibilities in terms of attendance.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

The levels of parents deciding to EHE continue to rise in Flintshire. In 2019, there were 95 children who were EHE. This rose to 167 in 2022 and 177 in 2023. This mirrors an increasing national trend. The largest cohort that became EHE in 2023 were children in year 7, with September being recorded as the month where the largest number of children became EHE. The majority of children who became EHE in 2023 were in years 7 - 9 and overall, the largest percentage of children who were EHE in the year were in year 10.

During the year 2022-2023 there were 45 successful home visits carried out. Parents have the option to decline a visit and/or to share an education report as this is not mandatory. All families were contacted by the LA at least once during the academic year. Home visits and/or telephone conversations were held for specific families who requested support when their child/ren asked to return to school. Support was given to decide on the most appropriate school and with the admissions process with 11 pupils returning to school. For the period September 2023 to March 2024, the level of successful home visits increased to 75, with 24 children returning to school during that period. This is reflective of the positive and trusting relationship that is being developed between the designated officer and EHE families. Officers work closely with colleagues across Social Services as required, where safeguarding is deemed to be a concern.

Community Focused Schools (CFS)

Flintshire has continued to receive WG funding to support the implementation of the Community Focused Schools initiative. The centralised service targeted 3 communities initially, selected on the basis of levels of eFSM, attendance data, index of deprivation and exclusion rates; this has now been expanded to 5. The service delivery model has evolved to a commissioning approach which allows for planning and agreement on delivery expectations between the service and school management and there has been a positive response from the schools where this has been established so far.

Key pieces of work this year have been to support the Food and Fun programmes over the summer holidays in the designated areas which provided key opportunities to not only deliver the programme objectives, but to provide additional transition support for some of the county's more vulnerable learners. Working alongside designated school staff, children accessed a range of important skills through the activities and also started to experience and build their knowledge of the new school building and importantly, build relationships with staff they would encounter in the new school year. A positive outcome of this, alongside engagement is that some participants have the confidence to return to support the project as year 7 buddies. Other community activities have included community lunches based in the schools where participants' comments were positive, indicating that they were feeling part of the school community again, something which had been lost during Covid. The team have also been instrumental in delivering food wellbeing boxes as part of the Children's University / Dylan's Restaurant initiative, engaged in Community Conference Meetings and facilitated delivery of the Safer Streets 5 projects. The beginnings of a Parent/Teacher Association(PTA) type group has also been established at a school along with delivery of a number of parental engagement sessions in partnership with the Health Improvement Team.

Alongside the wider community work, the team has delivered interventions to individuals and small groups. This has included support for transition for pupil who were identified as having persistent levels of absenteeism in year 6. Through this process it became clear that parents were not always contacting the school as required, and that some pupils had inaccurate views in relation to attendance, e.g. believing that 65% was an acceptable attendance level. Other pupils have engaged with support offered during lunch times to support them to maintain their presence in school for the full day and others have accessed courses to develop self-esteem, confidence and practical skills; 1 pupil accessing the support has gone on to be the first person in his family to attend college. Mechanisms for further evaluating service impact are under development, utilising the Outcome Star programme.

The continued development of community focused schools is also integral to the School Modernisation Strategy. Schools and other learning providers provide a range of well-planned community focused services for children, young people and families. They have an important role in promoting community cohesion, wellbeing, inclusion and diversity. Current capital plans and community facility grants continue to provide an opportunity to develop and provide access to facilities on our school sites. This has been

a successful strategy and we have developed a number of new exciting community facilities on a number of our capital projects.

Examples include:-

- Community room at Ysgol Penyffordd;
- Community Hub (Ty Calon) at Queensferry Learning Campus;
- Enhanced sports facilities funded through Sports Wales/WRU at Queensferry Learning Campus;
- ATP lighting improvements at Castell Alun School through Sports Wales;
- Community facilities incorporated into the MIM Mynydd Isa Campus (development underway)
- Childcare, Learning and Immersion Centre on new build Welsh Medium Campus (development underway)

Dedicated community rooms and facilities at new school sites gives the school a space within which they can explore community access. In addition, community facilities will be reviewed to ensure use outside of school hours and for Adult Community Learning (ACL) through the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership (“the Partnership”).

The Partnership aims to develop adult community learning and also Welsh and bilingual provision and has identified gaps within its current delivery. An evidence-informed plan has been produced by the Partnership to develop provision for adults, families and communities in Flintshire.

Capital projects in the Sustainable Learning Communities rolling programme will be reviewed to align with priorities of the Partnership in that:

- Meets the needs already identified locally;
- Supports key ACL national priorities;
- Addresses the Partnership’s Estyn recommendation to “increase opportunities for adult learning in the community bilingually and through the medium of Welsh”; and
- Provides a visible presence in Flintshire where community facilities and bespoke delivery model could be developed by the Partnership

Progression Team

The Engagement Progression Coordinator (EPC) works with a range of partners under the Youth Engagement Progression Framework (YEPF) to achieve the following outcomes:

- more young people move on to a destination that is right for them when they leave school, whether that is education, employment, or training (EET)
- young people are prevented from becoming homeless
- young people experience positive emotional mental health and well-being, as a result of them being engaged in activity that is meaningful to them, and where they feel they are on the right path

The EPC specifically co-ordinates support for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 who are potentially at risk of disengagement or are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET). The EPC co-ordinates termly meetings with schools, utilising the Learner Profiling tool which identifies individuals who are potential NEETs. Key partners attend these meetings including Careers Advisers, Homeless Co-ordinator, LEAP Co-ordinator, Education Welfare Officers, Pastoral Leads and if applicable Youth Workers. Individual needs are considered and appropriate actions are agreed via the meetings, one of which may be access to the Progression Team who work directly with potential NEETs and are managed by the EPC. The EPC also facilitates links with other relevant services such as Youth Justice, Sorted (Drug and Alcohol Team) and the Young Person’s Counselling Service.

Since the pandemic, an ongoing priority has been to support children and young people who have disengaged due to anxiety. Home visits are an integral part of the work of the Progression Team in particular, which serves to build rapport and explore the pupils' interests and needs. A range of opportunities have been made available from activities such as the theatre group Pwer which offered a safe space to engage creatively through music dance and drama, volunteering at Car Rhug Farm, cooking for the homeless, engaging with the Changes Lives Through Horses programme, to opportunities to secure level 1 NVQ qualifications in Outdoor Learning and Essential Skills Qualifications in Communication and Application of Number. Over the year, opportunities for 67 placements were offered through the activities referenced above along with direct contact from the team to build self-esteem, confidence and social skills for 115 individuals. Of the 32 Year 11 learners who engaged with the team, 94% progressed to a positive Post-16 outcome, either in the form of further training or employment with the remaining individuals continuing to access support and intervention from the service.

The level of year 11 NEET has remained relatively low over the past 4 years as a result of the targeted multi-agency work across the authority, underpinned by the work of the EPC and the Progression Team. The range of NEET levels across local authorities in Wales ranges from 4% (highest) to 1.1 (lowest). In 2023 the level in Flintshire was 1.9% - the 8th lowest value in Wales, and the lowest across the North Wales region. The data for leavers in years 12 and 13 also remains fairly steady.

Table 15: Year 11 Leavers (%) from schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training (NEET)

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Flintshire	1.9 (33)	1.7 (28)	1.4 (23)	1.2 (19)
Wales	2.0 (670)	2.1 (664)	1.6 (507)	1.7 (527)

Table 16: Year 12 and 13 Leavers (%) in Flintshire known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET)

	2023	2022	2021	2020
Flintshire Year 12	0.4 (2)	1.2 (7)	0.3 (2)	1.1 (6)
Wales Yr 12	0.5 (62)	0.7 (80)	0.4 (55)	0.6 (76)
Flintshire Year 13	3.9 (19)	2.9 (16)	3.4 (19)	3.7 (20)
Wales Yr 13	3.6(375)	2.8 (322)	2.3 (251)	3.5 (355)

Source: Careers Wales

The level of NEET has been a focus at the re-established YEPF Forum. The Forum includes membership from a range of partners relevant to the work of the framework and provides for greater understanding of challenges and collaboration. During the year, the appropriate and timely identification of individuals in tiers 1 and 2 was identified as a priority. Partners worked together to allocate resources to engage with individuals identified to confirm the tier status and determine the lead worker for those in tier 2. A pilot was also agreed with schools to support the accuracy of data for school leavers to facilitate accurate identification and contact information. The impact of this will be monitored for leavers in 2023/24.

The impact of the work in this area is recognised by partners, parents and the young people themselves. The EPC led panels in schools have been praised by colleagues in Careers Wales as effective examples of partnership working, along with schools who appreciate the different perspective that the EPC and the Progression Team can bring to discussions and also in terms of their involvement. Parents recognised the service as being vital support to the education system and the young people who may struggle with it.

Home Tuition

Children may have a need to access home tuition at any point in their educational career and this is usually in response to having a particular medical need which makes physical access to school difficult or where there are challenges in securing a suitable educational placement to meet the child's educational needs. Decisions to provide home tuition are made via the Additional Learning Needs Decision Panel and the Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Panel.

The vast majority of provision is commissioned externally in response to need. In 2022/23, a total of 38 year 11 pupils accessed home tuition funded by the Council. Pupils access tuition in the core subjects of English and Mathematics at a level suitable to their ability as a minimum, with access to a wider curriculum offer where appropriate. All pupils achieved at least one form of accreditation, with 29 (76%) pupils achieving accreditation for both core subjects and 10% of the cohort achieving 5 or more GCSE qualifications. Positively, all learners went on to further education, employment or training, with none becoming NEET.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Flintshire has an established multi-agency Emotional Health and Wellbeing Forum to oversee and guide its response to emotional health and wellbeing. The group is chaired by the Principal Education Psychologist and the forum identifies training needs and prioritises the allocation of the WG Wellbeing grant. The Council continues to promote and develop a relational approach to practice and intervention across its services and schools. Training on Trauma Informed Practice remains a priority and places on the 11-day diploma were funded by the Council with a particular priority for school leads for children who are looked after (CLA).

The training was well received, and a support group has now been established to support the ongoing practice across the county. This is in addition to the Trauma Informed Champions group that had been established in the previous year and is building a body of knowledge across the secondary sector. Where this is truly being embedded, it is possible to see the early shoots of a positive impact on levels of exclusion and attitudes to the use of exclusion changing.

The Forum oversees the allocation of the WG Wellbeing grant and informs decisions in relation to training and support. The ELSA training is valued by schools and was considered a priority for continuation, along with the Emotion Coaching training. Details in relation to attendees is provided in the table below.

Table 17: Training offered to support Emotional Health & Wellbeing

Training/support	Number of staff trained
ELSA Supervision	120
ELSA Line Managers	39
Emotion Coaching	125

In September 2021 the Education Portfolio introduced the 'Challenging Bullying online reporting system' for Flintshire schools. This was developed by Flintshire IT and hosted on the 'Flintshire Workspace' platform. It enables schools to report incidents of bullying, including racist incidents, on an online form and maintain these in one place and update as required. 'Challenging Bullying' sits alongside health and safety incident reporting on the platform and staff illness absence. Designated officers have access to this data which enables the Education Portfolio to maintain an overview of recorded bullying incidents in order to identify emerging trends or groups being discriminated against, and monitor exclusion rates. Long term, as the system embeds, the aim is that the data will show progress towards the Council's equality objectives.

Early Help Hub (EHH)

In early 2017 the Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) commissioned the establishment of an Early Help Hub to support the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support for families with greater needs. There were multiple drivers for this including the introduction of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act 2014, the CSSIW inspection report recommendations about prioritising early intervention, intervening earlier at lower cost and for better outcomes and the extent to which so many cases being referred and re-referred to Children's Services did not meet thresholds for a statutory intervention, notwithstanding that the families often presented with persistent challenges.

Flintshire's Early Help hub model has continued to develop since and frequently adapts to the ever-changing circumstances and landscape of support needed across the county. The Early Help Hub is now a well-established provision within Flintshire Early Intervention Service which has received approximately 16,911 referrals since inception, the highest proportion being request for support for families with a 10-15-year-olds. Within the EHH there continues to be a total of 16 agency representatives including health, education, police, housing and third sector representatives participating in hub discussions and actioning support to ensure families receive services at the point struggles start to emerge in their family journey.

The Information Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) was formed to provide a swift response in supporting our front door statutory partners, including schools, police, health, and early years to identify families in Flintshire's support needs. The IAA officially became operational in February 2023. This includes 8 IAA Duty Officers who offer Information, advice, and assistance to both families and professionals alike.

This work requires skilled conversations that clarify and understand "What Matters" most to families in Flintshire and how best to help them. Referrals that do not meet threshold for safeguarding but require additional support will be passed to the IAA Service.

Each Duty Officer will contact the family or professionals directly. IAA duty officers have a close link with education services and subsequently have built effective working relationships with schools and education representatives in the Flintshire community. This has been fundamental in the process of exploring how best to help families through either giving information, providing advice, or Assistance.

An integral part of the IAA service is the link with Flintshire Early Help Hub. Currently there are approximately 1,690 families per quarter being referred into IAA. Out of the 1,690, approximately 690 are being signposted to Early Help Hub for either Advice or Assistance. The numbers above are in addition to the approximately 400 other direct referrals per quarter. Out of these direct referrals more than half (approximately 280) are from Flintshire schools or education services.

Nominated staff from the Education and Youth portfolio have remained a consistent and integral part of the offer, evolving from one education representative to the current inclusion of the Education Welfare Team. This has facilitated a wider dissemination of the knowledge shared as part of the process to schools and their wider partners and enabled comprehensive sharing of information.

The team disseminate valuable information about families and their needs enabling an appropriate and effective support package to be identified, as well as providing a valuable conduit to support often linking families and encouraging engagement with the identified services.

All referrals referred into the Early Help Hub receive an action, whether that be a single service provision, multiple service, or voluntary sector information support. This is an innovative and highly effective model of support that is having a tangible impact on children and families in Flintshire. The knowledge and experience that the Education Welfare Officers provide, and the continued positive working relationships with education services linked into Flintshire Early Intervention services remains an intrinsic part of the Service.

2.3 Other Education Support Services

Funded Part Time Early Years Provision - Early Entitlement

Flintshire has a long tradition of supporting early years' education. Eligible children, whose 3rd birthdays fall within relevant timeframes each academic year, are entitled to 10 hours of funded education in a registered Early Entitlement (EE) setting or school, for a maximum of 2 terms following the term in which they are 3 years old. During 2023-24, 44 non-maintained settings registered to offer EE education. This included 6 'Cylch Meithrin, Welsh medium, 19 English medium playgroups and 19 Private settings / day nurseries.

In addition, 29 Flintshire schools were registered to provide funded education to 3-year-olds during 2023-24. An additional 2 schools offering specialist provision were also able to provide funded education if required. Within the 'maintained' sector the quality of the learning opportunities available for funded 3-year-old children is monitored and supported by qualified teachers within each school.

Despite the removal of the grant conditions by Welsh Government to provide '10%' teacher time for funded settings and reducing central resources, the Council continues to maintain appropriate levels of support to settings registered for early education delivery to ensure high quality standards of provision, which in turn leads to better outcomes for learners. A central team of early years specialists work across the settings to provide targeted role modelling of teaching, to develop quality learning environments and support setting staff to produce robust self-evaluation reports and improvement action plans. This team includes a manager, 3 full-time teachers, 1 part-time specialist support assistant and 1 part-time additional support co-ordinator. Areas of specialism within the team include; early years education and child development, ALN and universal targeted provision and forest school provision.

The core team is also supported in this delivery by several early years' teachers in schools, funded by the Council, where the local playgroup is the main feeder into the school nursery class. The Council still has sufficient capacity to deliver the number of early education places required. As an early implementer of the Welsh Government's 30-hour Free Childcare Offer, many settings have registered as joint providers so this additional funding provides some mitigation in the sector. The Welsh Government acknowledged the pressure on settings to maintain a combined delivery of early years' education and childcare with a difference in funding rates. This resulted in WG using Flintshire as a pilot authority for the provision of additional funding to equalise the rates of payment.

Flintshire continues to work closely with Mudiad Meithrin, the Welsh-medium early years' organisation, to develop new Welsh language provision in key geographical locations in the county as part of its Welsh in Education Strategy (WESP). There is currently sufficient capacity to deliver Welsh medium early years' education, but the aim is to increase this as a stepping stone to more children accessing their full-time

education in a Welsh medium school and support the WG target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. A new Cylch developed by Mudiad Meithrin opened in May 2019 in Buckley as part of a longer-term strategy through the WESP, however this unfortunately was not able to be sustained due to difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. There is a refreshed strategy within the Strategic Outline Plan for the Sustainable Learning Communities programme that will enable a Welsh medium offer including early years' education to be delivered in the Buckley/Mynydd Isa area.

Over the last few years, the focus of the Early Entitlement team's training has been on supporting non-maintained settings with the implementation and delivery of the 'Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings'. The team completed regular evaluation reports to Welsh Government focusing on the progress being made with the implementation of Curriculum for Wales in funded non-maintained nursery settings within Flintshire. As part of this, Flintshire was asked to write a case study on its support for non-maintained settings to be shared across Wales and published on Hwb.

During 2023-24 the team increased the support options available for setting staff who have different levels of 'good practice' understanding. Increased opportunities for settings to visit other settings have been facilitated and staff who were new to early entitlement during the academic year were offered additional online support sessions to understand the key features of the Curriculum for Wales. These opportunities were offered alongside the routine visits to settings and 'Cluster' meetings.

The Early Years Pupil Development Grant (EYPDG) continues to be used by the Early Entitlement Team (EET) for the professional development of the non-maintained workforce with a focus on strengthening staff impact on the engagement, well-being and performance of disadvantaged learners. In 2023-2024, the focus was on the ongoing support of children's early speech, language and communication skills. Funding was provided for staff to access an online ELKLAN course and to receive Makaton support material for staff and children. A selection of Welsh Government's 'Talk with Me' online resources were printed and setting's received access to a digital library of 'good practice' clips illustrating support of early language and other skills. Resources were provided for each setting to strengthen the increase in their provision of 'loose parts'. In addition, commissioning of a 7-part child development course delivered by external provider focused on increasing setting staff's knowledge of the stages of development and their understanding of how to support children's early speech, language and communication skills.

Alongside this, the early entitlement team (EET) allocated part of the Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS) funding to be spent the professional development of staff within settings. A new approach for 2023-24 meant that setting staff were asked to request this funding by submitting a proposal of how they intended to use it to develop their professional understanding of the curriculum and quality education. Approving and redirecting these proposals took time but eventually 35 of the 44 settings had staff who were engaged in some relevant independent and team professional learning during spring term 2024. This is helping to build self-improving capacity within the sector. Feedback from Flintshire settings is that this has been a very valuable use of the funding and that staff's understanding of the new curriculum has increased as a result.

During 2023-24 the EET has seen an improvement in the transition engagement between settings and schools. The Cluster Group meeting in summer 2023, where settings shared their good practice in supporting transition, had a positive impact on transitional arrangements between settings and schools. These positive changes have been sustained and witnessed by the EET team when visiting settings in the summer of 2024. Some examples of strong transitions include:

- An enhanced transition process for ALN children whereby they go over to the nursery setting more regularly. Practitioners are also making a book full of photographs of the provision in the

nursery class for ALN children to take home with them, parents will then share the book over the holiday to keep that in the forefront of their minds.

- During the last week of term, the setting planned to do a 'barefoot trail' where children step into different types of messy things and follow a tuff tray trail, the school staff will also join in with this so the children have opportunity to interact with them at this time.
- Practitioners have created a 'moving to maintained Nursery' transition action plan to support children's well-being through the transition process.
- Transition experiences within the setting include, talking about school at 'together time', providing school role-play activities, such as uniform and book bags, reading books about starting school and taking children to visit schools when dropping off or collecting nursery plus children.

The support provided for an EE child with developmental delays or difficulties traditionally takes place within the setting. The EET offer advice to setting staff on strategies that they can use with the child. Current feedback on this specialised input indicates that staff feel the strategies are having a positive impact on the child/children's engagement in learning. Support for children with developmental delays or difficulties is an area which the EET is focusing on in partnership with Childcare Services and the Inclusion Service in order to create a more integrated process for requesting and receiving support under the new ALNET Act (Wales). The multi-service Funding Delegation Panel plays a prominent role in ensuring that funded early entitlement children who require additional support are granted that support in order to access, as far as possible, the full curriculum within their setting. The additional support co-ordinator provides advice for setting staff on strategies they can use to encourage the full engagement of individual children in the routine and learning experiences provided by their setting. The Additional Support Co-ordinator also sits on the weekly multi-disciplinary health and education service Moderation Panel which determines the most appropriate placement and support for early years children within the LA.

The EET works in partnership with Flying Start, the Childcare Development Team and the Inclusion Service to agree an ALN training programme for the non-maintained sector. EET work cooperatively with Social Services teams to identify a range of resources suitable for supporting children's speech, language and physical skills. EET worked in partnership with the Early Years Pathfinder Project to identify opportunities for extending good practice in Flying Start settings into EE settings which resulted in the piloting of 'Wellcomm' - a speech and language screening tool.

Regionally the EET continues to work in partnership with other North Wales EE Teams and the EE Team Leader attends local and regional meetings supporting ALN transformation work. On a national level EET members continue to support the work of Estyn through their stakeholder meetings and support Welsh Government's working parties on the implementation of the new curriculum and assessment arrangements. The non-maintained sector continues to experience a high turnover of staff, and this is being exacerbated by the national difficulty in recruiting childcare workers. The Early Entitlement Team are regularly providing training to some staff with no prior knowledge of how to meet the demands of education, rather than solely childcare provision, as well as providing professional development in the delivery of a new curriculum and assessment arrangements.

Welsh Government (WG) have previously made available capital grants to councils for the purposes of providing seamless childcare provision to children in the early years, supported through several WG programmes including Flying Start childcare for 2-3-year-olds, the 3-4-year-old Childcare Offer and early learning. The WG Childcare and Early Years (phase 1) Capital Programme was completed at the end of March 2024. Planning for the next phase of the WG Childcare and Early Years Capital programme investment has already commenced.

Phase 1 of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme ran between 2019-2022 and saw the delivery of nine new modular buildings and the refurbishment of an existing building. The completion of the above projects has enhanced childcare provision in these areas. The settings have custom built buildings that have been designed with the needs of the children at the heart, improving facilities for childcare, which in turn attracts both parents and children to the setting/school and creates seamless pathways for children from childcare to early education.

The completion of the phase 1 Childcare and Early Years programme has seen delivery 163 childcare spaces, in a modernised and purpose-built building, become available within the County.

Flintshire Youth Service & Flintshire Play Service including Play Sufficiency

The Play Service has delivered the Flintshire Summer Playscheme since 1996. Summer 2023 witnessed delivery from 56 sites across the County delivered in conjunction with 30 Town and Community Councils. 3,681 children aged 5-11 were registered for the schemes which represents around 32% of this demographic in Flintshire. There were 11,907 attendances recorded and 1200 play sessions delivered. Summer 2024 participation data is currently being collated.

The play sessions are inclusive and cater for a range of disabilities and additional learning needs. To support this, a buddy scheme is utilised. 32 young people accessed this over the course of the six weeks of the 2024 programme.

The schemes support local employment through the employment of temporary Play Workers. 89 Play Workers were employed for between 3 and 6 weeks. 6 were retained in order to work on sustained provision.

Sustaining Play Provision is a key priority for the service and this has been developed over the reporting period with the establishment of two standalone Play Provisions in the Holway and Bryn Gwalia, as well as two Play/Youth transition clubs in Leeswood and Sealand. In addition to this, there are targeted schemes in half term holidays. The retention of staff, partnership with the Youth Service and sustaining of provision has enabled the transition of the service to a year-round service.

In order to support staff development, 3 of the current team have qualified to deliver the Level 2 Play Work Training Award which will ensure that future delivery can be done in-house and not necessitate the sourcing and funding of an outside organisation.

The service has been successful in sourcing external grant funding to enhance delivery and start new provision. This has also supported the sustaining of employment contracts.

Flintshire County Council upholds Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which places a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children, and to consider the many aspects of community life that affect play opportunities e.g. use of the environment; traffic and transport; play and leisure provision, and parental and community involvement with play. Flintshire is effective in adhering to the statutory guidance, 'Wales - A Play Friendly Country'.

In early 2023 the executive summary of the latest play sufficiency assessment was produced along with a self-assessment and action plan. To ensure that this is implemented, a strategic action group was established. Biannual meetings now take place to ensure that these actions are implemented. The membership consists of both internal and external partners and is Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture.

Flintshire Youth Service delivers a diverse range of targeted and open access activities across Flintshire, both directly, and through working in collaboration with a range of statutory, non- statutory and voluntary

organisations. Core council funding for the service is supplemented by Welsh Government grant funding streams e.g. Youth Support Grant and Families First Grant.

In April 2023, the service launched its new monitoring, evaluation and learning tool, Upshot. This enables much more accurate reporting and recording of data and evidence across the service. All staff have received training on the system and all sessions/activities are being recorded.

The service delivers traditional open access youth clubs, detached youth work, youth homelessness, schools youth work, LGBTQ+, transition (Play to Youth), the Duke Of Edinburgh Award, Welsh language provision, resilience (NEET Tier 2), forest school, C-Card and the Youth Council.

In 2023/24 across all programmes there were 14,600 attendances across 2108 sessions of youth work in 65 separate locations. Sessions are targeted against a range of factors such as locations of clubs, areas of deprivation, high anti-social behaviour, higher levels of school exclusion, non-attendance and low attainment, areas of play deprivation or lack of activity for young people; or areas identified through a range of consultation factors.

Through the newly established Flintshire Youth Work Providers Forum, provision is planned in conjunction with partners, such as Aura Leisure and Libraries, NEWCIS Young Carers, the Urdd and Boys and Girls Club Wales. This helps ensure that there is a more balanced programme of provision across the county and duplication is avoided. It has also led to partnership delivery opportunities such as the joint work with Aura Leisure and Libraries in Buckley with the detached offer and sharing staff resources when running projects, such as Snow Camp. This approach has enabled the team to continue and sustain delivery in challenging financial times.

The service administers grants on behalf of Welsh Government (Youth Support Grant and Families First) to partners to support delivery across Flintshire and/or, for the benefit of Flintshire residents e.g. to Newcis Young Carers. The service also supports the Inspire Project in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council to provide bespoke youth support services those young people who self-harm or are at risk of suicide ideation. This is the penultimate year of both funding streams. Partners in receipt of a grant report progress through a reporting proforma, newly designed for 2023/24 which is designed to help not only report against progress, but also identify gaps and further opportunities.

The service continues to work in partnership and create networks and systems which will improve and increase the range of delivery opportunities both in existing communities and in areas requiring youth work support. Those networks supported include the ASB/VARM meeting, MET Panel, Youth Justice Board, Ending Homelessness Board, Youth Engagement Progression Forum and the People and Places Strategic Groups.

Work has continued throughout 2023/24 to ensure that there is a qualified and professional workforce. The partnership work with Wrexham University to relaunch the Youth Work Degree programme has continued and it is anticipated that a new programme will be available in 2025. In order to support this development and support the growth of the sector locally, there has also been discussion and action with regards to a North Wales partnership delivering the Level 2 and 3 Youth Work Awards. Flintshire supported two members of staff to attend 'train the trainer training' and all of the team have agreed to attend either tutor training and/or assessor training in 2024/25 to support the delivery of the courses in conjunction with our North Wales partners. It is anticipated that a more flexible approach to delivery of training will result in a higher completion rate and, therefore, a greater opportunity to grow youth work in the county.

Two Youth Work apprentices were recruited through the Council Trainee Programme and have been a welcome addition to the team, supporting delivery across the full range of activities and leading on aspects of programmes in line with their qualification requirements. Both apprentices are completing the Level 2/3 Youth Work Award provided through the URDD and are on task to complete the end of 2024.

As part of the Council's pay modelling programme, all youth work job descriptions, currently on the JNC Youth and Community Workers (Pink Book) terms and conditions have been rewritten and re-evaluated and staff within those roles have been consulted on a potential change to the NJC pay scales (Green Book) pending a Council decision on the pay modelling exercise. As a result of this work the recruitment for the Duke Of Edinburgh (DoE) Award Lead Officer was delayed and this has caused a delay in developments. As an interim measure, the some staff had an uplift in hours and delivery with Aura enabled 5 community DoE sessions to continue running with practice expeditions taking place in March 2024 with over 40 young people taking part.

Recruitment was also delayed on the Welsh language officer post but a successful appointment was made in December, with the successful candidate starting in March 2024. Welsh language provision was continued through the work delivered in Ysgol Maes Garmon and also through the URDD and the establishment of two Welsh Language provisions. The service also supported the Arfer project with Bangor University, with most of the staff engaging and providing feedback, whilst improving confidence and knowledge in the use of Welsh in the workplace.

Young people's voices are continuously canvassed and the service has been as flexible and reactive in provision wherever possible to ensure it can respond quickly to changing need/priorities. The service also supports partners with their consultations, e.g. the Children's Commissioner's Office, as well as supporting Young Flintshire with the Three Issues Campaign and formation of the schools' Youth Council.

Examples of reflecting feedback from young people have been evidenced in a number of new programmes being established, such as the LGBTQ+ drop in operating in Flint, the Athena and Goliath projects which focus on the issues in and around toxic masculinity, a transition play to youth club in Sealand and projects such as Snow Camp, which enabled 20 young people to gain snow sports awards, 12 sports leadership qualifications and one to travel to Andorra to gain her ski instructor certificate.

Through 'Young Flintshire' the service is aware that mental health and well-being, education and community amenities remain as a priority for young people and that the youth service has a vital role to play in supporting and improving the associated action plans around these issues. The service has maintained its vision of being more agile and customer led and has made the difficult decision to reduce its reliance upon fixed buildings. This has enabled efficiencies to be found but also created greater flexibility within the current workforce and enables a more equitable provision now, and in the future.

Youth Justice Services & Flintshire Sorted

Within the last 12 months the Youth Justice Service (YJS) has continued its commitment to continuous improvement and as part of this commissioned a Peer Review from the Youth Justice Sector Improvement Partnership (YJSIP) to review our approaches to leadership and governance. In March 2024 the Youth Justice Service was the subject of a routine inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation. The Inspection reviews the work of the YJS across a number of domains including; Leadership and governance, Court disposals, Out of Court Disposals and Resettlement. Overall the Inspectorate rated the service as 'good' overall and made the following recommendations;

Flintshire healthcare partners should:

1. make sure that healthcare provision for YJS children meets their emotional health and wellbeing needs
2. ensure that children supervised by the YJS are assessed for and have specific access to services that meet their speech, language and communication needs.

The executive management board should:

3. continue to challenge the Probation Service to ensure that it meets its statutory duties and provides the appropriate secondment provision to the YJS
4. review the format and purpose of the Bureau and ensure that it has the relevant input from staff who have met the child and the necessary agencies a in attendance, so that out-of-court disposals meet children's needs.

The YJS senior manager should:

5. improve the quality of planning in both post-court casework and out-of-court disposals to ensure consistently high-quality planning activity, tailored to each child
6. strengthen the quality and consistency of management oversight to ensure it drives improvements in the quality of practice.

The inspectorate found good practice within the Youth Justice Service across a number of areas. The Inspectorate commended the overall approach to leadership and governance, including the creation of a distinctive service within the Education and Youth portfolio. Leadership at a Management Board and operational level was seen as a strength in a number of areas and the inspection identified that the YJS provided good quality information to the Management Board and partners. Whilst relationships across the partnership were good, with the YJS having suitable visibility, it was identified that partners in Probation and Health needed to review resourcing into the service linked to the secondment of a Probation Officer, improving support for emotional health and speech and language needs for our children and young people.

The inspectorate commended the service in its development of trauma informed practice and close working relationships with academic institutions. The presence of a trauma informed approach was evident at all levels within the service. A specific strength was the work of staff, practitioners and managers who were identified as 'filling the gaps' of other services and providing support to children and young people. In addition, the work we provide to victims was identified as an area of strength.

The Management Board had already commenced work on a number of areas of practice that had been identified by the inspectorate following on from our peer review earlier in the year. Within the last 12 months we have started to increase the expectations placed on the partnership and have been reviewing resources that support the service. An improvement plan will be submitted to the Inspectorate which outlines how the service and partnership intent to further the recommendations from HMIP. The improvement plan will be monitored by the Management Board.

During 2023-2024 the YJS supported 134 children and young people, a reduction in 13 young people compared with the previous year. The service continues to engage with the vast majority of our cohort through the Out of Court framework. However, this year the service has seen an increase of 11 first time entrants into the service compared to the previous year. This issue is currently experienced across all North Wales Youth Justice Services and a working group has been established with North Wales Police to review the operating framework for our Out of Court Disposals. In January 2024 the service also commenced the use of Outcome 22 which allows the YJS to engage with children and young people with intervention but does not result in a criminal outcome being recorded and reduces the impact of criminalisation.

The service is committed to promoting the voice of children and young people and in the last twelve months 83 children and young people were asked to provide their views of the service. Most provided a positive assessment of the work of the service. To strengthen this further a participation oversight group has been established to ensure the views of children, young people, parents, carers and victims are captured consistently.

All young people involved within the YJS undergo a comprehensive holistic assessment which assesses their likelihood of re-offending, risk of serious harm to others in addition to their safety and wellbeing needs. This also includes issues and concerns relating to education, training and employment, physical health and emotional and mental health. The services remains concerned about the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on children and young people. A cohort analysis of 92 children and young people open to the YJS in the last 12 months has highlighted;

- **80%** of children and young people were known to Social Services for Children (increase of 17%)
- **23%** of children and young people have had a period in Care (increase of 12%)
- **23%** have a physical health need (decrease by 1%)
- **79 %** of children and young people were assessed as having an emotional and mental health need (increase of 12%)
- **33%** of children and young people were assessed as having alcohol needs (decrease of 4%)
- **33%** of children and young people were identified as being at risk of self-harm (increase of 2%).
- **63%** of children and young people were identified as having a substance misuse need (decrease by 4%)
- **61%** of children and young people have had attendance issues in education, training or employment (increase by 20%)
- **66%** of children and young people have had behavioural issues in education, training or employment (increase by 18%)
- **49%** of children and young people have had a previous school exclusion (increase by 16%)
- **28%** of children and young people have been identified as at risk of modern slavery.

The YJS promotes a trauma informed approach and has a TrACE development plan in place which is overseen by Public Health Wales and Wrexham Glyndwr University and has commenced discussions with North Wales Police to identify areas of mutual benefit and support to improve outcomes for children and young people. YJS works in partnership with the Forensic Adolescent Treatment Service (FACTS) to embed trauma informed approaches through Enhanced Case Management and has continued to train staff to become trauma informed. The Service has also utilised Ministry of Justice funding for 'Turnaround' to provide additional resources to intervene with children and young people at earlier stages of the criminal justice system, utilising a 'what matters' and trauma informed approach. However, funding for Turnaround remains in its last 12 months.

The YJS works closely with colleagues across the wider Education and Youth Portfolio to improve attendance and engagement in education, training and employment and ensure that every child or young person has an assessment of their education and employment when they enter the service. The service is also exploring opportunities to utilise alternative qualification frameworks to improve outcomes for its cohort.

The service has worked closely with the North Wales Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on the Serious Violence Duty, contributing key data and information for the Serious Violence Strategy including developing a child and young people's survey which was completed by over 90 children and young people in Flintshire. As part of its previous Violence Audit, it was identified that the service needed additional training, support and interventions to help respond to children and young people involved in violence. The YJS successfully obtained funding through the 'Futures Without Violence Fund' through the OPCC, which funded 4 YJS and Sorted Practitioners to participate in training with Empire Fighting Chance to deliver their Box Champions programme.

In 2023 the Youth Justice Service commissioned Street Doctors to deliver their programmes for the first time in North Wales in a local Flintshire School. Street Doctors offer bespoke programmes to combat youth violence. Street Doctors seek to empower children and young people to become part of the solution to violence and through medical professionals (doctors, nurses and health professionals) provide lifesaving knowledge in the event of a knife related injury or assault and provide information to help understand the medical and psychological consequences of violence. Following a successful trial in a Flintshire School, Street Doctors have secured additional funding through the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioners 'Futures without Violence Fund' as part of the North Wales response to the Serious Violence Duty.

Through the Shared Prosperity Fund the service has secured funding to embed Action for Children's Sidestep Programme which enables children, young people and families at risk of exploitation and serious organised crime to receive tailored, individual 1:1 support. The programme also seeks to reduce vulnerabilities whilst securing positive outcomes through improved attendance in education, training and employment, health support and engagement with professionals. Sidestep is embedded into the Flintshire Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Panel and Contextual Safeguarding Panel and has established close partnerships with Youth Justice, Social Services for Children and North Wales Police to improve information sharing and data analysis. The programme is only funded until December 2024.

Previously YJS reported that there had been an increase in the use of remand and custody with 3 custodial sentences. However last year this reduced to 2 children and young people. In 2023 the YJS Management Board reviewed the cases and developed an initial plan to reduce the use of remand and custody. It will now review the strategy in line with recently published HMIP Thematic Inspections and respond to their recommendations. This will also extend to the service's approaches to managing resettlement.

Flintshire Sorted (Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team) aims to prevent substance use and to minimise the impact of substance use on children and young people, families and the community. It provides a universal, targeted and specialist service to children and young people up to the age of 25 years.

Flintshire Sorted delivers a universal and targeted service within every secondary school in the County with the overall aim of diverting young people away from the use of drugs and alcohol. The targeted content aims to promote healthy choices, challenge attitudes to drugs, anti-social behaviour and other risky behaviours, and strengthen protective factors. Flintshire Sorted provide universal delivery via awareness raising of the risk of using substances through the PSE (Personal, Social, Education) curriculum in schools and via outreach delivery within the community. Flintshire Sorted offer a referral-based service for more intensive work with young people whose substance misuse is having a negative impact on their lives. A range of therapeutic interventions is offered to meet the individual needs of young people and help them to make changes and lead healthier lifestyles. The service also provides a consultation service for parents and professionals who may have questions about suspected substance use in their children.

Between April 2023 and March 2024:

- **1171** sessions were held in 13 secondary schools and colleges
- **6459** young people were engaged in these sessions
- Drug and Alcohol Community Support Sessions took place with trained staff attending identified hotspots for anti-social behaviour where substances were an issue. The staff offered support and advice to young people at risk of offending and provided targeted support session to individuals and groups. They were also able to direct young people to specialist services
- **262** young people received a targeted intervention
- **73%** of young people reported that they had met their goals i.e. had gained more knowledge substances, understood the long-term effects of drugs, and/or had quit alcohol or smoking.

- **274** young people were referred to the service for specialist Tier 3 assessment and intervention.
- **216** professionals received training from Flintshire Sorted. These included: Social Workers, School Nurses, Residential Children Home staff, Safeguarding practitioners, Adult Substance Misuse Service practitioners.
- **74%** of young people reported that they had met their goals i.e. had gained more knowledge of substances, understood the long-term effects of drugs, and/or had quit alcohol or smoking.

Healthy Schools & Healthy Pre-Schools

Public Health Wales (PHW) identified that the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes required significant reform to optimise its potential in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the future. Work started on reviewing the scheme in 2019 however this was delayed by the pandemic and work to complete recommendations identified in the review remained on hold until June 2021. The work was then recommenced by the national health improvement team. In autumn 2022, PHW proposed a reform to the architecture of the programme to move away from 22 schemes towards a single all-Wales framework.

Local delivery and ownership will continue but supported by a single benchmark and framework of what is considered effective practice, as part of a continuous improvement model. This change aligns with whole school approach principles and the integration of support to embed a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being. This process has been overseen by the Health Promoting Schools Programme Board and is currently awaiting Ministerial approval for a proposed set of Minimum Standards that describe the core components of a health and well-being promoting school.

These Minimum Standards have been developed based on research evidence, international best practices, and input from a range of stakeholders across health, education, and the health promoting schools' workforce. The standards will be shared with schools ahead of the national launch in April 2025. Following consultation, as part of the reforms, the new name for the scheme is the 'Welsh Network of Health and Well-being Promoting Schools' (WNHWPS). To reflect the name change, a new logo and branding has been developed by PHW.

Despite the pause on the accreditation aspect of the scheme since the start of the pandemic, the Flintshire Healthy Schools team between 2022-2024 have remained focused on providing crucial support and resources to schools in the areas of learner and staff health and wellbeing, particularly through this time of transition:

1. Whole Schools Approach to Emotional Health and mental wellbeing (WSA)
2. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
3. Food and Nutrition

Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Mental Wellbeing:

The Flintshire Healthy Schools team supported schools to complete the PHW WSA self-assessment tool to provide a current baseline of wellbeing provision for pupils and staff in their school and action plan accordingly. In Flintshire, 97.4% of schools have engaged with this process; higher than the Wales average of 82.6%. 94% of schools have completed the self-assessment tool in Flintshire in comparison with the Wales average of 71.9%. These schools are now developing their action plans. Support will remain ongoing for all schools as they work through this process. Once the schools have implemented their action plans they will be supported to consult with all stakeholders to repeat the initial surveys they conducted, which will provide a measure of the impact this work has had in their school to improve wellbeing of children and / or staff.

Analysis of the initial self-evaluation tools completed by schools have identified that staff wellbeing is an area which is considered to be a priority and this is particularly the case among secondary schools. A pilot was subsequently funded through the LA wellbeing grant for 'Wellbeing with Cari' to be used at 9 secondary schools in January 2024. This was voluntary for school staff to participate in and required the completion by staff of short online wellbeing surveys during the spring and summer terms, assessing their levels of commitment, resilience, engagement, and well-being. Staff were subsequently signposted to appropriate support in order to improve their wellbeing scores and supported by identified key staff members who had received specific training – to become Advocates and First Responders. 26 staff completed Advocate training in February, and 10 went on to complete First Responder training in March 2024 to upskill them to be able to support colleagues' mental health and wellbeing in their schools. When the Healthy Schools team receives the final data from Wellbeing with Cari staff survey, they will be reviewing wellbeing scores pre and post intervention in order to analyse the impact and share any case studies and good practice identified.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

The Flintshire Healthy Schools team have been supporting schools to meet the requirements of the RSE Code / Curriculum for Wales. Historically RSE has been a theme within the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes criteria addressed under the banner of 'personal development and relationships'. At a local level, officers supported most schools in the county to deliver a programme of sex and relationships education in line with the previous government guidance. They supported schools by commissioning experts in the field, sourcing training and resources, policy development and establishing platforms to share information.

For many schools, the introduction of the RSE Code has meant reviewing what they have delivered previously and refining the content to ensure it is developmentally appropriate; and enhancing this provision further to ensure all the mandatory content is met. A comprehensive programme of staff training for RSE has been fundamental to raise teachers' confidence with this area of the curriculum over the last two years.

In the summer term 2023, members of the Healthy Schools team met with health and wellbeing / PSE leads from the secondary schools at the termly forum where they explored the benefit of working in clusters with their primary school colleagues focusing on RSE in 23-24. GwE has advocated working in school clusters to develop RSE and Health and Wellbeing in the curriculum as good practice and as such the approach is being adopted by other North Wales Local Authorities.

The aim is to utilise the cluster approach for identifying and sharing effective practice and develop a plan with identified training needs which can be co-ordinated through the cluster model. In the summer term 2023 the LA worked with one secondary school and their cluster primary schools to support a meeting of their health and wellbeing leads. This was a pilot to establish how this model could work on a county wide basis with a focus on RSE.

The Healthy Schools team organised an RSE meeting at County Hall in November 2023 for primary school RSE leads to meet in their clusters with secondary RSE / H&Wb lead. The focus of the meeting was to review how RSE was delivered in the first year of Curriculum for Wales and the implementation of the RSE code in order to identify future training and resource needs, support transition and planning for effective delivery of RSE. This event was attended by 58 staff from Flintshire schools and the team received really positive feedback on the day from both primary and secondary colleagues. The event provided officers with a better understanding of which schools have made good progress in meeting the requirements of the RSE Code as well as those that still require additional support.

Following this, each cluster was allocated funding of £3000 and were required to submit a proposal of how this could be utilised to develop RSE. This was a really useful exercise and enabled the schools to work collaboratively to best utilise the funding. Some clusters have continued to meet in person and others have maintained dialogue over email. The intention is for schools to build on this practice and a follow up event will be held in the autumn term 2024 to review how the funding has been utilised and what the outcomes are. Upon reviewing this model with the Secondary Health and Wellbeing / PSE forum meeting in the summer term 2024, it was identified that some schools have faced barriers to hosting meetings with their feeder schools and coordinating training together. The Healthy Schools team therefore will resume coordination of one termly cluster meeting for all schools and training will be delivered through this model. The autumn term 2024 meeting will review how the funding has been utilised and whether the outcomes have been met and consider what the current priorities are.

All training is evaluated, and there has been a positive response by schools to the training programme offered. Feedback is utilised to make improvements to the training programme as required. In most cases this relates to what further training schools would benefit from. For example, sexual health and LGBTQ+ have been identified as themes many schools identified as requiring further support and the team ensured these were featured within the programme of professional development offered.

Working with colleagues at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), funding was accessed to support secondary schools with the RSE professional development training, equipped teaching staff with extensive, current, and comprehensive knowledge of the RSE code, delivered by a specialist provider.

In 2023 and 2024 the Healthy Schools team have coordinated two Flintshire secondary schools Pride events in partnership with the Youth Service and secondary schools: 'Celebrating being me' and 'Just the way you are' during Pride Month. In June 2024, the LGBTQ+ Ambassadors from Hawarden High welcomed approximately 250 attendees, which included learners from 11 secondary schools across the county, representatives from over 30 LGBTQ+ charities and organisations, and several distinguished guests. The evaluation activity conducted during the event highlights the positive feedback from the young participants, providing the following insights:

"It was truly amazing and made me feel so comfortable."

"This event has taught me to accept who I am! Thank you!"

"I enjoyed the day as it allowed people to express themselves and be happy feeling safe."

The secondary Health and Wellbeing / PSE forum continues to meet on a regular basis attended by representatives from all secondary schools including Special and PRU.

"I'm so happy to see so many people appreciating the LGBTQ+ community. I feel I can truly be myself here, and it is amazing that this event is ongoing."

Food and Nutrition

Taking a whole system approach to 'Eating Well & Being Active' in Schools is a local and regional priority for the Healthy Schools team. Following a review of existing food provision in line with Welsh Government regulations, work has continued with secondary schools. In December 2023, a third learner voice event was held in collaboration with colleagues from Newydd to review the food and drink provision and to gather feedback on the new menu which launched in September 2023.

By comparing responses of learners that had completed the food and drink provision surveys in June 2023 with the responses in December 2023 it is evident that there have been improvements made to the

provision (e.g. 84% of learners feel that there are now more healthier breakfast options available in their schools in comparison to 18% in June 2023) There is a greater awareness among learners about different options available (e.g. 72% of learners feel they are now more aware that there are options for vegetarians and vegans in comparison with 27% in June).

During the workshop, water provision emerged as a common theme across a number of schools. A further water specific survey was then developed and shared with schools to review what provision was in place and to identify schools that could benefit from any additional water coolers for the numbers of learners on roll. Subsequently 17 mains-operated water coolers at 8 secondary schools were installed and a water provision policy template for primary and secondary schools was developed, to reflect the importance of adequate water provision in schools.

Vaping / Smoking

Wales, in common with other parts of the United Kingdom and countries internationally is experiencing a rapid increase in reports of young people vaping. The School Health Research Network (SHRN) study showed a marked increase in vaping among young people between 2019/21 and 2021/22. Headteachers and parents, not only in Flintshire but across Wales and the UK, are raising concerns and experiencing significant challenges in managing behaviours around vaping. These include growing reports of addiction to nicotine which is disruptive to day-to-day life and learning. Concerns have been raised about the safety and quality of products and also about the growing presence of illegal products in the marketplace.

In 2021 in Flintshire 23.1% of 11-16 year olds reported having tried e-cigarettes in contrast with 4.15% of 11-16 year olds that reported smoking tobacco at least once a week. Flintshire have the fifth highest local authority data for secondary age students having tried e-cigarettes and reported to be smoking once a week.

In response, the Education and Youth Portfolio has developed a model Smoke Free policy template which will be issued at the start of the new academic year. All schools have been provided with clear signage. Primary school headteachers and wellbeing leads in secondary schools have been offered training opportunities through Ash Wales and Public Health Wales Educational Settings team have developed a 'Substances and Addiction - Focus on Vaping' Curriculum toolkit which has been cascaded to schools in June 2024.

JUSTB Smokefree is an evidence-based smoking prevention intervention developed and delivered to schools in Wales by Public Health Wales. JUSTB is part of and works in partnership with a wider health and wellbeing system for schools which includes the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS), Help me Quit and the School Health Research Network (SHRN). The peer-led programme is delivered to peer-identified, influential year 8 pupils in schools in areas where children are at the highest risk of smoking. It equips these young people with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to comfortably discuss the risks of smoking and the benefits of being smoke free amongst their peers, prior to the age of typical smoking initiation. Using the SHRN data a targeted number of secondary schools with smoking prevalence rates in the top quarter in Wales are invited to take part in the programme. 7 secondary schools were eligible in Flintshire and 1 did engage in the programme in 2023/24. Increasing the uptake in 2024/25 will be a priority for the Healthy Schools team.

Co-ordination of Programmes

Healthy & Sustainable Pre-school Scheme (HSPSS):

There are 52 settings participating in the scheme in Flintshire. Each setting must demonstrate that it is promoting health and well-being through its policies, planning and ethos over 7 different health themes. At the end of each theme the setting is locally assessed and once they met the required criteria, they are accredited by PHW.

In total 28 settings (53%) have now completed the scheme. During 23/24 there were 17 assessments undertaken: 5 of which were end of scheme assessments, 7 were preliminary assessments and 5 were health theme assessments. 14 reaccreditations took place. 10 settings joined the scheme bringing the total participating in HSPSS to 53. For 24/25 we will be actively recruiting more settings.

During 23/24 an officer from the team worked in partnership with the Dietetics team at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to coordinate training and accreditation. 18 preschool workers attend the 2 hour snack training, 1 Day Nursery were supported to gain the Tiny Tums Best Practice Full Day Care Award and 9 Preschool settings achieved the Tiny Tums Best Practice Snack Award following the training they received.

HSPSS have promoted the Public Health Wales 'Breast feeding in the workplace' initiative and all 53 HSPSS settings are now engaged with the potential to reach 296 staff members.

An officer from the team has represented Flintshire as part of a review of the national HSPSS indicators on the PHW review group. This group informed the revised HSPSS indicators which were launched in January 2024; all settings in Flintshire are now using the new indicators.

Food and Fun:

The Healthy Schools team have coordinated the Food & Fun programme in Flintshire since it began in 2018. This includes the initial recruitment of schools, stakeholder group meetings, managing funding and direct support for schools prior to the programme beginning, throughout and afterwards. In 2023 13 schools (14 cohorts of 40 pupils) delivered the programme, with the support of NEWydd catering, Aura Leisure and Libraries and the Dietetics team at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). In 2024 10 schools, 11 cohorts are delivering Food and Fun.

484 children benefited from Food and Fun at 13 schools which is an increase compared to 8 schools in summer 2022 which was of benefit to 286 learners. 496 'Bag Bwyd' (pantry ingredients) to feed a family of four, were provided to the parents of children attending in summer 2023.



Period Dignity:

The Healthy Schools team has overseen the grant expenditure for this national project since it was first issued in 17/18. In 22/23 and 23/24 this continued with the online ordering and delivery of home packs in partnership with an external provider, alongside a wide range of community-based initiatives to make products available, including through food banks, community hubs, youth services and adult community learning providers. All primary and secondary schools were also allocated a proportion of grant funding to purchase period products to ensure they had a consistent supply available which was accessible by any learner who needs them.

In 23/24 In response to the increased number of reusable products ordered by young people with the previous provider and feedback from young people that some schools did not routinely stock reusable products, we explored a different approach. Grace and Green were commissioned to deliver reusable only period products via online ordering, direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years (we did not offer single use disposable products). This pilot ran throughout March 2024 following a very similar process as delivered in previous years. A total of 1814 orders were received. Again, period pants were the most popular product. There has also been an increase in the number of menstrual cups ordered compared to the previous year.

A Period Proud Flintshire Steering Group has been established this year with representatives from the authority and community. Members of the steering group have reflected on the funding offer, explored further opportunities to raise awareness among communities and are developing a Flintshire Period Proud Action Plan which is in its initial stages. Feedback from the steering group highlighted the need to equip community staff with the knowledge and skills needed to have supportive period product conversations. Building on this in 2023-2024, a broader offer of training and education was co-ordinated with 10 parents and carers trained, 104 learners, 19 school staff and 16 community staff.

Children and Young People's Participation

The Council is committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are reflected in its work and actively seeks their engagement. Following the introduction of the Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing, schools are required to complete an assessment tool and develop an implementation plan based on the outcomes. This includes specific indicators where schools need to demonstrate how the whole school community is engaged and involved in day-to-day life of the school in influencing decision making and reviewing progress.

All secondary schools are supported to complete the bi-annual School Health Research Network (SHRN) survey. The School Health Research Network (SHRN) is a partnership between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales (PHW), Cancer Research UK and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods. It is led by Cardiff University and brings together secondary schools across Wales and academic researchers, policymakers and practitioners from health, education, and social care. The SHRN aims to improve young people's health and wellbeing in the school setting by providing robust health and wellbeing data for school, regional and national stakeholders. The availability of health behaviour data on both a county and school level are particularly valuable in terms of coordinating the delivery of services and interventions.

The recent expansion of SHRN into primary schools offers an opportunity for joined up working across childhood and adolescence, and an avenue to better understand and support events such as transition to secondary school. As in secondary schools, a key element of this expansion is a survey of school pupils.

The survey asks students about a range of health behaviours and outcomes as well as their age, gender and how they feel about school. Some questions in the survey come from the World Health Organisation's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey, with some adaptation for younger pupils, ensuring comparability across primary and secondary surveys. Others are measures which have been used for younger pupils in other surveys, because some questions used in secondary SHRN surveys are too complex for younger pupils.



11 secondary schools participated in secondary SHRN survey in autumn term 2023. Although schools have received their reports, the county report for each LA has not been published to date. The last Secondary SHRN survey prior to this was undertaken in 2021 with 7537 young people from Flintshire taking part which is an increase from previous surveys - 6585 in 2017 and 6773 in 2019. Findings from the 2021 survey demonstrated the impact the pandemic had on young people's mental health and wellbeing and all areas of life from screen time to sedentary behaviour. The data for emotions and behaviour in comparison with 2019 indicates at Key Stage 3 there has been an increase in emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer relationships support. At Key Stage 4, data in comparison with 2019 also indicates an increase in emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, and peer relationships support. 43% of young people surveyed have screen time after 11.30pm on a school night, compared to 38% in Wales - a rise of 9% compared to county average of 34% in 2019. 21% of students surveyed spend 7 or more hours sitting down in their free time, compared to 18% in Wales. This is a rise of 4% compared to the county average of 17% in 2019.

All secondary schools have action plans in place based on their individual school report and provided with support to identify their priorities. There is a county action plan and monitoring of SHRN county data on a biannual basis.

18 primary schools participated in Primary SHRN in 2022-23 with 27.3% of students on roll taking part, equating to 1915 from Years 3-6. The data highlighted a difference of 4% or higher between Flintshire and the national average in the following areas:

- **33%** of children who reported consuming vegetables at least once a day in comparison with the national average of 37%.
- **67%** of children reported owning a smartphone in comparison to 63% national average.
- **76%** of children reported using portable devices to speak to family or friends a few times a day or every day, in comparison with the national average of 71%.
- **29%** reported being bullied as the thing that year 6 children in Flintshire were worried about when thinking about transition to secondary school - in comparison with the national average of 25%.

The Healthy Schools team will review the Primary data in line with the secondary responses to incorporate this in a new combined county action plan going forward. The primary survey will open in Autumn 2024 for another cycle and new data will be available for schools Easter 2025.

As part of the statutory processes in the identification of additional learning needs, children and young people are actively supported to contribute as appropriate to their age or stage of development. Youth Justice assessments and plans clearly reference the views and needs of the young person themselves and the Integrated Youth Provision regularly consults with its users and refines its services as a result. A Youth Council was in place prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and is in the process of being refreshed as part of the restructuring of Youth Service provision.

To strengthen participation in Flintshire, a model where both Youth Council and School Councils representatives (11-18 years old) collaborate to lead on participation across Flintshire has been developed under the identity of 'Young Flintshire'.

The Young Flintshire Aims are:

- Young people having their voice heard and speaking to decision makers.
- Opportunities for young people to feed into other working groups and projects running within the council.
- Awareness of how Flintshire County Council works and educating on democracy to young people and communities.

School Councils are a legal requirement and are fully operational in all schools in Wales. School Council representatives who are nominated as Associate Pupil Governors (APG's) will be invited from all secondary schools (including Specialist provision and the Pupil Referral Unit) to be members of Young Flintshire from Autumn 2024.

The Flintshire Youth Council has been in place for many years coordinated by the Youth Service. All young people can become members of the Flintshire Youth Council. The Youth Service also work with a variety of different groups of young people. Representatives from Youth Council will be invited to be members of Young Flintshire alongside School Council representatives from Autumn 2024. Prior to launching the Young Flintshire participation model in the autumn term 2023 a pilot with 9 schools took place during June and July 2024 focusing on the following three areas identified by young people across Flintshire through a consultation survey:

- 1. Community - Amenities & Safety**
- 2. Mental Health & Wellbeing**
- 3. Schools and Education**

Young people undertook a 'deep dive' in their school and local communities on the three identified areas from the initial consultation. Designated officers from various council services were asked to provide written and face-to-face feedback to the young people at a meeting chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language and Culture. The pilot has helped to fine tune the processes required to coordinate this model on a larger scale including safeguarding risk assessments, consent, formal and informal approaches and ensure representation from different groups. The work undertaken during the pilot brought young people across schools and communities together focusing on common priorities, developing a further a sense of belonging and also an understanding of how the Council operates in regard to its decision-making processes.

Sport Wales has coordinated the School Sport Survey for learners in Years 3 to 11 for over twenty years. All schools which collect the required number of survey responses from their learners receive unweighted results in a school report and providing enough schools have participated, the local authority also qualifies for a report. The numbers of learners that have completed the survey has steadily increased from 5090 in 2015, 5208 in 2017, and 5212 responses in 2022. 3052 secondary aged learners from 8 secondary schools completed the survey alongside 2160 primary aged learners from 25 primary schools in 2022. Schools, supported by the Portfolio, will be expected to share their reports with their School Councils and use the information to secure further improvements in sports and physical activities within their schools.

School Place Planning & Provision including provision for Welsh medium & admissions processes

Flintshire County Council has a strong track record in strategically managing its school estate through both its own resources and through the effective use of grant funding schemes e.g. Sustainable Learning Communities Programme, to manage effective and efficient delivery of school places. It has demonstrated

a willingness to take difficult decisions to modernise the school network to improve the quality of the learning environment to underpin teaching and learning and address issues related to condition and suitability within its school estate.

Under its School Modernisation Strategy the Council has undertaken a major programme of school organisational change proposals which have included the closure of one nursery school, three primary schools, one secondary school, the development of four federal arrangements across the primary and secondary sector, the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools, the rationalisation of post-16 provision in the north of the County resulting in a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria, the extension of primary Welsh medium provision, the building of two new primary schools and an award winning 3-16 learning campus and other major remodelling projects. The Sustainable Learning Communities Band A and B Programme have now been fully completed (on time and within budget) bringing the total investment envelope to £64.2m and £85m for these phases of investment.

The Council's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) for the next phase of rolling capital investment over a 10-year period is equally ambitious at £175.8m and is currently awaiting approval from Welsh Government.

The Council is constantly evaluating its programme priorities and how to use the differing forms of funding available e.g. Capital and Revenue based funding under the Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

The proposed programme provides efficient and effective educational infrastructure to meet current and future demand. The programme has potential to remove up to 12 educational buildings from the service portfolio and ensure suitable investment in new facilities. All projects within the programme will be designed to promote, where applicable, early years' provision and community access to school and sports facilities. The backlog maintenance for projects within the programme is £1.3m for secondary and £1.8m for primary. For new school projects, the Council would expect to achieve 100% reduction in backlog maintenance, for large remodelling projects an 80% reduction and smaller scale projects the aim would be for 50% as a benchmark. The Council has clearly defined arrangements for repairs and maintenance of schools and responds appropriately to emergencies.

The SOP is linked to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The rolling programme is focused on the remaining one primary school which would benefit from capital investment within the Welsh Medium (WM) sector, significant investment has already been made into 4 out of the 6 WM schools, linking in with the Council's desire to ensure that WM is given priority and links into the National Welsh Language Strategy.

Further funding opportunities have been identified and secured to develop a new start up Welsh Medium Area Primary school to be located in an area of known Welsh medium demand and to serve nearby areas in the northeast of the county. Other funding opportunities through the Welsh Government community facility and childcare capital grant are also being reviewed to provide capital investment enhancing Welsh medium learning provision.

Voluntary Aided schools are maintained jointly by the County Council and either the Church in Wales or the Roman Catholic Church. Aided schools also have access to separate capital funding streams directly through the Welsh Government. The Council continues to work successfully in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities to ensure that Aided schools are appropriately located and fit for purpose.

In January 2024 the Pupil Level Annual School Census showed the 64 primary schools had a total capacity of 14,183 full time places and had 11,441 total numbers on roll (NOR), which is a surplus of 19.33%. 11 Schools in the secondary sector had a total capacity of 10,718 with 9,594 NOR and 10.49% surplus places. When combined, these figures equate to 14.91% average surplus places across the school network, which is higher than the maximum national target of 10%.

Unfilled places in January 2024 were 3,866. This is an improvement on statistics produced in January 2013, when there were some 4,000 unfilled places in Flintshire schools distributed across primary and secondary schools. The proposals contained within the Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) for the rolling Sustainable Learning Communities schools' investment programme, should they be implemented, will reduce unfilled places in schools to near the national target.

Pupil number projections methodology is aligned with other authorities across the region and are completed twice per year; these are linked to school data returns, namely, January PLASC and September NOR returns. The capacity assessments are conducted using the Welsh Government's Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales methodology and are audited once per year.

The Council has an up-to-date Asset Management system and data from the system is used to influence decision making on capital investment in the school network. Priorities for investment for the schools' capital programme are clear, linked to the School Modernisation Strategy and are funded and based upon up-to-date information.

In 2016/17 suitability surveys were commissioned and conducted across the schools' portfolio based on national guidance. Despite the significant investment through Sustainable Learning Communities Schools programme and the Council's own capital programme, it is estimated that an investment more than £130m is still required to address suitability issues across the schools' network. The proposals contained within the Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) for the rolling Sustainable Learning Communities schools' investment programme, should they be implemented, will reduce suitability graded D schools to 1.

Table 18: Suitability of Primary and Secondary School Buildings

Suitability Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	11	14.67%
B	23	30.6%
C	39	52%
D	2	2.66%

School condition surveys are re-assessed in line with national asset management guidance on a five-year cycle, with the repair & maintenance (R&M) backlog estimated in excess of £10.6m, a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP.

Table 19: Condition of Primary and Secondary School Buildings

Condition Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	5	6.67%
B	61	81.33%
C	9	12%
D	0	0.00%

Flintshire County Council has no schools in condition 'D' as this would mean that the school building life would have expired or be at risk of imminent failure.

The Council consults with children and young people, parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders prior to making proposals for any school modernisation change. The consultation process involves the completion and presentation of impact assessments around community, transport, buildings, equalities and language and includes a financial appraisal.

The responses from each formal consultation process are presented to the Council's Cabinet, along with the impact assessment, options appraisal and officer recommendations. Cabinet then decides on how to progress. For all construction projects the Head Teacher or nominated person from the school forms part of the "operational team".

Flintshire consults other admission authorities and coordinates admission arrangements with neighbouring authorities, including common dates of return and common offer dates. Flintshire participates in the regional North Wales Admissions Group to coordinate admissions arrangements and develop/deliver joint training. The Council is represented at the ADEW School Admissions Officers' Group and is aware of national and Welsh Government initiatives in the service.

The composite prospectus, "Guide to Education Services" is reviewed and published annually and is made available online to all parents on 1st September each year, as part of the annual admissions round. Feedback from Welsh Government on the composite prospectus has been incorporated into the Guide. Most parental preferences continue to be met (over 95%). All appeals are held before the end of the academic year and any appeals outside the timetabled admissions process are heard, where practicable, within 30 school days in accordance with the School Appeals Code. Panel members are trained in accordance with the Appeals Code, and advertising, recruitment and training of panel members takes place every 3 years jointly with other admission authorities. This is a cost-effective way of managing recruitment and training and ensures consistency across the region.

Applications for mid-term transfers are made online and every effort is made to process the application to admit pupils within 15 school days. Flintshire's Managed Moves Protocol and a new Fair Access process is currently under review with Headteachers

Music Services for Schools

Music services for Flintshire schools are now delivered by Theatr Clwyd Music which was established in 2020 when Theatr Clwyd adopted the Flintshire Music Service to ensure this discretionary service was protected in the face of significant financial challenges for the Council. Flintshire pupils continue to have access to high quality individual, group and whole class music tuition. Learners have the opportunity to undertake music examinations and progress to county ensembles and national music groups. The Council works in partnership with the Theatr Clwyd Music Trust to maximise the impact of new national funding for music services provided by Welsh Government via the Welsh Local Government Association.



2. Quality of Education Services Areas Summary

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability

- Develop options for in-house provision to support the increasing number of pupils struggling to engage with education due to mental health difficulties and neurodiversity
- Develop new strategic plan for specialist provision
- Increase access to education, employment and training for young people in the Youth Justice Service
- Embed a skills and employment pathway into the Youth Service to ensure a sustainable model for high quality play and youth work delivery
- Continue to strengthen links between the Portfolio and its secondary schools with the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership Board
- Implement year 3 of the 5 year action plan from the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Continue to work collectively across schools and council services to mitigate the impacts of poverty and reduce inequality.
- Continue to embed the Anti Racist Wales Plan in schools
- Continue to embed the Young Flintshire Model

Inspection area 3: Leadership and Management

3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers

The Council benefits from strong leadership with an effective working relationship between professional officers and elected members, led by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. This is demonstrated through the portfolio structure within the Council where Cabinet Lead Members and Chief Officers work closely together to successfully achieve corporate priorities. This is exemplified in key documents such as the Council Plan and Well-Being Plan which are focused on improving outcomes for Flintshire communities and their residents, including children and young people.

Programme Boards are in place for each portfolio and are attended by the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, designated Cabinet Members, Chief Officer and senior managers. The Education and Youth Programme Board provides a purposeful platform for developing the strategic direction of the portfolio, informs policy development and ensures performance oversight. A robust and transparent scrutiny process ensures that there is continuous challenge of performance and evaluation of impact. Cabinet reports, Overview & Scrutiny reports, performance monitoring reports and risk registers are jointly owned by members and officers.

The leadership structure and hierarchy of accountability within the Council, both from an elected member and an officer perspective, is clearly articulated and understood. Roles and responsibilities are clearly documented and there is a constructive working relationship between officers and members that delivers an appropriate level of challenge to the work of the portfolio to ensure the best outcomes for learners but also ensures that positive impacts and successes are celebrated.

Professional and political leadership is used effectively to manage the Council's core business of providing quality and responsive public services in the face of long-term austerity, the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic and challenging budget settlements year on year. This has been clearly demonstrated by the collective problem solving by senior officers and elected members in managing the Council's financial strategy and achieving legally balanced budgets whilst protecting and sustaining services. Financial planning processes are robust with high levels of scrutiny and assurance. Officer and elected members have a track record of working together constructively and with clear purpose on difficult issues. This has been reflected in decisions taken e.g. the management of the school estate and the additional financial support provided for services supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

The Council's approach to strategic leadership is underpinned by public service values. Within the context of delivery of services to children and young people there is a moral commitment to delivery in an inclusive, nurturing and worthwhile way which enables them to successfully embrace adult life and become responsible, independent, economically active and resilient citizens. This is clearly reflected in the structure and priorities of the Council Plan which reflect the Welsh Government's Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles and the Well-being Goals of the Future Generations (Wales) Act and focus on six core areas:

- Poverty
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Green Society and Environment
- Economy
- Personal and Community Wellbeing
- Education and Skills

The Council has a good track record of communicating with residents, service users, its workforce and wider stakeholders through external and internal processes. There is a strong culture of engagement and inclusivity when agreeing priorities. An example of this is the Council Plan and in its work through the Public Service Board. What matters to communities is integral to priority setting and resource allocation. From an educational perspective this can be seen in its engagement work around the budget settlement for schools, in its consultations around school organisational change, in the School Health Research Network surveys and action plans and in other key areas e.g. youth service provision, play and childcare sufficiency.

The Council is proactive in making difficult decisions and where needed, the professional and political leadership intervene effectively to overcome obstacles. Systems leadership and the delegation of resources support the efforts to place the learner first and protect the quality of education and support services. This has been exemplified in the work by all officers and elected members to set legally balanced budgets in the face of significant financial challenge.

Across all education services commissioned by the Council over the value of £25k, social value is considered and included as a key priority. Social value is separately weighted during the procurement process, and supply chain partners are expected to monitor and report against the generation of localised social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being outcomes, in order to evidence value for money and social return on investment. A significant amount of social value is generated through education services including; the creation of local employment and training opportunities, retention of local people in employment, employee upskilling, growth of the local economy through a commitment to local spend, investment in local community needs projects, increased engagement with local schools through investment and volunteer time to assist in the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales, and waste reduction through implementing circular economy solutions to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. Procurement activity across the Education Portfolio in 2023-24 resulted in over £2.4m being achieved in social value outcomes.

There is strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is innovative and pragmatic. Education priorities are exemplified in corporate and portfolio level plans and are regularly scrutinised through the quarterly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. The annual performance report for the period 2023-24 showed 85% of actions on track (RAG – Green) with 15% subject to ongoing monitoring (RAG Amber) but none rated as RAG Red. In terms of performance monitoring, of the 17 measures identified for the portfolio in the Council Plan for 2023-24, 10 were RAG rated as Green, 3 as Amber and 4 as Red. (See Annual Council Plan Report 23-24).

Elected members effectively undertake their statutory duties and make a worthwhile contribution to the development and progress of statutory plans. They also show real commitment to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable learners. Reports presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee are thoroughly reviewed by members and officers are appropriately challenged. Members are also positive in their acknowledgement of the work of officers and the impact of their services on children and young people. There is strong member engagement in the following areas relevant to children and young people:

- The Welsh in Education Forum
- The Corporate Parenting Forum
- The Corporate Safeguarding Panel
- The Schools Standards Quality Board
- The Youth Justice Executive Board
- The Education Consultative Committee

- SACRE
- School Budget Forum
- Regional School Improvement (GwE) Joint Committee

Senior leaders and managers communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools to good effect through a range of forums. For school improvement these include regular meetings with the head teacher community, working through nominated representatives on the primary and secondary Head Teacher Federations, School Performance Monitoring Group and other specific groups e.g. Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator Forum, County Curriculum Steering Group and Emotional Health and Well-Being Strategy Group, Digital Advisory Group and Welsh in Education Strategic Forum. There is also effective monitoring and challenge for other areas of provision through the Youth Justice Executive Board, Children's Services Forum and the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The key objectives of the Public Service Board are clearly aligned with the Council's and Portfolio's strategic improvement plans.

The Council and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and to developing a learning culture in the county, from early years to adulthood. They understand the impact of national and regional priorities and how these impacts on decision making locally for services e.g. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, Education in Wales - Our National Mission, Cymraeg 2050 - Welsh Language Strategy and the North Wales Economic Growth Deal.

Whilst a lean team in terms of personnel, senior leaders in the Education Portfolio work in a collegiate way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together for the young people of Flintshire. They are well respected by elected members, external partners, regional colleagues and school leaders. There are effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. Managers ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities.

The Council works effectively with GwE (Regional School Improvement Service). Since the inception of the service in 2013, there has been a good track record of engagement with the service to support its development and robust scrutiny of the service in holding it accountable for the scope of its delivery on behalf of Flintshire. GwE officers participate fully in Flintshire business and understand and contribute to the vision, aims and objectives of the Council. This is evidenced by the way in which GwE Business Plans support the Portfolio's Business Plan and the Council Plan. Roles and responsibilities of GwE officers in contributing to the delivery of the service within Flintshire are clearly articulated. This mutually supportive, yet challenging culture fostered between GwE and Flintshire officers, helps the Council maintain its focus on outcomes for learners across all phases. The Chief Officer for Education in Flintshire is currently the Lead Director on the GwE Management Board.

During this academic year, Welsh Government initiated a review of the education system in Wales, referred to as the 'Middle Tier Review', in response to concerns about national education standards and issues raised by different stakeholders about the crowded space related to school improvement. This includes schools, local authorities, regional consortia, Estyn, the Education Workforce Council, the National Academy for Educational Leadership and Welsh Government themselves. The decision by Welsh Government to change funding mechanisms and effectively bring to an end the current regional approach to school improvement services from April 2025 will be far reaching. It has generated a significant amount of work, particularly for Council Education Services as new models for supporting school improvement in line with the recommendations from the review have to be developed, approved and implemented in a very short period of time. This work has begun in Flintshire and will be presented to stakeholders and elected members in the autumn term 2024.

All schools have chosen to access the Human Resources, Employment Services and Occupational Health SLA provision which provides for a range of services to assist them in complying with their 'people related' statutory responsibilities and operational/ business obligations. Customer led solutions manifest themselves in a wide range of service delivery including model policy and information provision, confidential telephone and face to face support, Heads Federation and cluster group briefings, conference sessions, case conferences and discrete advisory session. The take up rates, activity levels and repeat business support consistent 'buy back' levels and evidence that these services are valued and contribute significantly to school performance. Relationships between school leaders and central service providers are very good and the ethos is to support school leaders in their management functions.

Relationships between senior Council officers and trade union representatives are good and there is a high degree of engagement on key issues through the Education Consultative Committee and other statutory groups e.g. School Budget Forum. There is also a good level of informal interaction between the Portfolio's HR officers and local union representatives in individual school processes e.g. redundancy, absence management etc.



3.2 Self-Evaluation processes and improvement planning

The Council has a well-established process of evaluation, review and challenge. Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate understanding of the Council's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities.

The Education Portfolio undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities, first at a service level analysing any available data and first-hand evidence to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of individual services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic plans are reviewed effectively and timely interventions made. This is then fed into the Portfolio's overall evaluation of its annual Business Plan and into the Portfolio Annual Self Evaluation Report. This then links to the Council Plan which is regularly reviewed by Chief Officers and senior managers and reported on regularly to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Through its locally commissioned arrangements with GwE, there are clearly defined plans for primary and secondary schools which are agreed between the Chief Education Officer and Senior Manager for School Improvement and GwE Core Lead Officers. Agreed priorities in the business plans are based firmly on the findings of self-evaluation processes within schools. The plans accurately identify key issues and include bespoke improvement plans to address the specific challenges, drawing on the resources of both GwE and the Council's own services. Plans are regularly updated to reflect the outcomes of whole school reviews and support visits commissioned by the Education Portfolio. Progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes is regularly reviewed by the Senior Manager for School Improvement and the GwE Core Leads. This then feeds into termly Quality Board meetings with the Cabinet Member for Education, Chair of Education, Youth and Culture Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth. This ensures that strategic leaders are fully informed on school performance in Flintshire.

The Portfolio works swiftly and effectively with GwE Officers to address 'Schools Causing Concern' and 360° support plans are put in place. Where rapid progress in some schools has been required, Accelerated Improvement Boards (AIB) have been used successfully to oversee progress. When deployed, these Boards meet regularly and include key officers of the Portfolio, GwE and school leaders, including governors. Where required, the Chief Officer has used statutory powers of intervention and established Interim Executive Boards (IEB) to replace traditional governance models. This has been successful in improving the pace of improvement in identified schools. GwE senior officers support the IEB alongside senior LA managers. At the current time there are no schools in Flintshire which have either an Accelerated Improvement Board or an Interim Executive Board.

Where it is available, education officers use data effectively to ensure areas for improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. As a result, the quality of information shared within Flintshire is of a high standard, enabling members to scrutinise and challenge progress effectively. With the Welsh Government decision to remove a range of data sets that were traditionally used for accountability purposes, officers of the Local Authority, Elected Members and GwE Officers continue to enhance ways to effectively monitor performance and measure progress.

Education officers within the Council focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The Portfolio has strong links with the community, has good liaison and communication with schools, engages positively with parents and carers and works effectively with other Council portfolios and external agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. Good examples of this include the statutory processes around provision for children with Additional Learning Needs, the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, the Adult Learning Partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council and provision through the Youth and Youth Justice Services.

The Portfolio engages well with partners, service users and other stakeholders in its evaluation processes and in planning for improvement. Any aspect of school organisational change includes consultation with the children and young people potentially impacted and school leaders are regularly consulted directly or through the Federations on major issues. The Council supports schools to make good use of surveys to improve provision and outcomes e.g. School Health Research Network and Sports Surveys and has engaged learners in evaluative activities in relation to school meal provision. Youth Service provision has been changed directly as a result of young peoples' feedback and the development of 'Young Flintshire' will further enhance the way in which the Council engages with young people on issues that matter to them and to gather their views on Council services.

The Council uses a corporate database for the recording of complaints, concerns and requests for services. A senior manager within the Portfolio is the link officer for complaints. Parental complaints about schools have to be re-directed back to the individual school to be dealt with via their own complaints' procedures. Complainants are advised of the correct procedure and as necessary, the Portfolio provides support to schools on ensuring its procedures are in line with the national guidance. On-line complaints training is available to all governing bodies. During 2023-24 there were 12 formal complaints directed to the Portfolio on a variety of issues e.g. admissions, school transports, inclusion provision, school closure in bad weather, youth services and youth justice provision. Two were upheld. There were no complaints in relation to education services in Flintshire investigated by the Ombudsman in 2023-2024.

The Council is compliant with the requirement regarding partnership agreements with its schools.

3.3 Professional Learning

Relationships between the Education Portfolio and schools are strong and productive. Regular head teacher meetings and the partnership groups in the consultative structure form an effective mechanism for raising issues and agreeing actions to tackle them. Flintshire benefits from well-established learning networks within and across schools, and more widely across the region, enabling schools to develop and share their professional knowledge. Working in clusters and alliances has developed well in Flintshire over the last few years with all schools engaging in this co-operative learning approach. Key areas such as Additional Learning Needs, Digital Learning and Welsh Language have all benefitted from a cluster training and support model.

Flintshire schools engage effectively with the range of professional development opportunities provided by GwE and the Council for school leaders, teachers and support staff at all levels. Flintshire staff have access to a comprehensive learning continuum provided by GwE which delivers appropriate training at all stages of professional development, from Newly Qualified Teacher to Executive Headteacher. Data shows that the take up of these opportunities from Flintshire schools is very positive. Staff within the Education Portfolio access professional development opportunities within GwE where appropriate e.g. curriculum reform.

Portfolio officers and senior leads from the regional school improvement service support governing bodies with senior leadership appointments. New and acting headteachers are then provided with mentoring by local headteachers and portfolio leads, as well as on-going support from the primary learning adviser via network meetings and school visits.

The Portfolio facilitates a professional network for deputy heads from across Flintshire primary schools. The network meets half termly and during the last academic year, seventeen primary colleagues from different schools shared good practice on aspects including positive behaviour management, assessment and curriculum planning. The senior Primary Learning Adviser brokers shadowing visits for deputies to other schools and signposts coaching opportunities to those seeking to further develop their leadership roles.

As part of the national Hub programme for digital learning, the Portfolio performs the intelligent client function for Ed Tech across all schools. This work is led by the Hwb Board, jointly chaired by the Chief Officer for Education and Youth and the Chief Officer for Governance. Annual meetings are held with all schools to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of the HWB programme and that sustainability of the IT infrastructure remains a key priority.

The portfolio was able to recruit for a new post of digital learning adviser from September 2023. The impact of this additional capacity has been immediate, focusing on enabling schools to develop their provision in line with the digital competence framework. All schools have been supported to develop their own digital strategy. The digital learning adviser facilitates the sharing of effective practice through regular digital leader meetings. Teachers have access to a comprehensive support website that provides guidance on how to use all the digital platforms they need. Feedback from practitioners is positive, with evidence of increased confidence in trying new activities that clearly targets the DCF.

The digital officer has supported schools to plan for sustainability and is engaged in monitoring the provision of resources across schools to ensure parity of provision for learners.

Bespoke professional development is provided for portfolio education colleagues on digital learning and recent technology. Flintshire has allocated funding during this academic year for schools and the English as an Additional Language Service to continue to support pupils who are digitally disadvantaged. This

should enable up to 100 learners if required, to have additional resources to learn at home or within school to catch up and extend their learning and skills.

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The Council takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners. These include effective partnerships between the Council, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Youth Justice Board, Coleg Cambria, Wrexham Glyndwr University, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and other local education authorities.

Partnership working between the Portfolio, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is good. They successfully promote co-operation and enable school governors, Coleg Cambria, employers and the Council to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners.

The school improvement team works collaboratively to support schools in accessing appropriate services and educational activities. During the last academic year, ten schools provided adult community learning sessions and ten schools ran well-being sessions with a variety of mentors, introducing projects such as Foster Bear, working in partnership with social services. The portfolio makes good use of external funding streams and have provided innovative activities linked to improving wellbeing for over 25 service children and their peers through a successful 'Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru grant.



One priority in the portfolio business plan has been to support schools to further improve provision for outdoor learning. During the last academic year over 40 practitioners have attended outdoor network meetings run by the primary officer in conjunction with colleagues from natural resources Wales and other key partners. The aim has been to collaborate on a draft outdoor learning policy for Flintshire schools which will be completed by autumn 2024. This work has created a better understanding amongst practitioners and consistency in the offer for pupils across the county within and beyond their school grounds.

Work has continued on the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus for RVE for primary schools with over 50 practitioners attending network meetings run by the primary officer and key partners from SACRE/ SAC, Wrexham and the Diocese of St Asaph . The aim of the network is to share information, resources, good practice case studies and key information from the RVE documentation in the new curriculum. This has created a more common understanding of how to teach the new aspects of RVE such as pluralism and equality.

The Welsh Advisory Team in the Portfolio actively encourages school staff at all levels, including head teachers, to engage in the Welsh Government sabbatical training programmes for practitioners who wish to teach through the medium of Welsh or wish to improve their Welsh-language skills. This is a key component of the Council's Welsh in Education Plan which has been approved by Welsh Ministers. Take up across the different sabbatical options are good and Flintshire staff represent a sizeable proportion of each cohort. This is extending the number of employees with improved Welsh language skills, which is contributing to the improving quality of provision for learners in both English and Welsh medium schools.

The professional learning offer supports current school leaders across Flintshire but also invests in developing leaders of the future. Subscription rates to the NPQH and Aspiring Heads courses from

Flintshire staff are strong. Newly appointed and acting headteachers are supported through development programmes and are also allocated mentors and leadership coaches.

Networking and peer-to-peer work is a positive feature in Flintshire schools. This collaborative work has led to a shared understanding of what constitutes good leadership. Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. These forums support strong effective communication and nurture a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges.

The Council promotes professional learning for its core portfolio team through structured learning opportunities, most visible through the Flintshire Academi Infonet, which provides learning and e-learning modules on leadership and management, personal development, specific professional development, equality and diversity, Welsh language, health and safety and ICT. Education Portfolio staff also access training opportunities offered by GwE e.g. the development of the new curriculum.

The Council has a well-established and successful Trainee (Apprentice scheme). The Council recruit local people every year to undertake work-based qualifications. The most recent outcomes relating to the scheme remains very positive.

- **93%** of those who have undertaken an FCC Apprenticeship have had a positive outcome.
 - o The percentage of those gaining employment within the Authority after completing the programme **80%**
 - o The percentage of those gaining employment externally **10%**
 - o The percentage of those moving on to Higher Education or other professional training programmes **3%**

After a successful recruitment campaign in 2023, 21 apprentices across a range of disciplines commenced work placements in September 2023.

All staff benefit from the annual appraisal scheme which ensures personal and professional objectives are linked to the annual corporate service and portfolio plans. Centrally employed teaching staff have statutory performance management. The process enables employees and managers to explore individual strengths and identify wider opportunities for these to be utilised effectively. These opportunities support succession planning at a time where central services remain under pressure from financial and recruitment/retention challenges, particularly post-pandemic and also focus strongly on staff wellbeing.

As part of its People Strategy, the Council takes a proactive approach to talent spotting and succession planning. Senior managers regularly identify officers who have potential and signpost them to learning opportunities to develop their skills. Many officers within the Portfolio have accessed professional development e.g. Institute of Leadership & Management qualifications and NVQs through a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria. Senior managers are identified for external learning opportunities through Academi Wales and SOLACE (Chief Executives' professional association).

Senior managers network and share good practice through quarterly Flintshire Academi sessions which not only provide key updates but also are the driver for developing cross-cutting policies and strategies e.g. the Council's People Strategy and Carbon Reduction Strategy. Specifically within the Portfolio, there are termly workshops for service managers to share updates, future plans and engage in consultation and professional development opportunities. There is a comprehensive online training programme available for all staff of the Council to access on corporate training priorities e.g. safeguarding, GDPR, leadership and management etc. Networking by senior managers through representation on various groups of the

Association of Directors of Education in Wales ensures service planning is informed by current and best practice from across Wales. The Chief Officer for Education in Flintshire was elected to the Chair of ADEW for a two year period from May 2023 and is providing strategic leadership at a national level.

During the academic year 2023-24, the Senior Manager for School Improvement was seconded to Estyn for a fixed number of working days, at their specific request. This is an acknowledgement by Estyn of the post holder's skills and knowledge and the regard she is held in by the sector. The post holder successfully contributed to a number Estyn teams undertaking inspection activity on the Local Government Education Services framework.

In more recent times, and particularly since the pandemic, there have been increasing challenges in recruiting into key posts both in the Education Portfolio and in schools. Educational psychology, youth work, youth justice work and IT systems administration have all experienced difficulties recruiting appropriately qualified staff with adverts having to be go out multiple times and Head teachers are reporting challenges in recruiting skilled classroom support staff as well as key roles such as caretakers. In the secondary sector there are recruitment challenges in key subjects including Welsh, Mathematics and the science subjects. Recruitment in the Welsh medium sector is even more challenging. The recruitment difficulties in relation to school cooks, catering staff and cleaners has also had an adverse impact on the Council's key partner, NEWydd, which has sometimes made their service delivery to schools challenging at times.

3.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a corporate priority set out in the annual Council Plan and the Council has robust arrangements in place across all areas. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for all council services to safeguard and protect children and adults, ensuring that all are fully aware of their responsibilities. This policy applies to Flintshire County Council employees, councillors, volunteers and organisations commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council. Flintshire County Council is a member of the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (NWSCB) and North Wales Safeguarding Adults' Board (NWSAB).

The Corporate Safeguarding Panel is well established and includes representation from all portfolios, including Education and Youth, to ensure that all services integrate safeguarding awareness into the way they work. The panel is jointly Chaired by the Chief Officer for Social Services and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth. It receives information regarding the working practices and procedures of every service in the Council, providing assurance that the services are meeting their duties in accordance with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines and reports to Cabinet on an annual basis.

The Chief Officer for Education and Youth ensures that all the statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults receive due consideration and that effective safeguarding arrangements operate within the Education and Youth portfolio at the three levels of responsibility of strategic, support and operational.

In order to further sharpen the focus on safeguarding, the Education Portfolio established its own Safeguarding Panel, and this is attended by senior managers within Education and Youth and with representation from Children's Services. It has clearly defined terms of reference, an action plan and ensures that communication up to, and down from, the Corporate Safeguarding Panel is effective.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement has the lead strategic responsibility for Safeguarding in the Portfolio and is the designated contact for officers and schools. The Learning Adviser for Health,

Wellbeing and Safeguarding is the deputy designated contact who provides operational activity support, including attendance at national and regional safeguarding meetings. This officer also co-ordinates training for schools, governors and portfolio staff and provides model policies for schools. There is effective communication between Education and Youth and other portfolios in the Council as well as with external partners. An annual safeguarding report is presented to the joint Health and Social Care/Education, Youth and Culture Scrutiny Committee to provide members with the assurance that safeguarding functions are being appropriately delivered and having a positive impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Portfolio has appropriate arrangements for the strategic planning for safeguarding within both the core education service and schools, which includes monitoring. The safeguarding model policy for schools is updated annually in line with revised national guidance (Keeping Learners Safe and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures).

A Flintshire Secondary Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) Forum was established in October 2023 to ensure that a continuing dialogue exists to support the development of robust safeguarding arrangements in Flintshire secondary schools, and the effective implementation of the Welsh Government's statutory safeguarding children in education guidance, Keeping Learners Safe. The terms of reference set out the purpose of the group and the proposed governance arrangements. The group is jointly chaired by a secondary school DSP and a Children's Services Team Manager. It is the intention to establish an equivalent primary forum and advice has been sought through head teacher colleagues about the most effective means of establishing this for the next academic year.

The DSP forum has been an effective means of engaging DSPs and senior managers in children's services and has had a significant impact. One proposal of a direct phone line for DSPs into children's services has been actioned and after an initial successful pilot with secondary schools in the spring term, has been opened up to primary schools in the summer term 2024. This has resulted in DSPs acquiring support sooner and enabled more timely decision making in order to safeguard children. As a result, DSP's have further strengthened working relationships with colleagues in children's services.

A structured rolling programme of 'core' safeguarding training is in place which includes Level 3 training for new designated safeguarding persons (DSPs) and refresher training for existing DSPs, Level 2 safeguarding for managers and senior leaders. Governor awareness training is also delivered as well as Ask and Act. Materials and support are provided to DSPs annually to deliver regular basic awareness training to all school staff.

In 2022 Social Care Wales developed the National Safeguarding training, learning and development Framework and also the National Safeguarding training, learning and development Standards. There is an expectation that organisations in Wales incorporate the standards into their safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure practitioners understand their responsibilities relevant to the group they are in. This has been underway in the local authority already and during the last 12 months the current training offer for schools has been reviewed and mapped against the standards.



In order to support the review of the existing training offer and the implementation of the national training standards, a sub-group of the DSP Forum specifically focusing on training has been formed. The updated training offer will be implemented as part of a phased approach from September 2024.

Professional Development - Safeguarding 2023-2024

Autumn term 2023 - 8 courses (138 attendees)

3 x level 2 courses

3 x level 3 Refresher courses

2 x level 3 Full course

Spring term 2024 - 7 courses (106 attendees)

3 x level 2 courses

2 x level 3 Refresher courses

2 x level 3 Full course

Summer term 2024 - 9 courses (150 attendees)

3 x level 2 courses

4 x level 3 Refresher courses

4 x level 3 Full course

During the 23/24 academic year, a total of 394 staff have accessed Levels 2 and 3 safeguarding training from 24 courses. This is an increase in the number of courses delivered and number of attendees in comparison with previous years:

2023/24 - 394 staff from 24 courses.

2022/23 - 371 staff from 23 courses.

2021/22 - 299 staff from 17 courses.

2020/21 - 262 staff from 15 courses.

The level 2 and 3 courses (including refresher and full course for new safeguarding leads) continue to be delivered online. Colleagues in Social Services continue to provide an incredibly valuable input into level 3 refresher courses and training for new safeguarding leads. Feedback from headteachers confirm the training and support for schools is welcomed and effective. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each training delivery and the information is reviewed on an individual basis in addition to any immediate response that can be implemented. Feedback is also included in the annual report to the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Children's Board.

Safeguarding updates are incorporated into local authority headteacher meetings and into planned LA training programmes for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and new and acting headteachers. In addition, key safeguarding themes are addressed on a rolling programme including Prevent and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence (VAWDASV). There are strong relationships with key local partners including North Wales Police, Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (RASA) and the NSPCC.

The Portfolio and schools operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out. All schools are routinely reminded of their responsibilities under Section 28 of the Children Act and as outlined in the Welsh Government guidance - Keeping Learners Safe.

There is regular monitoring of safeguarding activity by the local authority through audit procedures. Schools are required to complete an annual monitoring report for school leaders alongside a safeguarding self-evaluation (audit) tool. Information from returns is reviewed and results shared with headteacher federations and individual schools annually. Support is prioritised accordingly; either on an individual school level or through a broader approach, including training or policy development or updates.

Between April 2022 and July 2024, 33 primary schools, one Pupil Referral Unit and six secondary schools were inspected. All schools except one, were judged to have safeguarding arrangements that meet requirements and provide no cause for concern. The school with an identified recommendation to improve safeguarding processes was quickly supported to develop and implement an action plan in response. The school was able to confirm then to Estyn that this recommendation had been addressed. Three primary schools had health and safety issues relating to site security identified and the local authority provided advice and support to those schools in quickly responding to the issues raised.

The strategic lead for safeguarding and the learning adviser work effectively in partnership with managers from social services and the human resources team in the management of allegations against members of staff from schools. Online safety is an area regularly considered by the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Council actively encourages all schools to use the 360° Safe Cymru Tool and the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme. The IT Service Level Agreement provides for web filtering in schools.

3.5 Use of resources

Flintshire's response to funding reductions in recent years has been measured and appropriate. The Council has adopted a systematic approach to ensure that efficiencies are secured across all services and the organisation has embraced alternative models of delivery where appropriate. There are plenty of examples of good practice and innovation within the Council.

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Council despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the Council's allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been generally protected from efficiency reductions in recent years until the difficult decision taken for 2023-24 to cut 3% from the earmarked uplift for schools, reducing it to 5.1% rather than the 8.1% originally planned. Risks related to the impact of poor funding on the quality of education services have been clearly set out and are understood by elected members and head teachers. The Council reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that funding is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

The school funding formula is regularly reviewed in consultation with schools and reported to the School Budget Forum. Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are effectively managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the Council and its schools alone could not provide.

The Council is committed to an ambitious school modernisation investment programme by maximising Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities funding (previously 21st Century Schools) and its own capital funding. Flintshire is also a Pathfinder Council for the new Mutual Investment Model created by Welsh Government to deliver a new 3-16 learning campus in Mynydd Isa which will be the Council's



first net zero carbon school in operation. The Council has also secured funding in recent times through Welsh Government's additional grant funding streams for Small and Rural Schools Infant Class Sizes, Welsh Medium, Childcare, Community Learning and Community Facilities and Additional Learning Needs. The Council has also maximised its investment programme through seeking additional external funding through Sports Wales to support schools to improve their facilities. The Council has a positive reputation for delivering quality projects on time and within budget.

The Council currently has an estimated Repair & Maintenance (R&M) of approximately £10.6m, which is a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 Strategic Outline Programme and has been achieved through targeted capital investment. However, the level of R&M remains a risk and is strategically linked to the rolling programme of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

In response to a recommendation in its Estyn inspection of 2019, the Council had made significant progress in reducing the number of schools in deficit. It refreshed its policy for the management and monitoring of schools' deficits which is robustly applied. There are effective working relationships between senior council officers and school leaders to ensure an appropriate level of both challenge and support to control spending and reduce deficits in schools.

With the level of inflationary pressures experienced again over the 23-24 financial year and a further 3% cut to school budgets in 24-25, the number of schools declaring a deficit position has increased as expected. This was also exacerbated by the Council decision to remove the additional funding of £0.750m it had set aside in the budget to support secondary schools in financial difficulty as it was unaffordable for 2024-25. The overall level of reserves held by Flintshire schools at March 31st 2024 was £4.125m, a decrease of £3.117m from the previous year – a reduction of 43.04%. The number of schools forecasting a deficit position by March 2025 has increased to 27, from 8 schools who ended the financial year in deficit in March 2024. Looking forward to future years, it appears that setting a balanced budget is becoming increasingly difficult across all sectors and that there is a risk around deficit balances becoming greater in the short to medium term.

Demographic changes in the distribution of pupils across the primary and secondary sectors have taken place in recent years, with secondary pupil numbers increasing whilst primary pupil numbers declined. This resulted in a redistribution of funding between sectors. Overall, in 2024/25, the fall in number of learners across sectors, led to a net reduction in funding to schools of £0.675m.

This downward trend in numbers of learners is forecast to continue, however it is anticipated that pupil numbers across both the primary and secondary sectors are likely to decrease, which will have a further negative financial impact on school funding, going forward.

Forecasted pupil numbers, for the next 3 years, are shown in Table 7 below and this highlights the decline in pupil numbers across both sectors. This is reflective of the declining birth rates in Flintshire.

Table 20: Pupil Forecasts

Sector	September 2024	September 2025	September 2026
Primary	11,099	10,835	10,641
Secondary	9,538	9,382	9,182

This worsening financial position is also reflected in a significant rise in the number of redundancies and other reductions in teaching and support staff across the school network at the end of this academic year.

Table 21: Redundancies 23-24

	No. of schools that commenced formal redundancy processes	Voluntary Teaching Redunancy notices issued for 2024/25*	Voluntary Support Staff Redunancy notices issued for 2024/25*	Complusory Teaching Redunancy notices issued for 2024/25*	Complusory Support Staff Redunancy notices issued for 2024/25*
Primary	5	2	2	0	0
Secondary	3	2	1	1	4
Specialist	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8	4	3	1	4

*as at 31st August 2024

A data gathering exercise with Flintshire schools in the summer term, to which over 80% of Headteachers responded to, identified the range of difficult financial decisions schools are having to make in order to manage their budgets. These cuts in posts and hours will obviously impact on the offer for children and young people and increase the workload of other staff in schools:

- Total Number of Fixed Term Contracts not renewed: **122**
- Total Number of leavers not replaced: **197.8**
- Total Number of maternity/paternity leaves not covered: **27.3**
- Total Number of posts where hours have been reduced: **118.75**

Where balances are above the recommended levels, schools are required to submit spending plans to clearly demonstrate how resources are being invested appropriately for the benefit of current learners. An annual report on school balances is presented to the Council's Education, Youth and Culture Committee and the Audit & Governance Committee for member scrutiny in September of each year.

The Portfolio's services are heavily dependent on funding from Welsh Government through the Local Authority Education Grant and the Education Improvement Grant and any reduction/removal of these grants poses a risk. This is carefully monitored through the risk management processes within the portfolio and more widely across the Council. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that grant funding is maximised to support strategic priorities and deliver quality services and drive positive change. Late notification from external funders for some services e.g. Youth Justice can make strategic planning difficult and create uncertainty within the workforce, impacting on recruitment and retention. In the best examples of targeted funding streams, early bespoke interventions with families make measurable contributions to improved educational outcomes.

There are detailed and rigorous financial management processes across the Council and regular reviews of portfolio budgets to ensure value for money and the identification of efficiencies. Cost pressures and other financial risks e.g. price volatility and inflation, are closely monitored. Over the last fifteen years the Council has taken £110m from its operating budget. The Education and Youth Portfolio has delivered £3.3m of efficiencies through the business planning process over the last eight years.

These efficiencies have been achieved whilst ensuring high quality services continue to meet need. Through regular portfolio budget management processes, senior managers take responsibility for their services budgets and are well supported by the corporate finance team. However, the Portfolio's budget has extremely limited capacity for any further efficiencies to support the Council's medium term financial strategy. It is also facing an unprecedented demand for services than ever before, particularly in relation to Additional Learning Needs and Education other than at School provision.

With a significant proportion of its budget used to commission the regional school improvement service, it is important that the Council is reassured that GwE has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation about financial arrangements are effective with both core funding and grant-expenditure kept under regular review by GwE, the host local authority, the Joint Committee and all Chief Executives across the region. Detailed work has been undertaken to align grant allocations with priorities. Supporting Improvement Advisers to challenge schools on their use of grant funding to improve pupil outcomes remains a priority.



In January 2024, there was a Ministerial decision to reroute grant funding from regional consortia to local authorities for 2024/25, as a result of the Middle Tier Review. Flintshire County Council supported in full the Ministerial request to ensure appropriate levels of funding were passported back to GwE to enable the ongoing delivery of effective school improvement services for the financial year whilst new models of delivery are developed and approved. Services for schools have continued to be delivered effectively through the Local Authority Commissioned Plan. A new model based on Welsh Government guidance is in the process of being developed for approval in the Autumn Term 2024.

Overall, the Council's education services, including schools, continue to provide good value for money.

3. Leadership & Management Summary

Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability

- Maintain rigorous budgetary monitoring and management processes to protect the delivery of quality education services in times of extreme budget challenge to mitigate adverse impacts on school performance and learner outcomes.
- Embed the new model of school improvement services in line with the requirements of the WG Middle Tier Review.
- Further develop and embed the Belonging Strategy as the Portfolio's strategic approach to its delivery of education services.
- Continue to improve the school estate through the School Modernisation Strategy and the maximisation of Welsh Government funding streams.





CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 and half-year complaints performance 2024-25
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 for Flintshire County Council. The Annual Letter provides an overview of the performance of the Council in relation to complaints of maladministration received between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

This report also provides an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of Flintshire County Council in the first half 2024-25 (1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024).

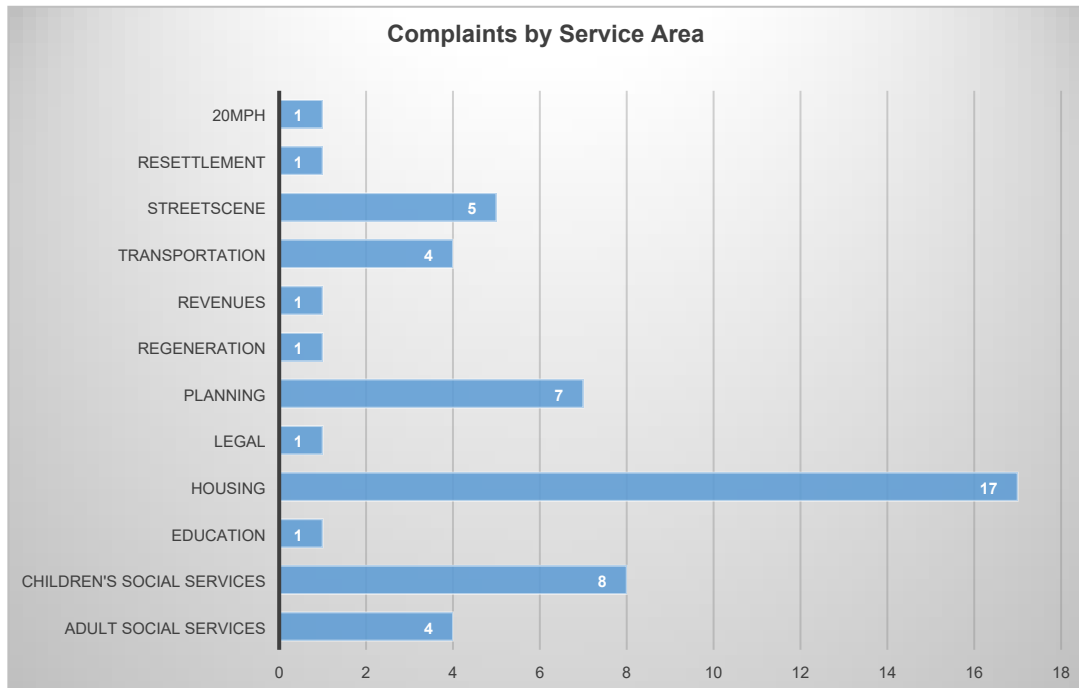
RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet notes the positive annual performance of the Council in respect of complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during 2023-24.
2	That Cabinet notes the half year performance of the Council (2024-25) in respect of complaints received in line with the Council's Concerns and Complaints policy.
3	That Cabinet supports the priorities outlined in paragraph 1.25.

REPORT DETAILS

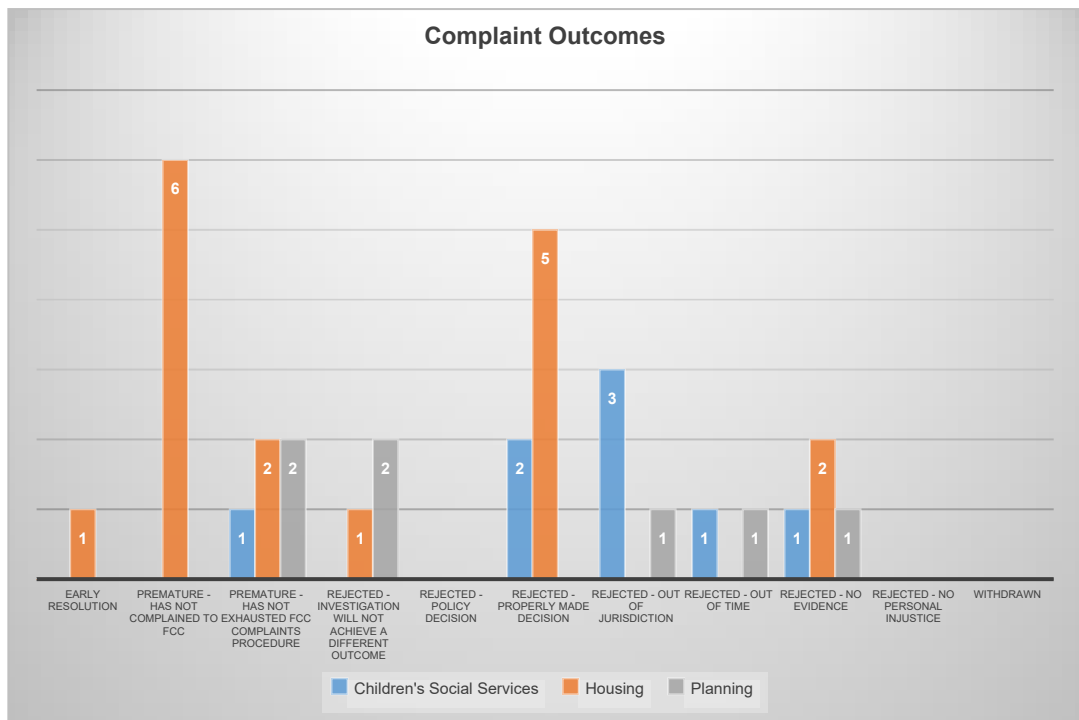
1.00	EXPLAINING THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER 2023-24
1.01	The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (“Ombudsman”), Michelle Morris, published her Annual Letter 2023-24 in September 2024. The Annual Letter considers complaints about public services, complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members and standards for complaints handling by public bodies in Wales.
1.02	The Annual Letter coincides with the Ombudsman’s Annual Report – “A New Chapter Unfolds” which highlights during 2023-24 the Ombudsman’s office considered and closed more enquiries and complaints than ever before. The number of people asking the Ombudsman’s office for help increased by 17% overall compared to 2022-23. The Ombudsman reports that her office has seen an increase in caseload of 37% since 2019 and acknowledges the considerable pressures on public services which have led to that rise.
1.03	The Ombudsman received broadly the same number of complaints about local authority services in 2023-24 (1,108 complaints) and the Ombudsman intervened (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) with a similar proportion of complaints 14% compared to 13% the previous year.
1.04	Appended to this report is a link to the Annual Letter detailing Flintshire’s performance and comparative data. The following paragraphs provide a summary of performance and additional context in response to the findings.
1.05	Section A – Complaints Received Whilst the Ombudsman has reported broadly the same number of complaints about local authorities in 2023-24, Flintshire’s complaints reduced by 22% from 65 to 51. This is an indication that Flintshire’s commitment to delivering better outcomes for customers is coming to fruition. Interestingly, over the last three years complaints to the Ombudsman have reduced by 48% (99 in 2021-22 and 65 last year), bringing the number of complaints against Flintshire in line with the Welsh average (50), a positive step considering Flintshire has been higher than the Welsh average for the past few years.
1.06	Section B – Received by Subject The Ombudsman provides a breakdown of complaints by subject. However, these subjects are universal complaint categories for Councils across Wales and do not accurately reflect local records and organisational structures e.g. a complaint about school transport is categorised as “Education” by the Ombudsman but locally it is referred to “Transportation” who manage school transport.
1.07	An analysis of the Annual Letter against local data illustrates a more accurate record of complaints by subject:

Chart 1



1.08 The data in Chart 1 illustrates that Housing, Children’s Services and Planning received the highest proportion of complaints; the outcome of these cases is illustrated in Chart 2 below:

Chart 2

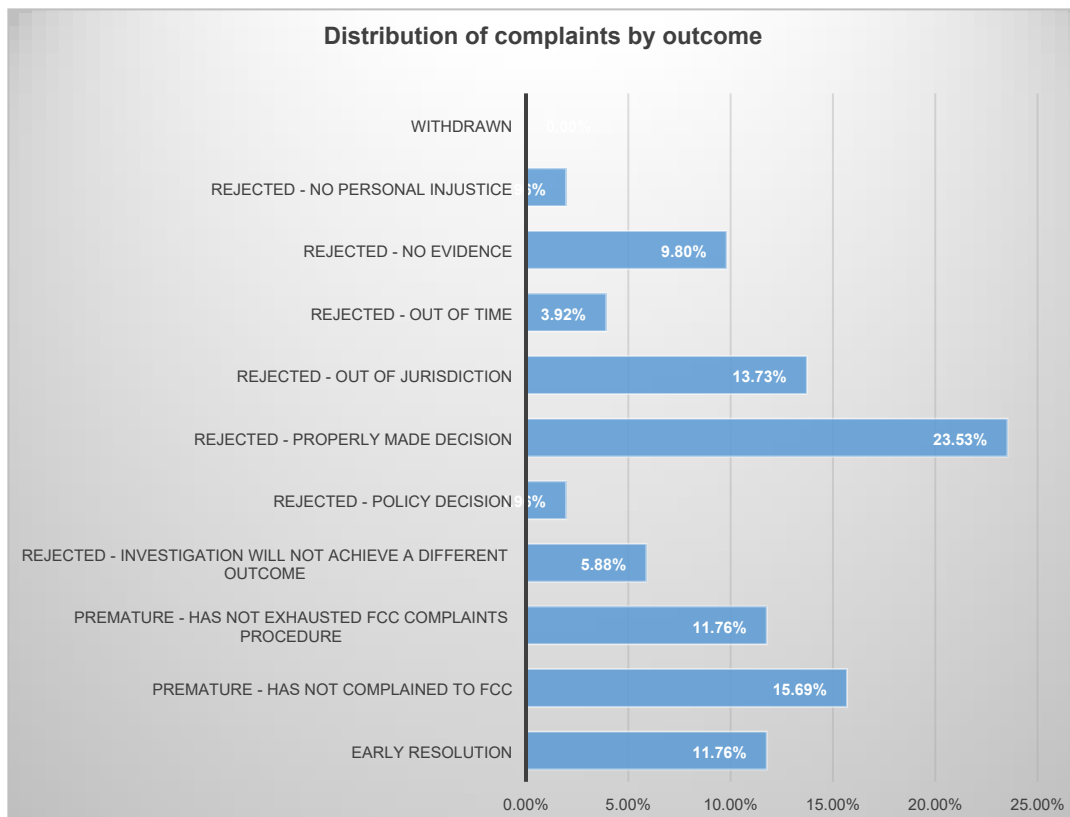


1.09 Section C – Complaint Outcomes

Flintshire has a higher-than-average number of complaints closed after initial consideration (45 or 10%) which is higher than last year and demonstrates an improvement in the quality of responses thus removing the

need for the Ombudsman to intervene, and more cases closed without action. Chart 3 below illustrates the distribution of complaints by outcome:

Chart 3



1.10 Chart 3 highlights the main reason for rejecting complaints is due to a properly made decision i.e. despite a complainant raising their dissatisfaction, the Council acted in accordance with policy in reaching a decision. The second reason is complaints being brought to the Ombudsman prematurely. In 2023-24 the number of premature complaints fell by 21% which is testament to work undertaken by Customer Service to promote information and improve advice to complainants, therefore reducing these premature cases.

1.11 Section D – Cases with PSOW Intervention

86% (49) of all complaints against Flintshire were rejected by the Ombudsman. Eight complaints required some action through “early resolution”, examples include:

- Failure to advise the complainant of their right to escalate to Step 2 – resolved to escalate to Step 2.
- Failure to provide information requested – resolved to apologise and provide the information.

The Ombudsman did not instigate any investigation in 2023-24 and therefore no reports were issued against the Council.

1.12 Section E – Compliance Performance Comparison

	<p>This section is new and is designed to ensure compliance with recommendations agreed by the Council. In 2023-24 a total of 17 recommendations were due, the importance of this criteria is that recommendations have been implemented and the Ombudsman has been notified. The latter point can lead to the idea that recommendations have not been implemented. The Ombudsman prepared the data in early April 2024 and since publishing the Annual Letter, all recommendations are now closed.</p>																																																						
1.13	<p>Section F – Code of Conduct Complaints</p> <p>This section of the Annual Letter is the remit of the Standards Committee.</p>																																																						
1.14	<p>Section G – Town/Community Council Code of Conduct Complaints</p> <p>This section of the Annual Letter is the remit of the Standards Committee.</p>																																																						
1.15	<p>Reflecting on the Annual Letter 2023-24, Flintshire’s achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the number complaints made to the Ombudsman – down from 65 to 51 (22%); • A reduction in complaints over the last three years – from 99 to 65 then to 51 (48%); • A reduction in the number of premature complaints to the Ombudsman – down from 36.92% to 15.69%; • An increase and higher-than-average number of complaints closed after initial consideration – 45 i.e. 10%; • No investigations for the second year in a run. 																																																						
1.16	Flintshire County Council Complaints 1 April – 30 September 2024																																																						
1.17	<p>The Council received 363 complaints between 1 April – 30 September 2024 which is lower than the same time last year (448) and 74% were considered within target which is broadly the same as last year (76%). Encouragingly 92.28% of all complaints were considered within 20 working days which is a slight improvement on the previous year (91%).</p>																																																						
1.18	<p>Chart 4 – Summary of complaints performance</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #212529; color: white;"> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">1 April - 30 September 2024</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">Overall</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">CEO</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">E&Y</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">Gov</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">H&C</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">PE&E</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">SS</th> <th style="font-size: 0.8em;">S&T</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">No. of complaints received</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">363</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">5</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">9</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">19</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">90</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">24</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">18</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">198</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #212529; color: white;"> <td colspan="9" style="font-size: 0.8em;">69</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">Number of complaints open and overdue</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">7 1.93%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">1 1.11%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">1 5.56%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">5 2.53%</td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #212529; color: white;"> <td colspan="9" style="font-size: 0.8em;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">Number of complaints open and nearing target date</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">7 1.93%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">1 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">2 2.22%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">1 4.17%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">0 0.00%</td> <td style="font-size: 0.8em;">3 1.52%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1 April - 30 September 2024	Overall	CEO	E&Y	Gov	H&C	PE&E	SS	S&T	No. of complaints received	363	5	9	19	90	24	18	198	69									Number of complaints open and overdue	7 1.93%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	1 1.11%	0 0.00%	1 5.56%	5 2.53%	0									Number of complaints open and nearing target date	7 1.93%	1 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	2 2.22%	1 4.17%	0 0.00%	3 1.52%
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Number of complaints closed late (over 10 working days)	81	1	1	0	20	10	3	46
	22.31%	20.00%	11.11%	0.00%	22.22%	41.67%	16.67%	23.23%
Number of complaints within target (10 working days)	268	3	8	19	67	13	14	144
	73.83%	60.00%	88.89%	100.00%	74.44%	54.17%	77.78%	72.73%

1.19 Frontline services in Streetscene & Transportation and Housing & Communities received the highest proportion of complaints in the first half of 2024-25 which is a normal trend. It should also be noted that the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 and Social Services Complaints Procedure Regulations 2014, requires Local Authorities to maintain a separate representations and complaints procedure for social services functions. Social Services' complaints are reported to the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.20 The following charts provide an overview of complaint themes and outcomes in 2024 compared to the previous year. A breakdown of complains data by portfolio is provided in Appendix 1.

Chart 5 – Complaint Themes

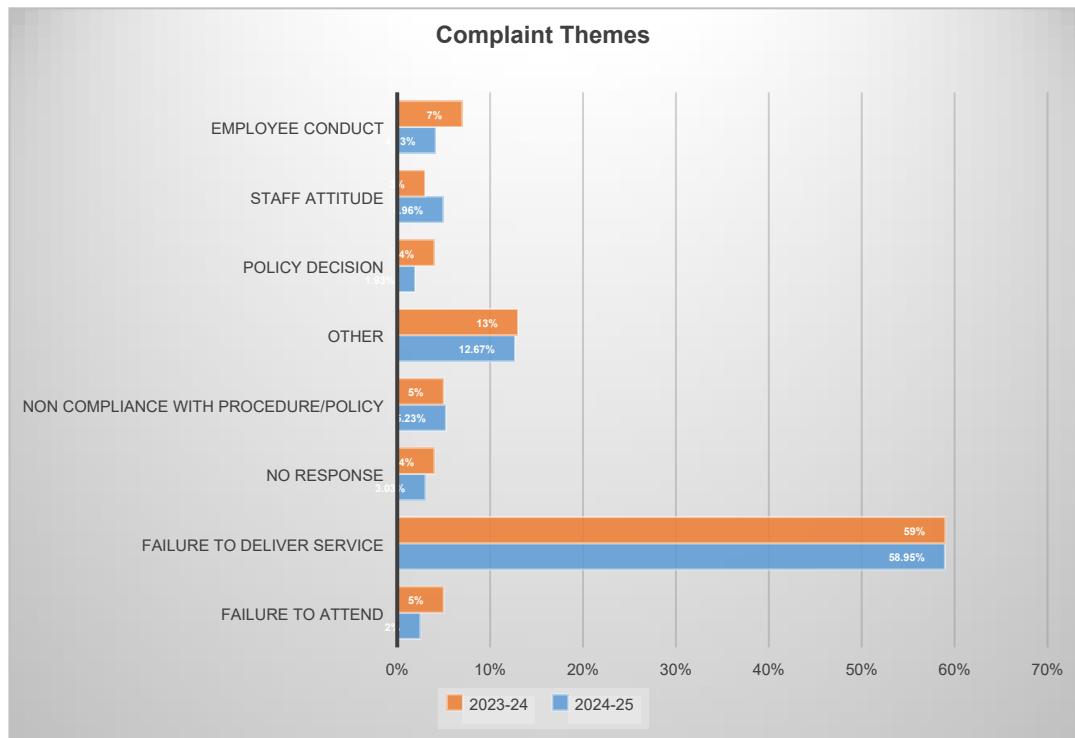


Chart 6 – Complaint Outcomes

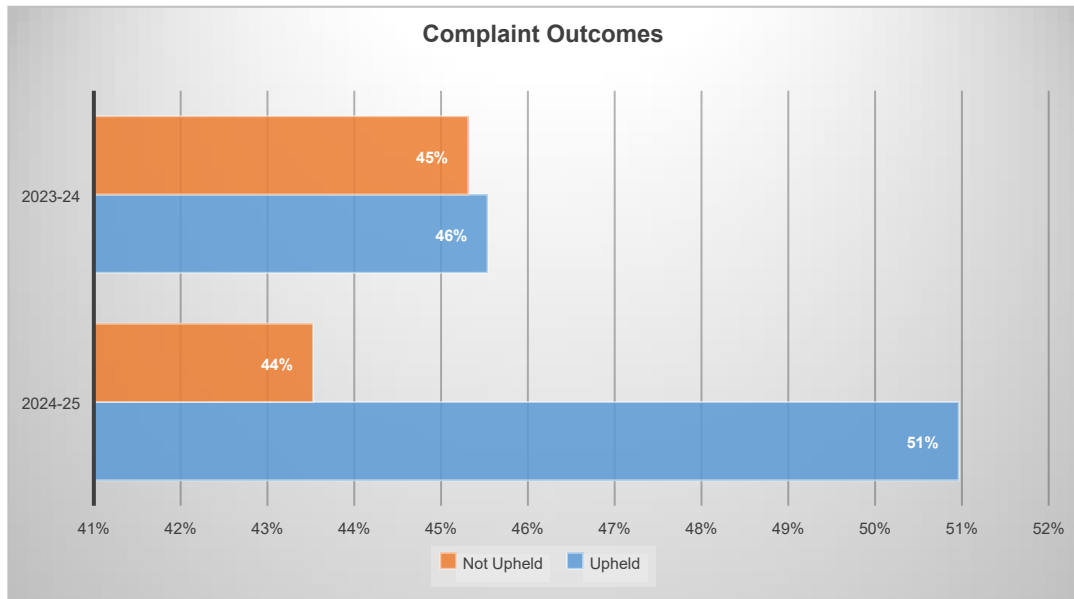
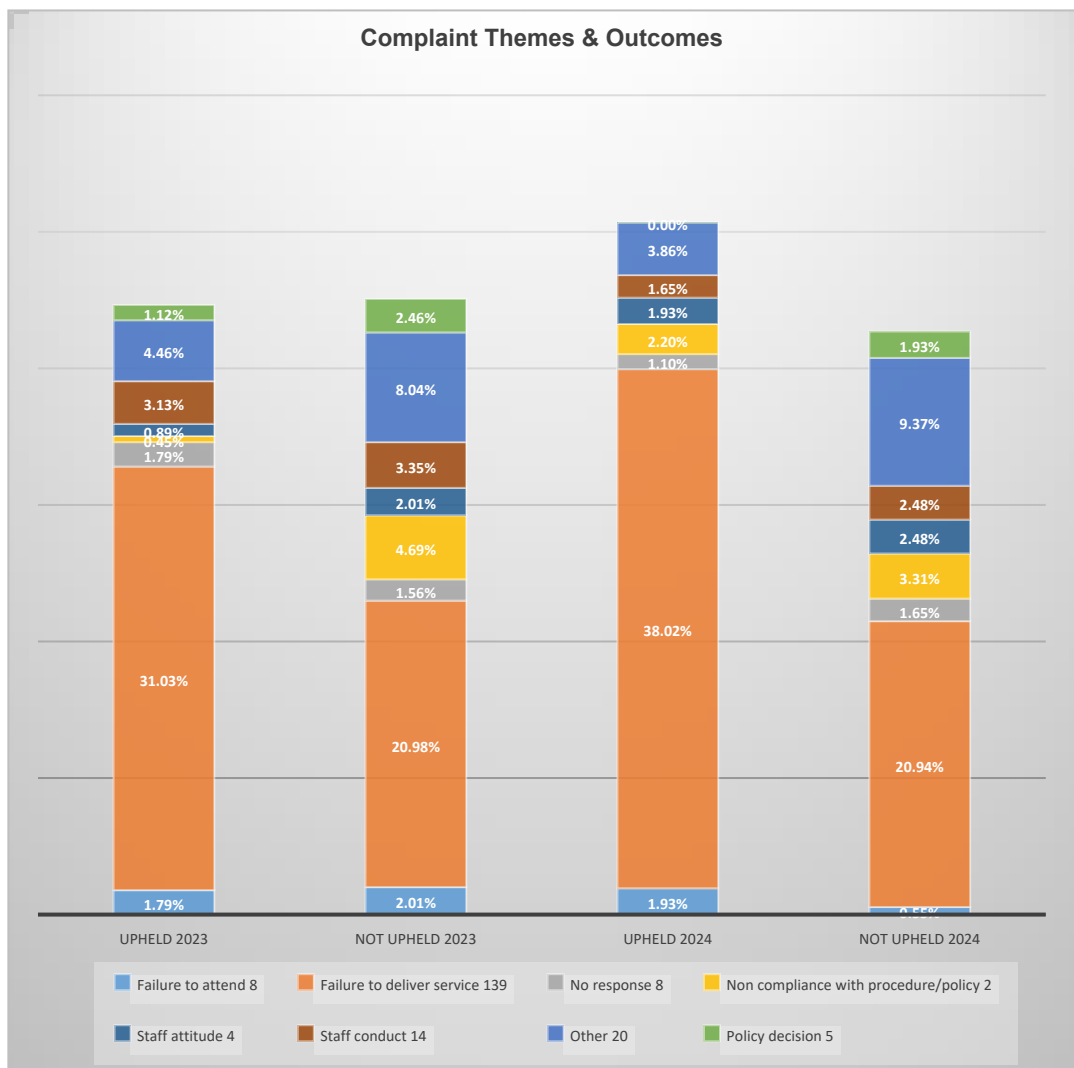


Chart 7 – Complaints Themes & Outcomes

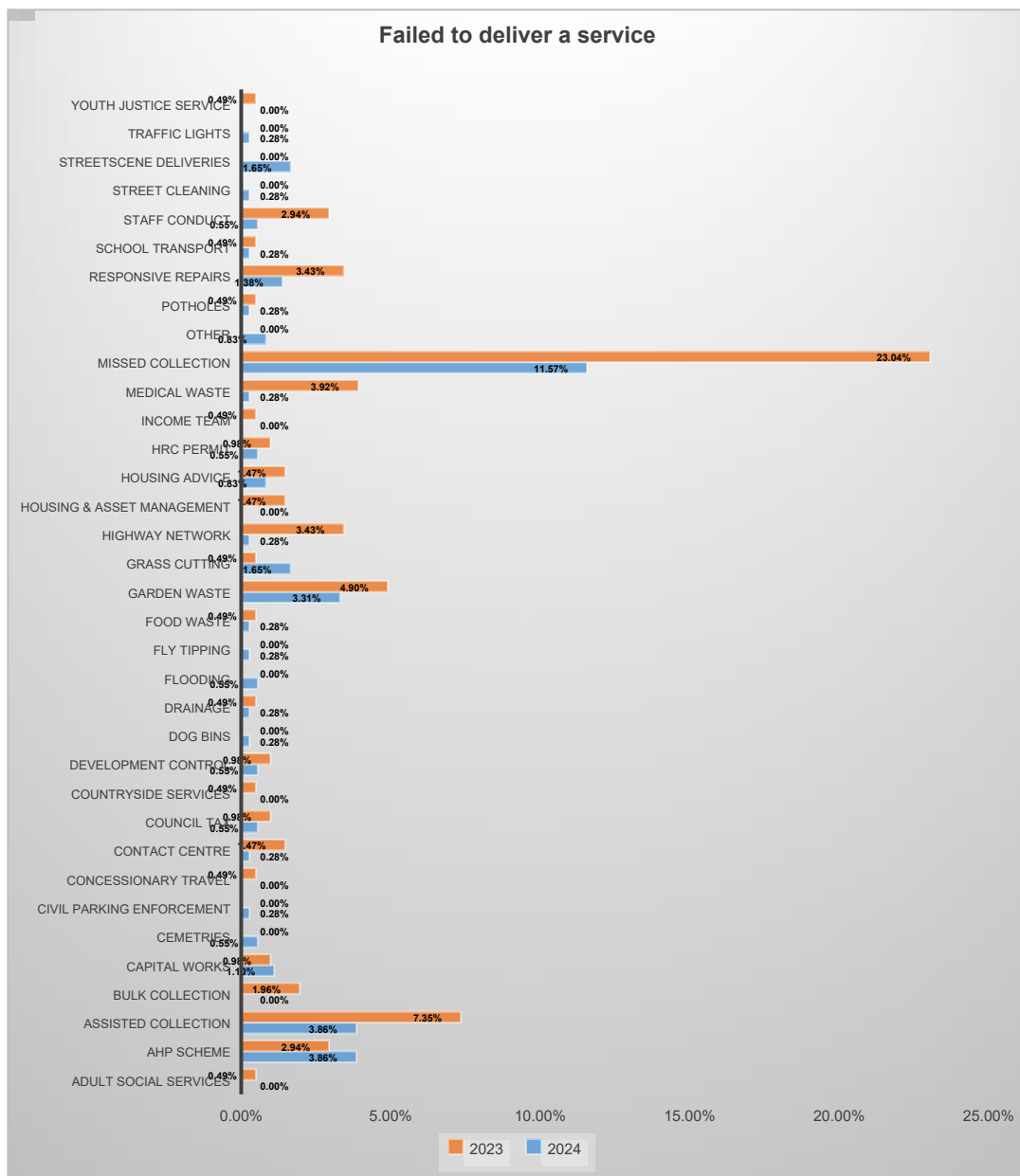


The data in the above chart illustrates that “failing to deliver a service” accounts for most upheld complaints against Council services.

1.21 Most upheld complaints about service failure relate to frontline services and Chart 8 provides an illustration of which services upheld complaints. There are several examples where the number of upheld complaints about service failure have fallen this year:

- A reduction in upheld missed collection complaints – from 23.04% to 11.57%;
- A reduction in upheld garden waste collection complaints – from 4.90% to 3.31%;
- A reduction in assisted collection complaints – from 7.35% to 3.86%;
- A reduction in responsive repair complaints – from 3.43% to 1.38%;
- A reduction in employee conduct complaints – from 2.94% to 0.55%.

Chart 8 – Failure to deliver a service



Conversely, there are examples where a higher number of complaints have been upheld e.g. Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) Scheme up from 2.94% to 3.86% and Streetscene are taking action to review their processes

	<p>and procedures, and grass cutting has also risen from 0.49% to 1.65% because of reduced resources.</p>																										
1.22	<p>The Complaints Officer Group continue to meet regularly to review performance and share lessons learned from complaints. This group of officers, which represent each portfolio of the Council, have been the catalyst in driving improvements. This year the group has reflected on lessons learned from complaints and examples of how complaint data has been used to shape services is attached in Appendix 2.</p>																										
1.23	<p>The Council complies with an all-Wales model for complaint handling in public services and accurately records complaints. However, more work needs to be undertaken on capturing the good work that happens across the Council and capturing compliments. However, the data recorded so far this year illustrates:</p> <p>Chart 9 - Compliments</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Chart 9 - Compliments</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Service</th> <th>Number of Compliments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Service</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing & Prevention</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Assets</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing Programmes</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing, Welfare & Community</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inclusion & Progression</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customer Contact</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community & Business Protection</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children's Services</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bereavement Services</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Highway Network</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Streetscene</td> <td>37</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Service	Number of Compliments	Service	2	Housing & Prevention	4	Housing Assets	7	Housing Programmes	1	Housing, Welfare & Community	2	Inclusion & Progression	6	Customer Contact	18	Community & Business Protection	1	Children's Services	1	Bereavement Services	1	Highway Network	9	Streetscene	37
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1.24	<p>Conclusion and priorities</p> <p>Much of the positive achievements in the Ombudsman’s Annual Letter and the half year reporting on local complaints can be attributed to work over the last 12 months including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued positive and productive engagement with the Complaints Standards Authority; • Continued collective work with Councils across Wales and the Ombudsman to record complaints performance data to help drive improvement in public services for citizens in Wales; • Creation of the Complaints Officer Group to manage performance and drive improvements; 																										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved advice and guidance for complainants e.g. website and complaint responses; • Completed Internal Audit actions which identified opportunities to improve complaints handling.
1.25	<p>Overall, portfolios are making good progress to improve complaints handling as greater awareness is promoted by the most senior officers of the Council.</p> <p>The following actions will be taken forward to further improve complaints handling across the organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining positive and productive engagement with the Complaints Standards Authority; • Continuing work with Councils across Wales and the Ombudsman to record complaints performance data to help drive improvement in public services for citizens in Wales; • Ensuring compliance with recommendations by the Ombudsman are communicated in a timely manner; • Implement recommendations (as appropriate) following the publication of the Ombudsman’s Own Initiative Investigation into Carer’s Needs Assessment when the report is published in 2024; • Promote the need to record compliments received by services across the Council; • Review the programme of mandatory complaints training for Team Leader+ roles – 331 employees trained to date (over 70% of original target audience); • Complete the redesign of the electronic system used to record complaints to ensure it is fit for purpose; • Complete work relating to a toolkit for Schools and elected Members on how to manage unacceptable behaviour on social media; • Support to all services through regular sharing of performance data to help manage casework and keep complainants informed where targets are not achievable.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	This report provides details of the annual performance of the Council in relation to complaints. At this point there are no proposed change or actions and as such no impact or risks have been identified.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 Flintshire County Council complaint data 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.
5.02	Appendix 2 Learning from complaints 2023-24.

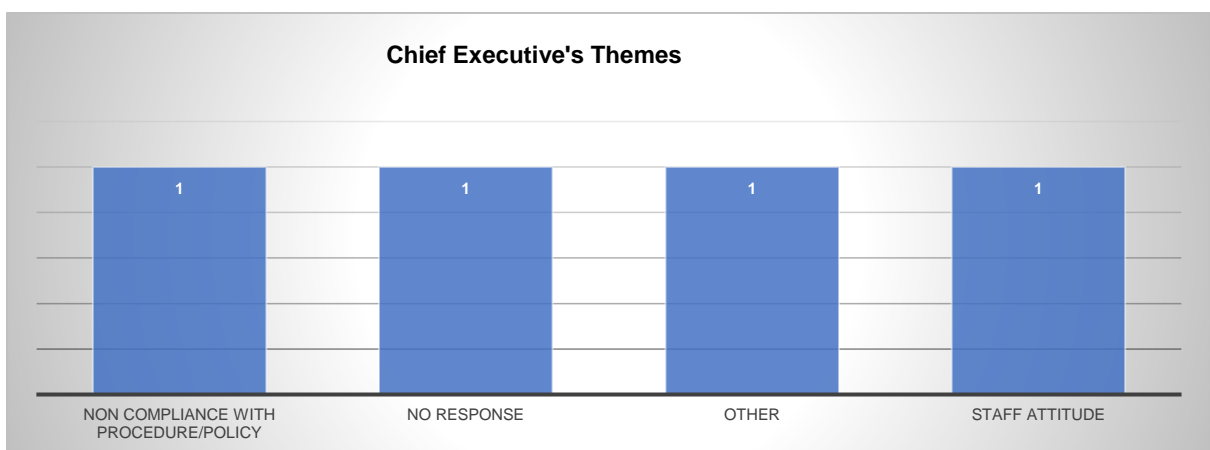
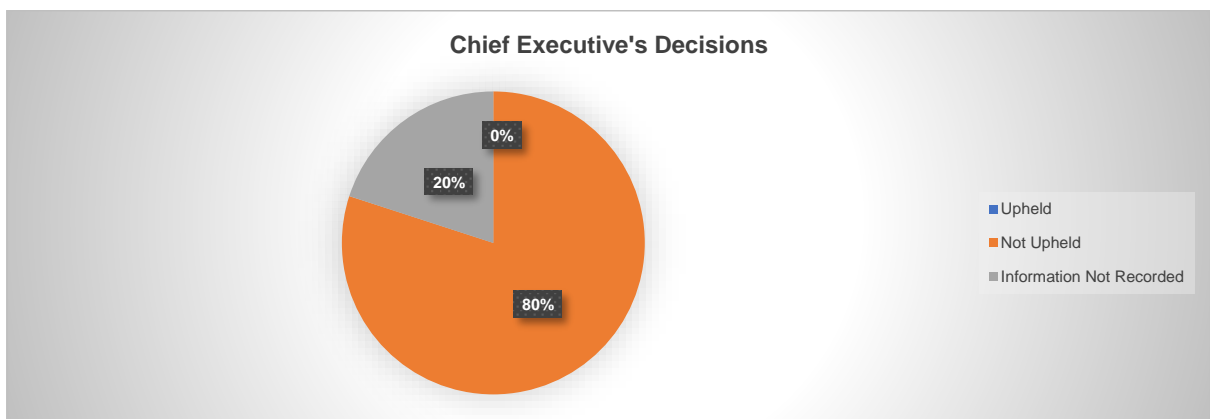
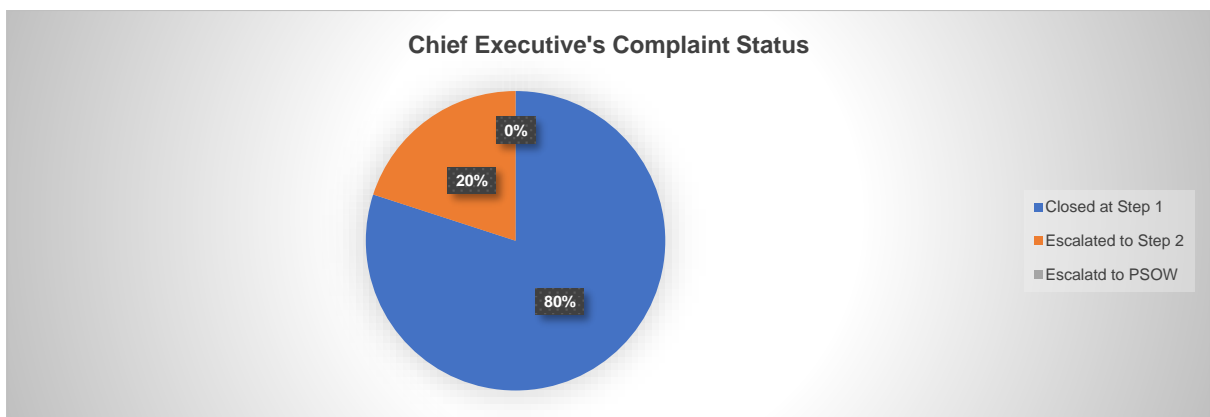
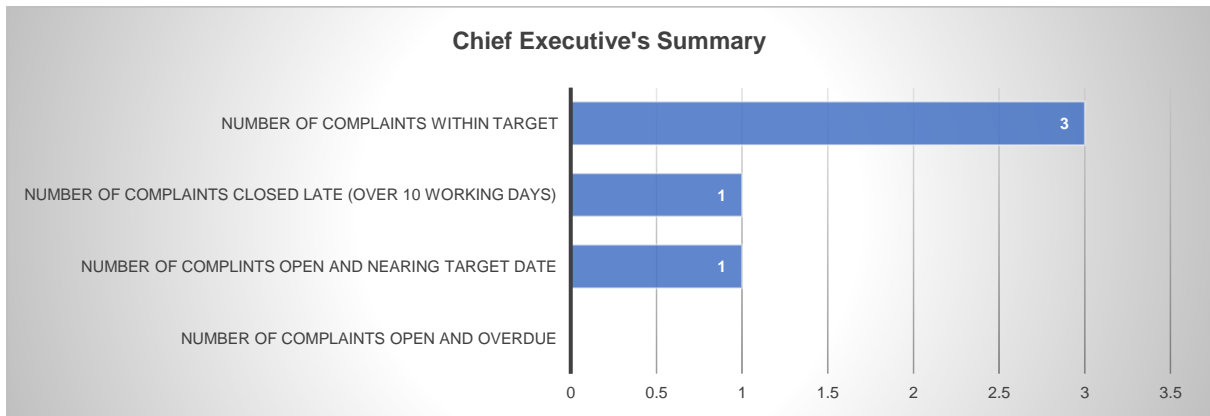
6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	A copy of the Annual Letter is published on the Ombudsman’s website – https://www.ombudsman.wales/app/uploads/2024/10/Flintshire-County-Council.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Rebecca Jones, Customer Contact Service Manager Telephone: 01352 702413 E-mail: rebecca.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

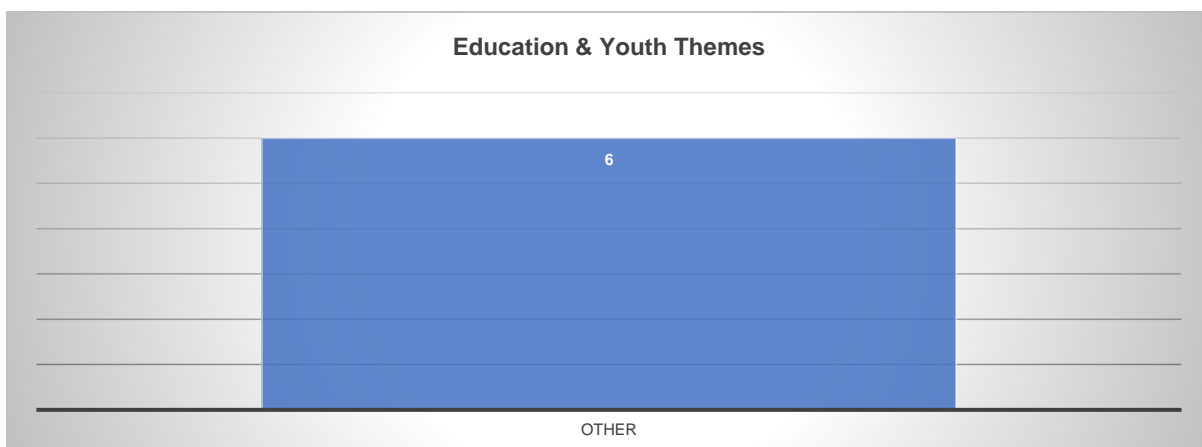
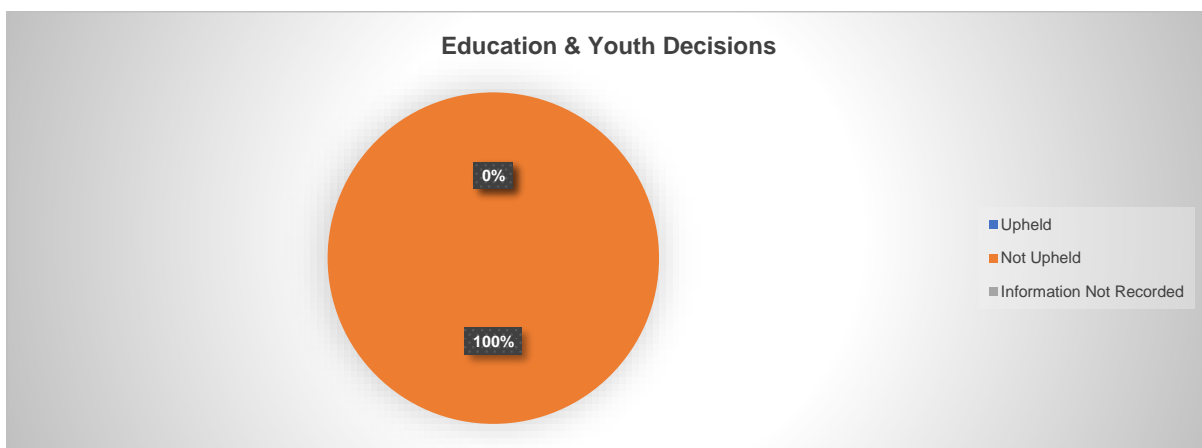
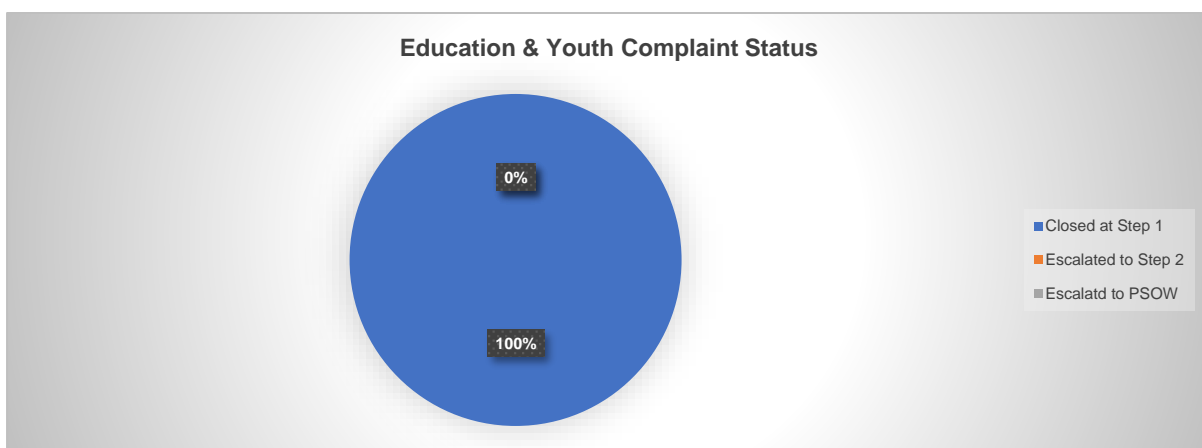
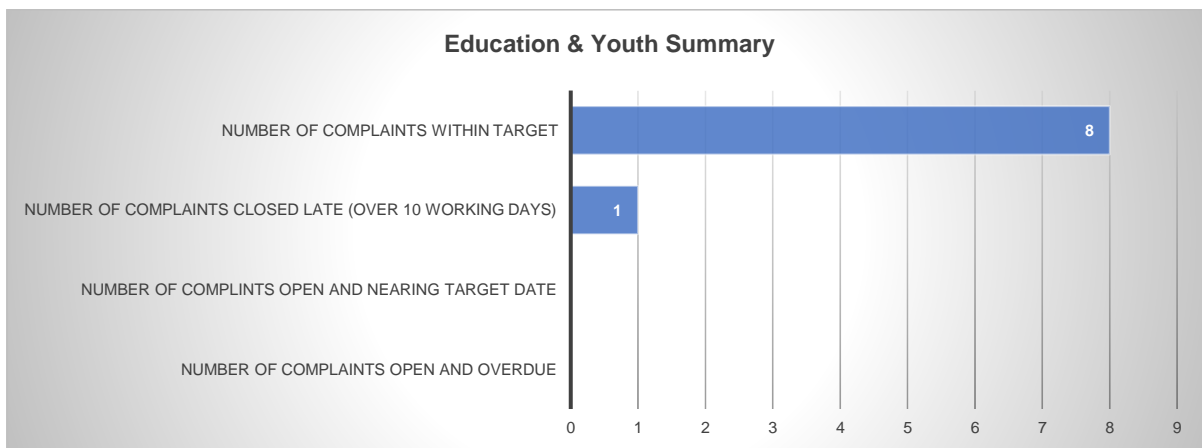
8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – investigates complaints against public service providers in Wales where people believe they have suffered an injustice through maladministration on the part of the public service provider e.g. a local authority. Complaints Standards Authority – a team within the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales’ office focused on ensuring the procedures to complain to public service providers in Wales are complainant focused, simple, fair and objective, timely and effective, accountable and committed to continuous improvement.

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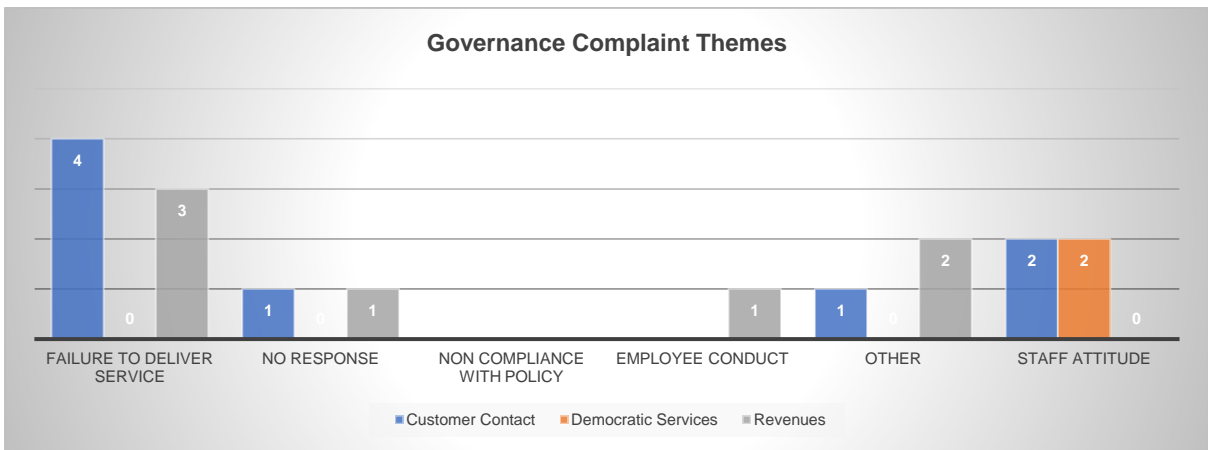
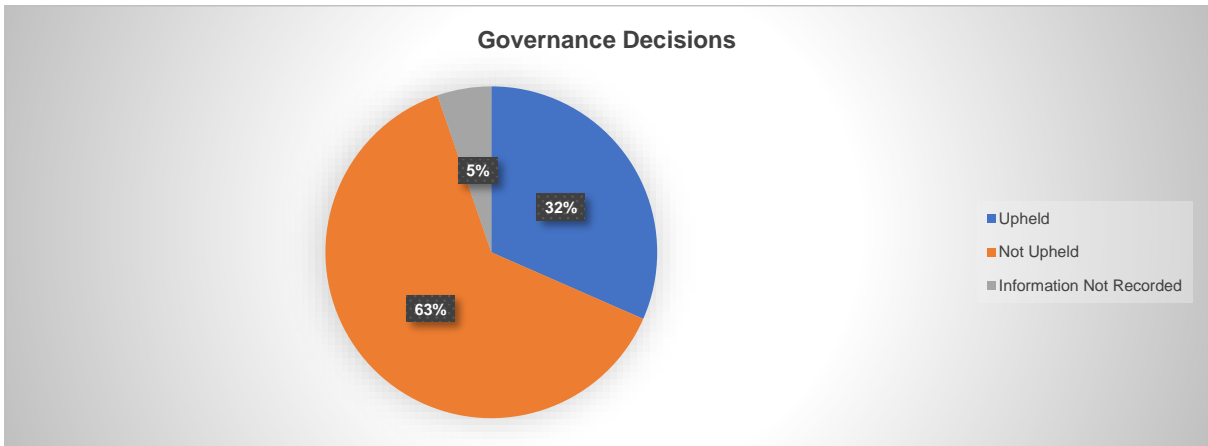
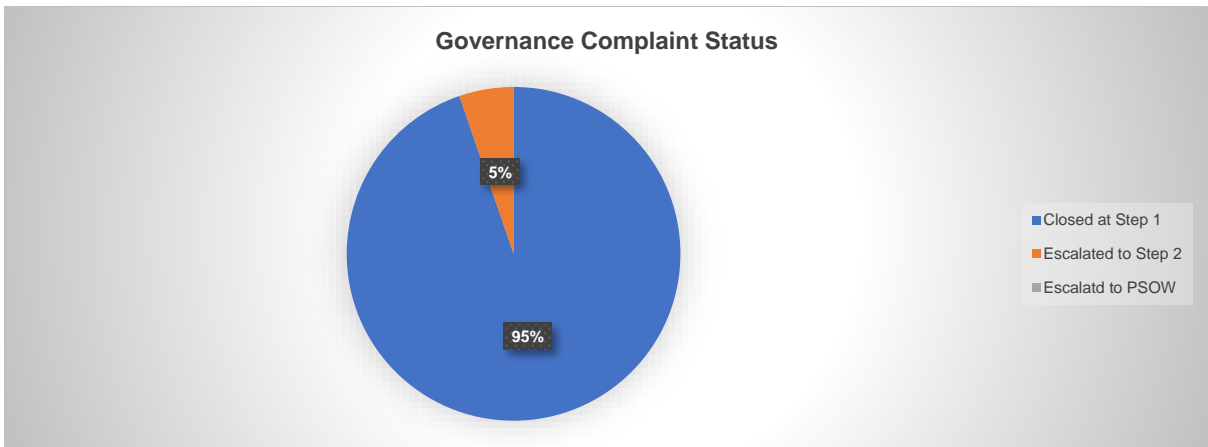
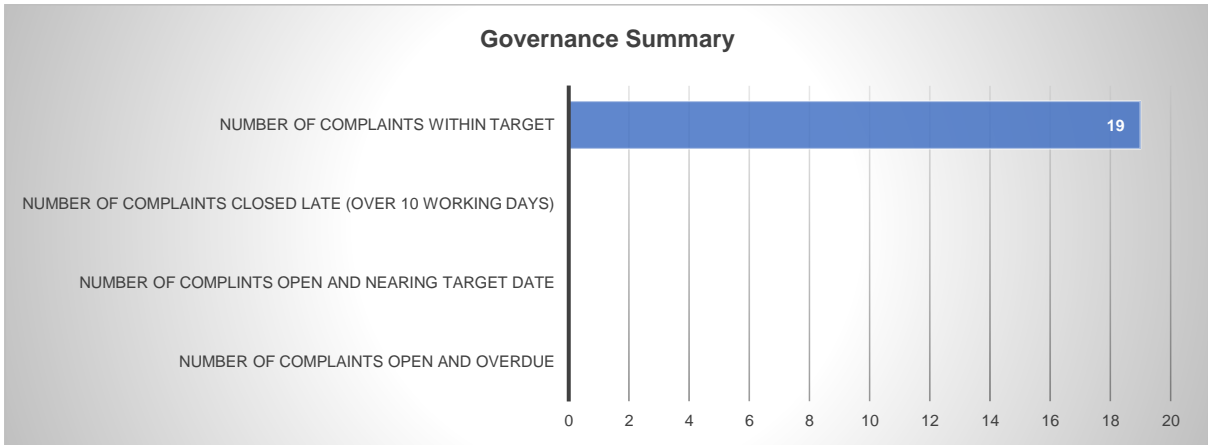
Chief Executive's



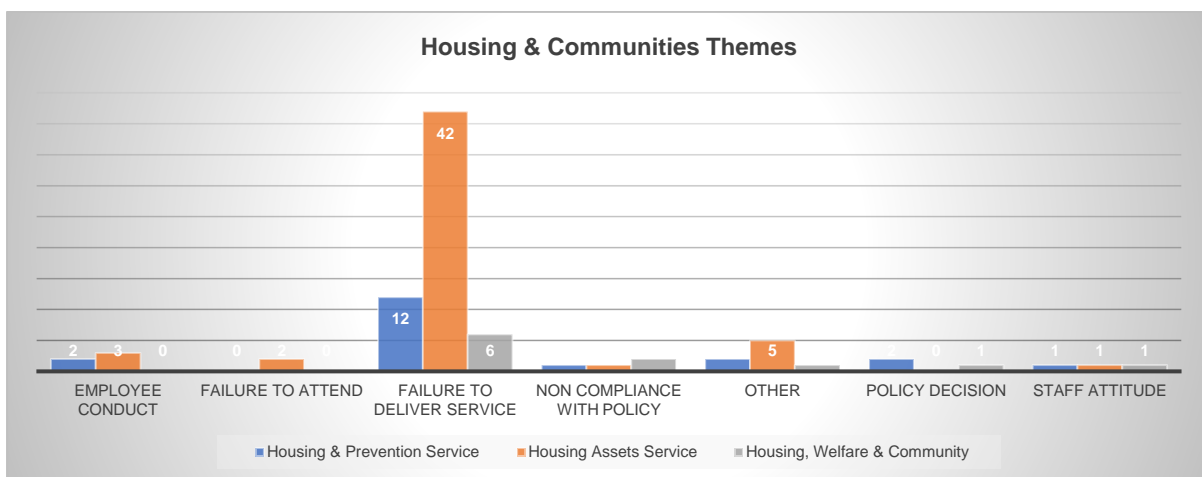
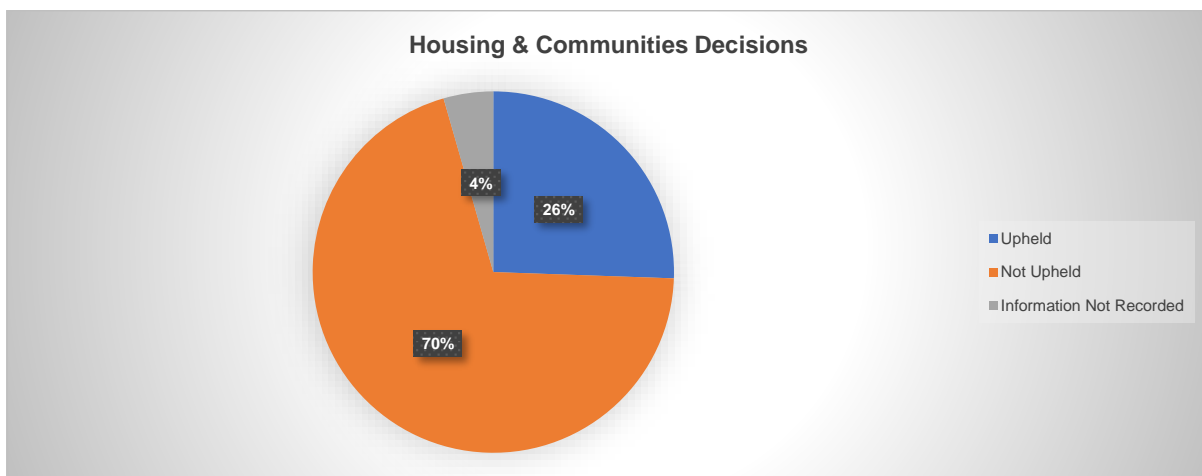
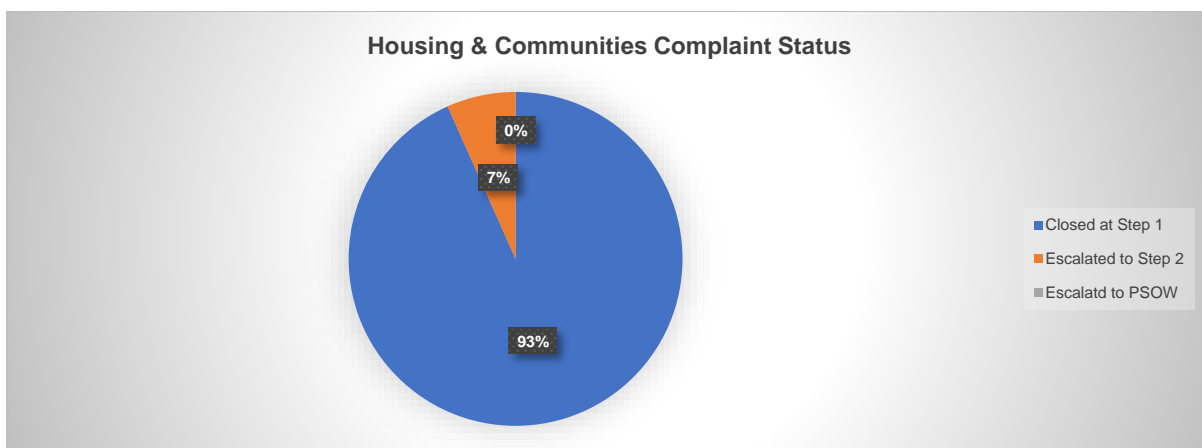
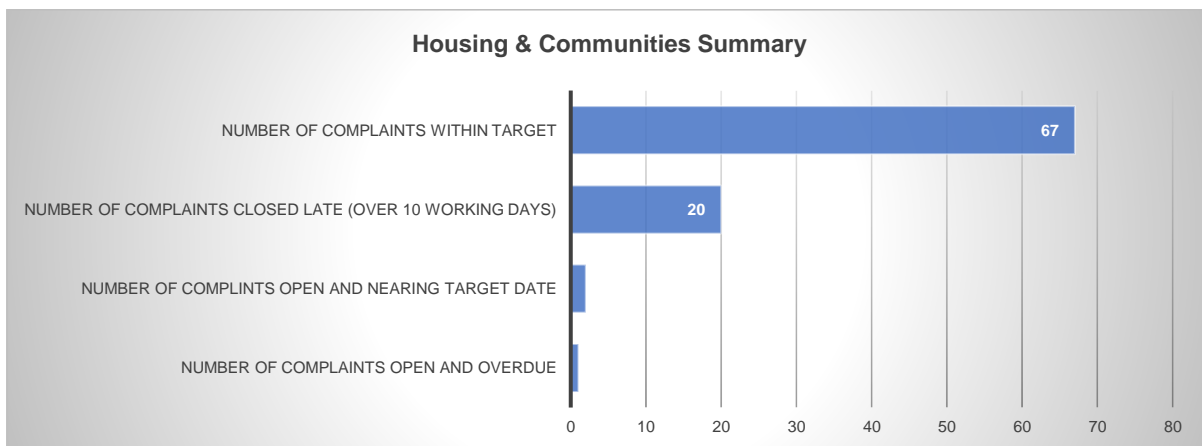
Education & Youth



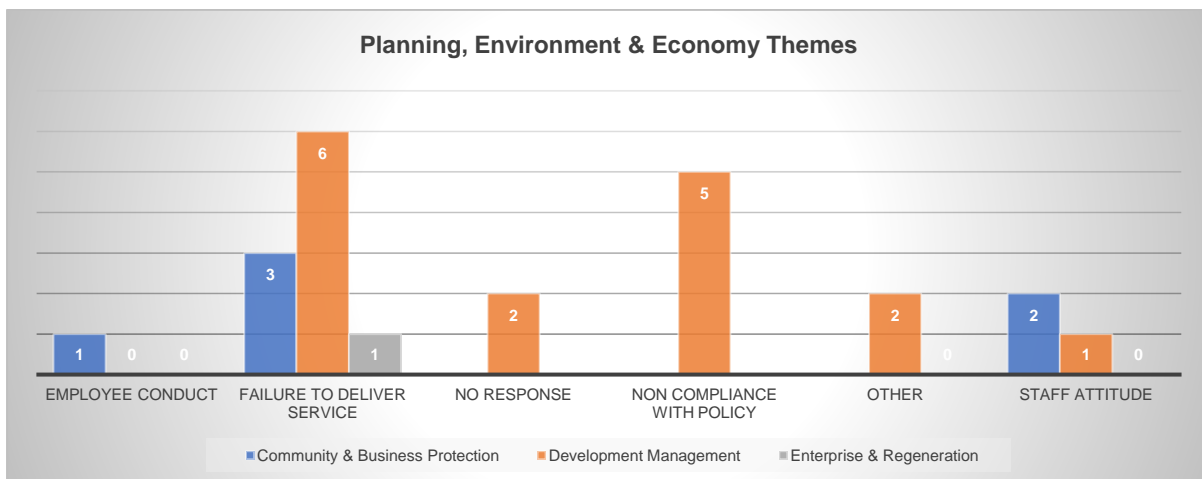
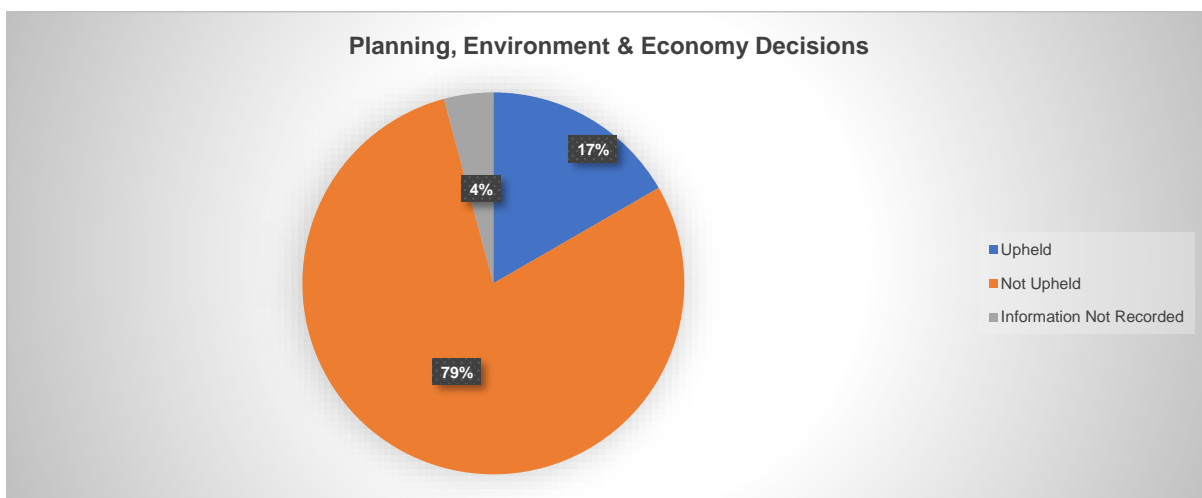
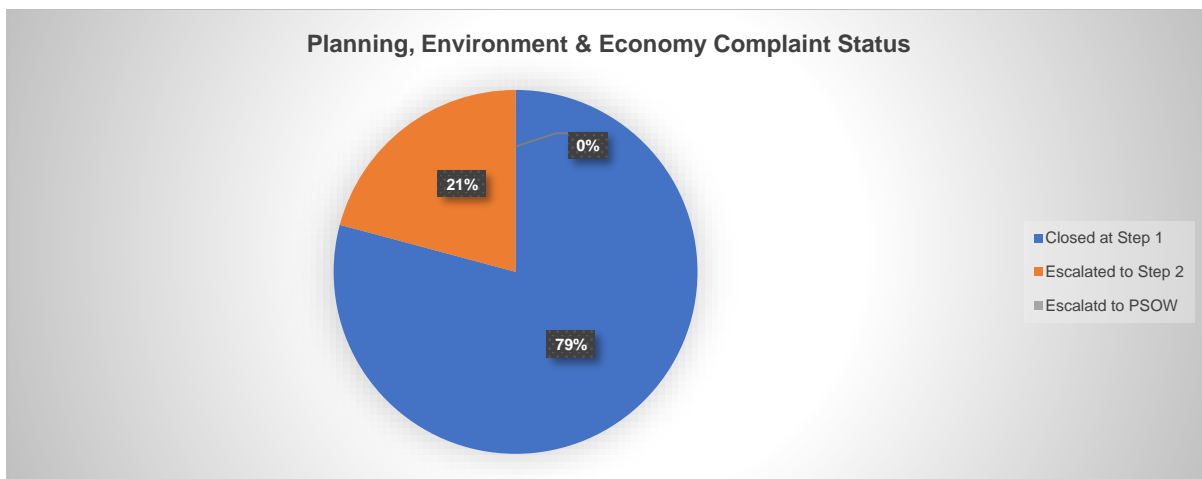
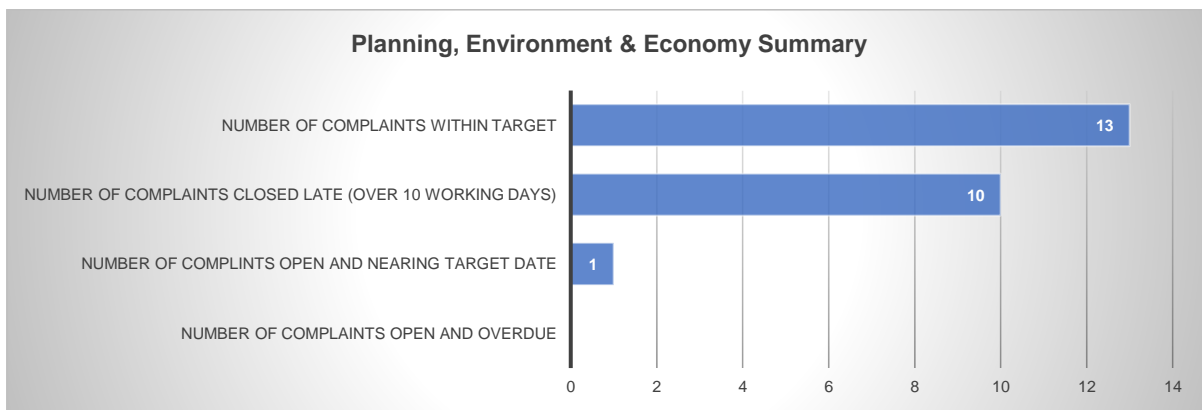
Governance



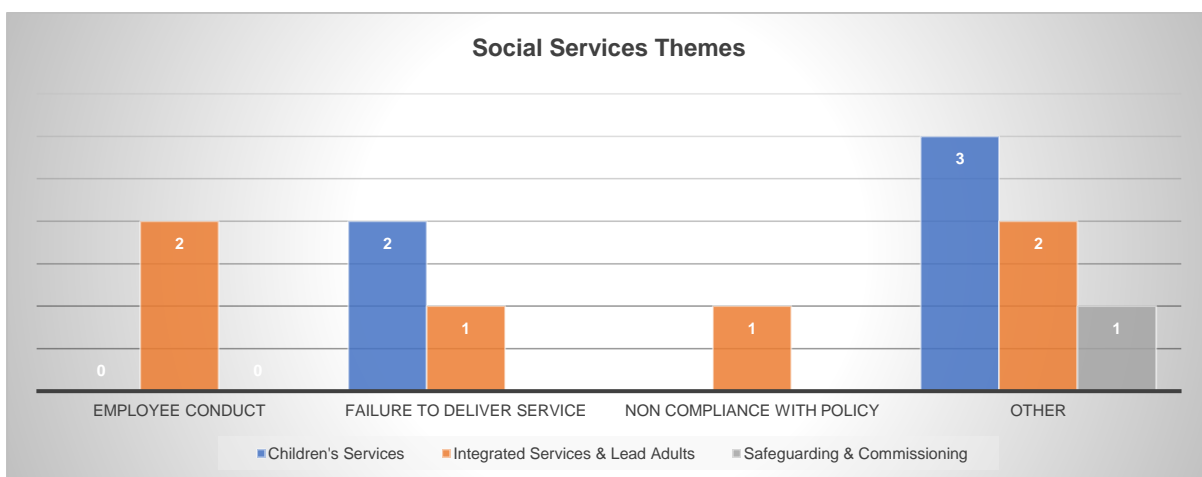
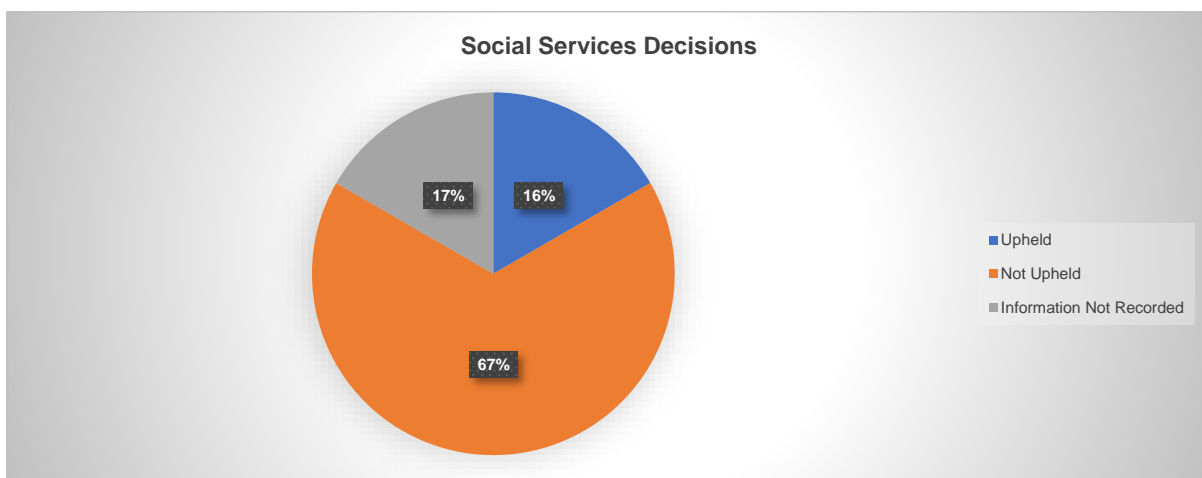
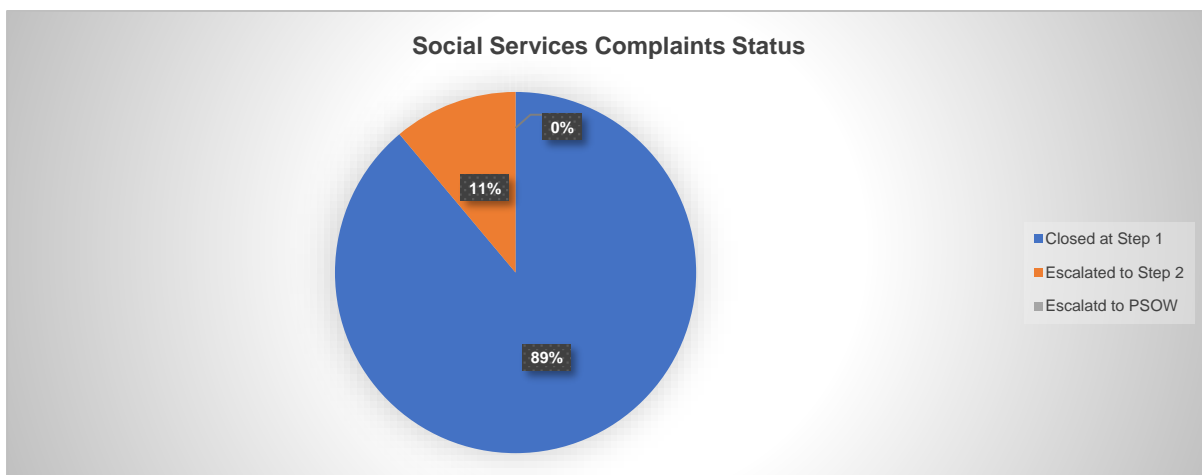
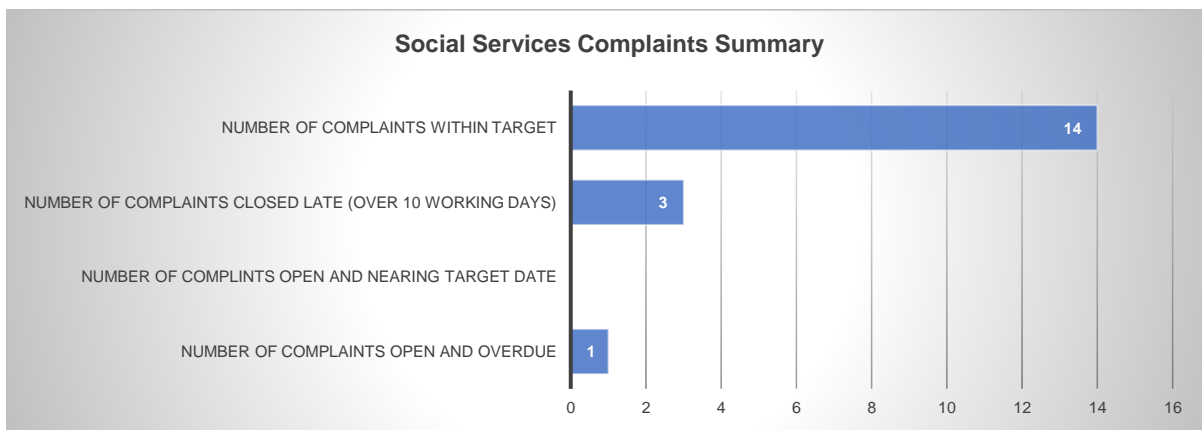
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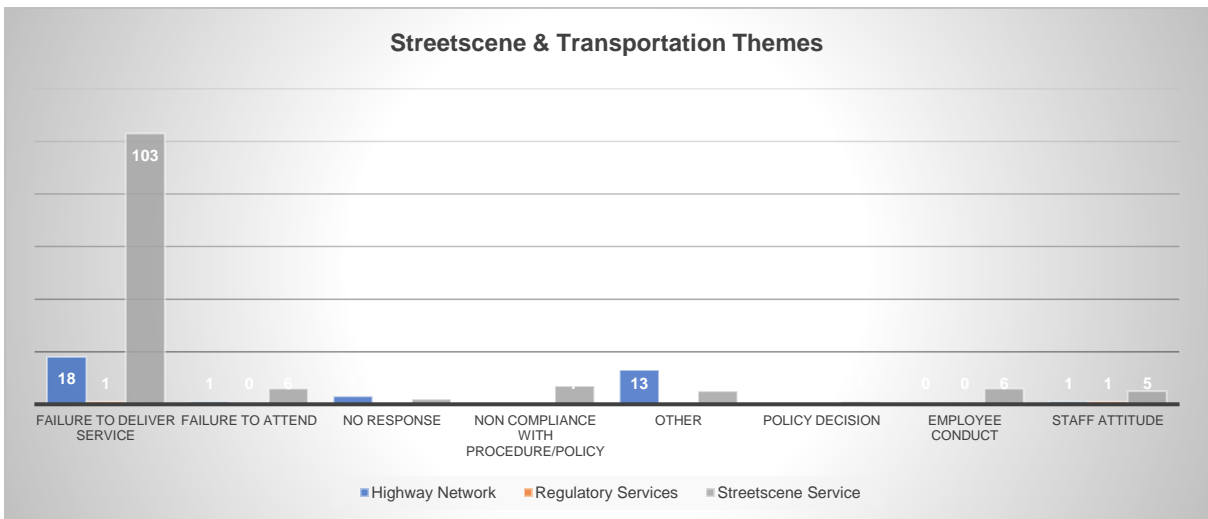
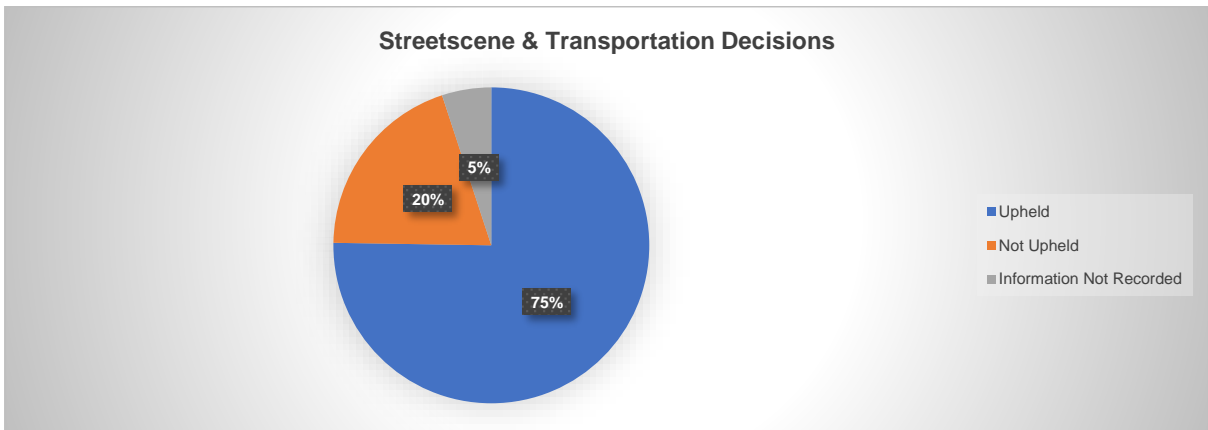
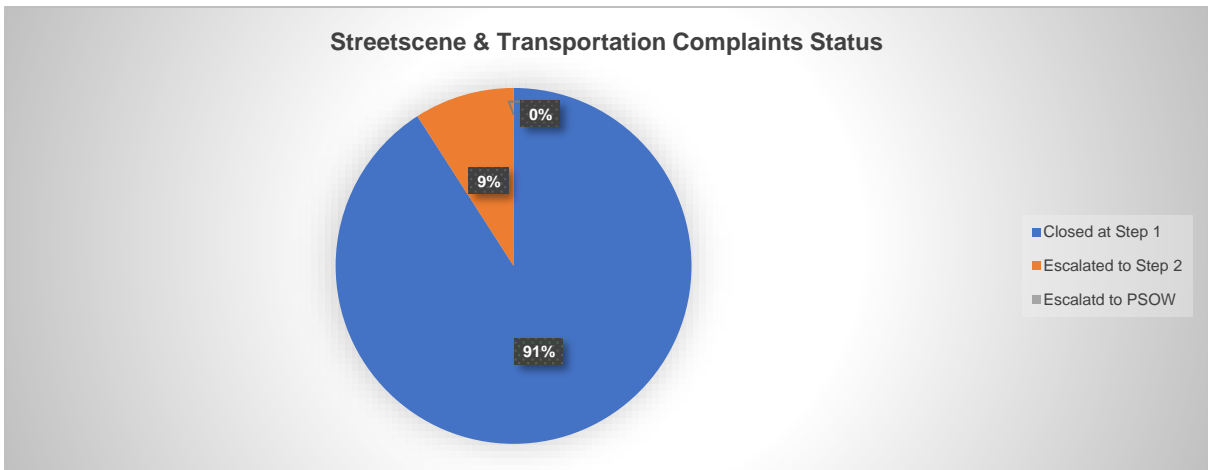
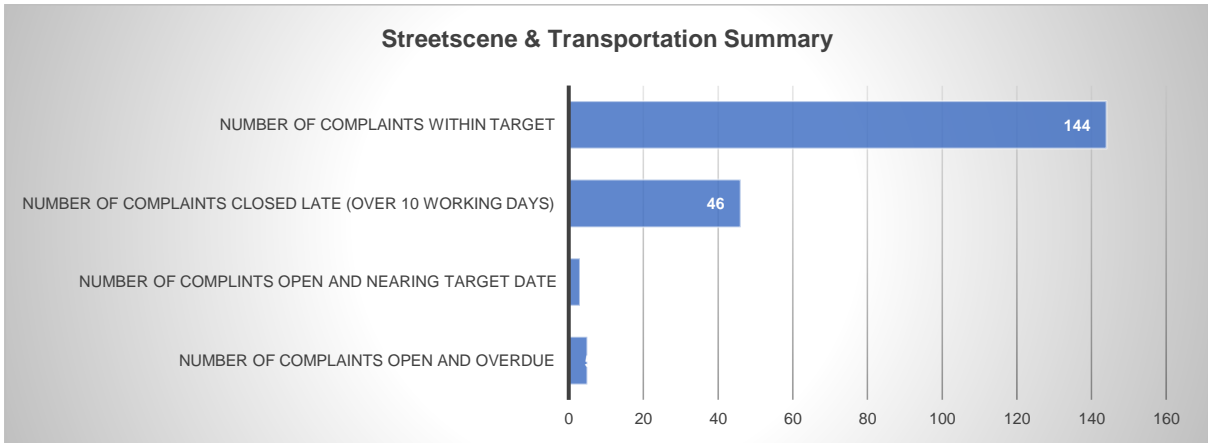
Planning, Environment & Economy



Social Services



Streetscene & Transportation



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Appendix 2: Learning from complaints 2023-24

Ref	Portfolio	Service	Issue	Theme	Lesson learnt
1.	Chief Executives	Low number of complaints – no complaints upheld in 2023-24.			
2.	Education & Youth	Low number of complaints – no complaints upheld in 2023-24.			
3.	Governance	Customer Contact	Staff attitude in the Contact Centre.	Staff attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine call sampling by the Team Leader. • Regular 1:1s with Agents and review of sampled calls. • 1:1 support for any known issues.
		Revenues	Personal information recorded on ring doorbells when Enforcement Officers make enquiries with neighbours.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising especially given the increased use of ring doorbell technology. • Instruction to Debt Enforcement Agents to refrain from knocking on neighbour doors to avoid inadvertently compromising third party residents who receive a cold call.
		Revenues	External Debt Enforcement Agent acted disproportionately when clamping a vehicle of a third party.	Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a process whereby the Council is presented with a schedule of visits that have taken place over the previous fortnight. • Sampling of the cases including a review of video footage to ensure the appropriate standards are being met and that Enforcement Agents are representing the Council professionally. • Feedback to the external agency where necessary to drive improvement.
4.	Housing & Communities	Strategic Housing	Gas safety concerns at NEW Homes.	Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised guidance to the Council's Gas Safety Engineers. • Revised procedures for accepting handover of new homes or major refurbishments. • The Council undertakes its own survey/review of each installation.
		Housing Assets	Timely of responses.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New templates enabling the service to respond to frequent complaints more efficiently.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated specific complaints or requests for service directly to WHQS teams to bypass the inspection team (which could take longer etc.)
		Housing Assets	Pre-emptive measures to reduce number of complaints.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed internal reporting processes and actions. Produced tenant guides for controlling mould and condensation. Produced helpful information and guides published on our website. Created specific programmes of work to deal with seasonal issues (emergency boundary and gardens works programme, Mould & Condensation works). Tenant induction handbook given to all new tenants within 2 weeks of their occupation.
Page 360.		Housing Assets	Reducing cases of no access and resulting complaints made from tenants not knowing when someone was attending to complete their reported repairs.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of DRS to improve the service delivery giving our customers an appointment convenient for themselves to have their repair carried out.
	Planning, Environment & Economy	Portfolio wide	Complaints not being answered within timescale.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A portfolio complaints tracker spreadsheet developed. Monthly complaints tracker meetings with officers where complaints are outstanding. Improved processes around issuing holding responses to complainants.
		Portfolio wide	Dealing with complex complaints that often involve more than one service area.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio collaboration meetings held to discuss and track actions on complex complaints. Meetings are minuted to capture all agreed actions and officer responsibilities.
		Portfolio wide	Ownership of complaints.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Team Leaders now responsible for answering Step 1 complaints for their service areas (unless complaint is referring to them). Feedback on complaint given at 1:1/workload review meetings. Team Leaders held accountable for actions agreed at complaint tracker meetings.

6.	Social Services	Adult Social Services	Increase in the volume of complaints about financial implications of charges.	Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and refreshed a range of leaflets including Paying for Residential Care, Deferred Payments Scheme, Charging for Community Care, Discharge Leaflet. • Employees reminded to add a case note that leaflets have been shared with family members and when they share financial advice in conversations they have with families.
		Children's Social Services	Lack of information about direct payments and how to use payments.	Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a standard letter to explain to families why a direct payment has been awarded and how it should be used and why excess funding is required to be returned to the Council. • Review underway for children with care and support needs to have their own individual case record, moving us away from the 'lead child' approach.
15.	Streetscene & Transportation	Garden Waste Collections	Confusion on website as to whether to apply for new sticker.	Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website application reviewed and noted that wording was unclear and confusing causing residents to apply for a sticker they did not require. • Application wording was adjusted and members of staff within the admin team to review reports to check additional stickers had not been ordered
		Rail Card Codes	Codes no longer supplied to FCC from TFW.	Information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaised with Transport department to inform them of the changes. • Made enquiries with TFW – codes no longer supplied, but residents can apply direct through TFW. • Updated information on website with new link to refer residents to.
		Mattress Bookings at HRC Sites	Booking in system was ineffective, causing complaints.	Service standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process was reviewed and feedback given to waste & recycling manager. • New system put into place, which links straight through to HRC sites. • Updated the team on the process and website information. • Training given to chargehands on site so that bookings can now be reviewed and monitored.

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CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 19 th November 2024
Report Subject	Bromborough plastics – Update report
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Report Author	Corporate Manager, Capital Programme and Assets
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 20th June 2023, Cabinet considered (and approved) under the Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) to write off debts to the Commercial Rent debt for Bromborough Plastics Limited to the value of £56,000.

This proposal was based on legal advice and was a pragmatic way forward to recover some of the debt, and ensure the site is cleared and vacated in readiness and in a timely manner for the proposed Welsh Government acquisition.

Supplementary legal advice was to continue to invoice the tenant as a contingency plan as it provided the Council an improved legal platform should the tenant not move out as planned.

The report summarises the situation, confirms that officers followed legal advice, the Tenant vacated the site as planned and the deed of surrender executed. Therefore, the contingency plan was not required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet review the report and confirm that it support the write off of the debt as noted in para 2.02
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND TO THE WRITE OFF
1.01	In a report dated 20th June 2023 Cabinet agreed to write off circa £56,000 of debt and as part of an agreement (to be included within a Deed of Surrender) with the company they would pay the Council £10,000 and in due course vacate and importantly clear the former Queensferry Depot site.
1.02	Alongside the proposal to write-off of most of the debt, the Deed of Surrender, drafted by the Council's Legal Team endeavoured to ensure that the occupier shall fully clear the site of all waste materials and other items associated with their business.
1.03	Supplementary legal advice at the time (which as legally privileged information), was despite moving forward the deed of surrender, advice was to continue invoicing Bromborough Plastics until the deed of surrender was executed. This was a contingency position designed to protect the Council's legal position should Bromborough plastics do not vacate the site as planned and the matter moved to further litigation.
1.04	Bromborough plastics have now cleared and vacated the site, the deed of surrender has been executed and the money due to the Council has been deposited with our legal representatives. Therefore, the contingency position was not required as the scenario of the tenant not vacating and cleaning the site did not materialise.
1.05	The site (now empty) has been secured (entrance, perimeter, buildings, and CCTV surveillance is in place) and an arson reduction survey has been conducted by the Fire Service.
1.06	As of 28th August 2024, the debt logged through following legal advice is £122, 999.98. However, when the £10,000 payment from the rent deposit is considered, the residual balance for write off is £112,999.98.
1.07	Under the Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) to write off debts to the Commercial Rent debt for Bromborough Plastics Limited, there is a requirement for Cabinet to write off this debt.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Cabinet (June 2023) agreed with the recommendation is to write off Circa £56,000 of debt and as part of an agreement (to be included within a Deed of Surrender) with the company they would pay the Council £10,000 and in due course vacate and importantly clear the former Queensferry Depot site.
2.02	As of 28 th August 2024, the debt logged through following legal advice is £122, 999.98. However, when the £10,000 payment from the rent deposit is considered, the residual balance for write off is £112,999.98.

2.03	The process can be managed within current in-house resource.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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3.01	The original risk of Bromborough Plastics not vacating the site is now closed.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	All write offs must be approved by the Corporate Finance Manager, but in the case of write offs over £25,000, Cabinet must be consulted before a decision is taken.
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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	Cabinet report, 20 th June 2023
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Damian Hughes, Corporate Manager, Capital Programme & Assets Telephone: 01352 704135 E-mail: damian.hughes@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: David Barnes, Revenues & Procurement Manager Telephone: 01352 703652 E-mail: david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>
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EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS - DECISIONS TAKEN REPORTED TO CABINET – 19.11.24

Streetscene and Transportation

- **Proposed Disposal of Surplus Land Located Adjacent to 3 Parc Issa, Bryn y Baal, Mold CH& 3NH**

The subject land was included in a transfer to the County Council in 2004 as Public Open Space for the Construction of a children's play area. Since 2017 the land has rested with the Streetscene and Transportation department. Following a review it is understood that the land was enclosed by the property owners of 3 Parc Issa before the land was transferred to the County Council, estimated in the year 2002. The current owners of 3 Parc Issa have approached the County Council around transfer of the land, and so with the County Council never effectively having possession of this land, and following discussions with the County Council's Legal department about the current property owners have a possible claim for adverse possession, it is proposed the land be transferred for a token sum consideration, but subject to payment of the Councils surveyors and Legal fees.

Copies of the Delegated Powers reports are retained by the Team Leader – Committee Services and available to view on request by Members.

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**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS
COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY
1 November 2024 TO 30 April 2025**

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
November					
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/11/24	Streetscene and Transportation	Residual Waste Collections Change and Communication Plan To consider the proposals.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/11/24	Finance	Budget 2025/26 – Stage 2 To review and comment on the budget pressures under the remit of the Committee.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate, Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/11/24	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (E&E OSC)</p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/11/24	Planning and Development Control	<p>Consultation on the proposed new National Park for North East Wales</p> <p>To agree the Council's response to a live consultation on the proposed North East Wales National Park</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/11/24	Finance	<p>Budget 2025/26 – Stage 2</p> <p>To review and comment on the budget pressures under the remit of the Committee.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/11/24	Housing and Communities	Intensive Housing Management Solutions for Homeless Accommodation To consult on engaging with a company for the purpose of delivering homeless accommodation services for up to 50 households experiencing homelessness.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/11/24	Housing and Communities	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25 and the HRA Business Plan.	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/11/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (C&H) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/11/24	Housing and Communities	Void Management To provide an update on the number of Void properties and the work undertaken to bring in properties back into use.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Action Tracking To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Governance	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 and half-year complaints performance 2024-25 To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 for Flintshire County Council and an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between 1 April 2024 - 30 September 2024.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Chief Executive's	Capital Strategy including Prudential Indicators 2025/26 - 2027/28 To present the Capital Strategy 2025/26 - 2027/28 for review.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Chief Executive's	Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28 To present the Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28 for review.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6) and Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6) To provide the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6) Report and the Capital Programme 2024/25 (Month 6) Report.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/11/24	Finance	Budget 2025/26 - Stage 2 To review and comment on the budget pressures under the remit of the Committee.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	19/11/24	Governance	<p>Council Tax Base for 2025/26 To approve the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2025/26 as part of the process of the revenue budget setting and Council Tax setting process for the new year.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet Page 374	19/11/24	Housing and Communities	<p>Intensive Housing Management Solutions for Homeless Accommodation To gain consent to engage the above company for the purpose of delivering homeless accommodation services for up to 50 households experiencing homelessness.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Cabinet	19/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 To present the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 for recommendation to Council.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	19/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Capital Strategy including Prudential Indicators 2025/26 – 2027/28 To present the Capital Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28 for recommendation to Council.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	19/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6) To present the Month 6 Capital Programme information for 2024/25.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	19/11/24	Governance	<p>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 and half-year complaints performance 2024-25 To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 for Flintshire County Council and an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	19/11/24	Chief Executive's	Bromborough plastics – Update report The Report is submitted to Cabinet under the Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) to write off debts to the Commercial Rent debt for Bromborough Plastics Limited.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	19/11/24	Social Services	Procurement of Client Information System – Update To provide an update on the procurement of a replacement client information system and to include proposed implementation dates and costs.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	19/11/24	Education and Youth	School Improvement Model To bring a draft proposal for a Flintshire School Improvement Partnership model following the Welsh Government decision to review the delivery of school improvement services which has resulted in the planned cessation of regional school improvement consortia.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	19/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 6) This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 6, and projects forward to year-end.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	19/11/24	Education and Youth	<p>Self Evaluation of Flintshire Education Services To provide assurance on the range and quality of provision of education services in Flintshire.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	19/11/24	Streetscene and Transportation	<p>Residual Waste Collection Change Implementation and Policy Review</p> <p>To provide an overview of the implementation and communication plan for a transition to a three weekly residual waste collection model and seek approval for the associated updated recycling and waste collections and household recycling centre operational policy.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Cabinet	19/11/24	Housing and Communities	<p>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan</p> <p>To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25 and the HRA Business Plan.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Governance & Audit Committee Self-Assessment - Action Plan</p> <p>To present to Committee a detailed action plan to support the results of the Committee's self-assessment. It will also form the basis for the provision of any further training required by the Committee.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Finance	<p>Statement of Accounts 2023/24</p> <p>To present the final audited version of the Statement of Accounts 2023/24 for approval.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Social Services	<p>Response to the Audit Wales Review “Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital – North Wales Region”</p> <p>To present findings and the council response to the Auditor General’s review of the arrangements to support effective flow out of hospital in the North Wales region detailed within “Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital - North Wales Region”.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Governance	<p>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 and half-year complaints performance 2024-25.</p> <p>To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24 for Flintshire County Council and an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between 1 April 2024 - 30 September 2024.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Chief Executive's	<p>Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2024/25 and Q2 Update</p> <p>To present to Members the draft Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 1st April - 30th September 2024 for comments and recommendation for approval to Cabinet.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Governance	<p>Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report</p> <p>To report on activities of the Committee during 2023/24.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Governance	<p>Forward Work Programme</p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Internal Audit Department.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Governance	<p>Action Tracking</p> <p>To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Governance and Audit Committee meetings.</p>	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Internal Audit	<p>Annual Governance Statement mid-year progress report</p> <p>To provide an update of the progress made against managing the issues identified within the Annual Governance Statement.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	25/11/24	Finance	<p>Audit Wales Report - Financial Sustainability</p> <p>To advise on the final report received from Audit Wales.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	28/11/24	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (EY&C OSC)</p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	28/11/24	Education and Youth	Theatr Clwyd and School Music Service To receive a report on the involvement of young people in the activities at Theatr Clwyd, together with an update on the School Music Service.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	28/11/24	Education and Youth	NEWydd To provide an update to the Committee on the service provided at Schools, including information on pupil engagement and suggestions made by pupils during the Learner Voice event, and if they had been taken on board.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
December					
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Chief Executive's	Capital Strategy including Prudential Indicators 2025/26 – 2027/28 To present the Capital Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28 for approval		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Governance	Scrutiny Arrangements for the Corporate Joint Committee To consider and make recommendations to Council on the proposed scrutiny arrangements for the Corporate Joint Committee		
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Chief Executive's	Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 To present the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28 for approval		
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Governance	Review of Political Balance Due to a change in group membership we need to review the Political Balance and the allocation of seats on Committees.		
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Chief Executive's	Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24 To present to Members the draft Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24		
Flintshire County Council	4/12/24	Finance	Appointment of the Leader of the Council To clarify the procedure when a Leader resigns		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 385	5/12/24	Finance	Budget 2025/26 – Stage 2 To review and comment on the budget pressures under the remit of the Committee.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Social Services	A Sustainable Approach to Social Services To propose and discuss changes to the financial assessment and charging for Domiciliary Care and Residential Care Services.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Social Services	Mockingbird Fostering Project To update on the progress of the implementation of the Mockingbird model of care.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Social Services	Financial Assessments and Charging Team To provide Members with information regarding the work undertaken within the Financial Assessment and Charging Team.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Social Services	Children and Families Safeguarding Hub To receive a report outlining the strengths and challenges from the newly established Safeguarding Hub.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	5/12/24	Social Services	<p>Social Services Workforce Development Report This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Social Services Workforce Development Team over the past 12 months, including details relating to recruitment activity in Social Services.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Page 987 Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/12/24	Overview and Scrutiny	<p>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (E&E OSC) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/12/24	Streetscene and Transportation	<p>Conversion of the FCC fleet to electric or alternative fuels To receive a progress report on the implementation of the conversion of the FCC fleet to electric and alternative fuels.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/12/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking (C&H) To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/12/24	Housing and Communities	Garage Site Review To provide an update on the Garage Site Review, to include information on the Car Parking Matrix.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/12/24	Housing and Communities	De-carbonisation Strategy Update To provide the Committee with an update on the De-carbonisation Strategy.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Action Tracking To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	Chief Executive's	Cambrian Aquatics To provide an update report on Cambrian Aquatics.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	Overview and Scrutiny	Forward Work Programme To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 7) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 7) Report and Significant Variances.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone To provide an update on the development of the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/12/24	People and Resources	Employment and Workforce Mid-year Update This report covers strategic updates in addition to the quarterly workforce statistics and their analysis.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cabinet	17/12/24	Chief Executive's	Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2024/25 To present to Members the draft Treasury Management Mid-Year Review for 2024/25 for recommendation to Council.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
Cabinet	17/12/24	Chief Executive's	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 7) This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2024/25 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 7, and projects forward to year-end.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

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Cabinet	17/12/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	Consultation on the proposed new National Park for North East Wales To agree the Council's response to a live consultation on the proposed North East Wales National Park	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate
Cabinet	17/12/24	Chief Executive's	Cambrian Aquatics To provide an update on Cambrian Aquatics	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets
Cabinet	17/12/24	Planning, Environment and Economy	Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone To provide an update on the development of the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone.	Operational	Leader of the Council
January					
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	9/01/25	Education and Youth	Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25 (EY&C OSC) To review and monitor the Council's performance including actions and measures, as set out in the Council Plan (2023-28) at mid-year for 2024/25.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/01/25	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p>Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25 (E&E OSC)</p> <p>To review and monitor the Council's performance including actions and measures, as set out in the Council Plan (2023-28) at mid-year for 2024/25.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Climate, Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transportation
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/01/25	Housing and Communities	<p>Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25 (C&H OSC)</p> <p>To review and monitor the Council's performance including actions and measures, as set out in the Council Plan (2023-28) at mid-year for 2024/25.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/01/25	Housing and Communities	<p>Local Housing Market Needs Assessment</p> <p>To present the Local Housing Market Needs Assessment.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/01/25	Housing and Communities	NEW Homes review To outline the outcome of the NEW Homes review.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/01/25	Housing and Communities	Food Poverty Update To provide an update in relation to the work that has been ongoing and the work that is planned in relation to the food poverty priority area. And to also highlight the positive role Flintshire has played in developing partnerships, supporting other organisations and facilitating action.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/01/25	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 8) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 8) Report and Significant Variances.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/01/25	Chief Executive's	<p>Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25 (CROSC)</p> <p>To review and monitor the Council's performance including actions and measures, as set out in the Council Plan (2023-28) at mid-year for 2024/25.</p>	Strategic	Leader of the Council
<p>18099 394</p> <p>Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p>	17/01/25	Social Services	<p>Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25 (S&HC OSC)</p> <p>To review and monitor the Council's performance including actions and measures, as set out in the Council Plan (2023-28) at mid-year for 2024/25.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	21/01/25	Chief Executive's	<p>Strategic Risk Overview To provide an overview of strategic risks across the Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of all the strategic risks across the Council • High level overview of escalated and deteriorating risks • A real time view of what position the Council is at, at the date the report is produced. 	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Governance and Audit Committee	22/01/25	Education and Youth	<p>Flintshire Youth Justice Service HMIP Inspection To present the report following the recent Youth Justice Service Inspection.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Governance and Audit Committee	22/01/25	Governance	<p>Risk Management Update To be assured that the updated risk management framework is comprehensive and functional.</p>	All Report Types	

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Governance and Audit Committee	22/01/25	Chief Executive's	Asset Disposals and Capital Receipts Generated 2023/24 To report on asset disposals and capital received generated during 2023/24.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Assets
February					
Community & Housing Overview Scrutiny Committee	12/02/25	Housing and Communities	Housing Strategy To consider the Housing Strategy.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/02/25	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 9) and Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 9) To provide the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 9) Report and the Capital Programme 2024/25 (Month 9) Report.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
March					

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/03/25	Finance	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 10) To provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 (Month 10) Report and Significant Variances.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance and Social Value
April					

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