FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **QUARTER 1 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT**

1.00   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01   To receive the 2014/15 Quarter 1 Improvement Plan monitoring reports for the period April to June 2014.

1.02   To note the following: -

- the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of high level activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;

- the performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and

- the current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them.

2.00   BACKGROUND

2.01   The Council adopted the Improvement Plan for 2014/15 in June 2014 following consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This is the first monitoring update prepared for Cabinet.

3.00   CONSIDERATIONS

3.01   The Improvement Plan monitoring reports give an explanation of the progress being made toward the delivery of the impacts set out in the Improvement Plan. The narrative is supported by measures and / or milestones which evidence achievement. In addition, there is an assessment of the strategic risk and the level to which they are being controlled.

3.02   Individual sub-priority reports (22 in total) have been completed by each lead accountable officer. A summary of the reports has been brought together to provide a single report for Cabinet.

3.03   Appendix 1 provides a summary against each Improvement Plan priority of the RAG status for each high level activity, measure and

risk. Copies of the more detailed quarter 1 Improvement Plan monitoring reports are available in the Member's Library and on request. Members will receive respective reports when circulated with Overview and Scrutiny Committee agendas.

3.04 **Monitoring the progress of our activities**
Each of the sub-priorities have high level activities which are monitored over time. 'Progress' monitors progress against scheduled activity and has been categorised as follows: -

- RED: Limited Progress – delay in scheduled activity; not on track

- AMBER: Satisfactory Progress – some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track

- GREEN: Good Progress – activities completed on schedule, on track

A RAG status is also given as an assessment of our level of confidence at this point in time in achieving the 'outcome(s)' for each secondary priority. Outcome has been categorised as: -

- RED: Low – lower level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)

- AMBER: Medium – uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)

- GREEN: High – full confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)

3.05 In summary our overall progress against the high level activities is: -

PROGRESS

- We are making good (green) progress in 42 (53%).

- We are making satisfactory (amber) progress in 38 (48%).

- We are making limited progress (red) in 0 (0%).

OUTCOME

- We have a high (green) level of confidence in the achievement of 66 (83%).

- We have a medium (amber) level of confidence in the achievement of 14 (18%).

- We have a low (red) level of confidence in the achievement of 0 (0%).

3.06 **Monitoring our performance**
Analysis of performance against the Improvement Plan measures is

undertaken using the RAG (Red, Amber Green) status. This is defined as follows: -

PERFORMANCE

- RED equates to a position of under-performance against target.
- AMBER equates to a mid-position where improvement may have been made but performance has missed the target.
- GREEN equates to a position of positive performance against target.

OUTCOME

- RED equates to a forecast position of under-performance against target at year end.
- AMBER equates to a forecast mid-position where improvement may have been made but performance will miss target at year end.
- GREEN equates to a forecast position of positive performance against target at year end.

3.07   Analysis of current levels of performance shows the following: -

- 55 (57%) had achieved a green RAG status
- 39 (41%) had achieved an amber RAG status
- 2 (2%) had achieved a red RAG status

Analysis of predicted outcome levels of performance shows the following: -

- 76 (79%) forecast a green RAG status
- 20 (21%) forecast an amber RAG status
- 0 (0%) forecast a red RAG status

3.08   The measures which showed a red RAG status for current performance are: -

3.08a   2 measures within the sub-priority: Independent Living have a red RAG status for progress and an amber RAG status for outcome: -

The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant for children and young people
The outturn at the end of quarter 1 was 767 days against a target of 231 days.

The average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled

Facilities Grant for adults
The outturn at the end of quarter 1 was 369 days against a target of 247 days.

These measures are the national indicators for the timeliness of the delivery of major adaptations which go through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process. This applies to adaptations in owner/occupier dwellings only. For 2013/14 Flintshire was the second most improved Authority overall (DFGs for children and adults), reducing the average days to 246 (a reduction of 145 days) and our ranking in Wales to 13th from 21st in 2012/13. This improvement was a result of a combination of interventions.

However, in quarter 1 the time taken for adaptations for adults increased due to a reduction in staffing in Housing, causing a delay in the post-inspection works. Clearance to recruit to this post has been obtained, but it is expected that a similar impact on adaptation delays will be seen in quarter 2. In addition, more works are going through the minor adaptations route resulting in the remaining DFGs being more complex and therefore likely to take longer. In contrast, major adaptations completed in local authority dwellings, which do not go through the DFG process, are being completed in an average of 120 days. Other authorities have taken different policy decisions which mean that they include smaller and less complex works resulting in reduced average days for DFGs.

There was only one DFG completed for children in quarter 1; this was a complex case where the needs of the child changed several times throughout the course of the grant works; the adaptation was completed in 767 days.

3.09 **Monitoring our risks**
Analysis of the current (net) risk levels for the strategic risks identified in the Improvement Plan is as follows: -

- 7 (9%) are high (red)
- 42 (54%) are medium (amber)
- 29 (37%) are low (green)

3.10 The 7 high (red) risks are: -

3.10a 3 risks within the sub-priority Financial Strategy are currently assessed as being red (high risk): -

1) **Ensuring that capital and revenue resources are sufficient to operate effectively**
2) **Uncertainty in the level of Welsh Government Funding which represents 80% of the funding of council services**

These risks are assessed as high in recognition of the current

uncertainty of the budget gap going forward. The predicted reduction of between 1.5% and 4.5% for 2015/16 could mean a gap of between £12m and £18m.

The Council continues to pressure Welsh Government for earlier and more timely indication of indicative settlement to enable effective planning as well as seeking to influence Welsh Government to maximise the local discretion over available resources so that they can be allocated to local priorities and enable effective operation. Currently, a significant amount of fast paced work is on-going across the whole authority to develop longer term business plans that may propose alternative service delivery models with the aim of protecting services and creating greater cost efficiency. These plans will feed into further iterations of the MTFP, through the budget setting process. Potential options have been shared with Cabinet Members (early September) followed by the wider Membership in October. The first phase of public consultation is already underway. A second more detailed phase will take place in the autumn. Alongside this, specific interest groups are being consulted with during September e.g. Town and Community Councils.

3) Gaining agreement to a new corporate approach for fees and charges

The red (high) risk status reflects that work in this area is incomplete and that decisions will need to be taken which may introduce or increase some charges significantly. This is likely to be subject to challenge and debate. In addition, national charging policy set by Welsh Government and legislation place limitations which constrain cost recovery for some services.

3.10b 2 risks within the sub-priority Town and Rural Regeneration are currently assessed as being red (high risk): -

1) Maximising funding opportunities through external programmes to invest in our urban and rural areas

2) Ensuring sufficient project management capacity to successfully complete the programmes

The high (red) assessments for both risks reflects the end of the current Rural Development Plan (RDP) programme in September 2014 as well as the end of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme in June 2015. Close involvement is being maintained to influence the new RDP and ERDF programmes, but limited funding is available for rural and urban regeneration from WG and others.

At present the role of local government in the new RDP programme is unclear but it is likely there will be much less control. For the ERDF programmes priorities are now set and Flintshire has fed into regional prioritisation. The next steps are to start developing regional and local projects. However, whilst there is new temporary capacity to assist

with project delivery, which is funded through the programmes themselves, future capacity is uncertain.

3.10c **Keeping up with specialist demand such as meeting the specific needs of those with dementia and physical and learning disabilities** – sub-priority Extra Care Housing
Whilst the impact of this risk is reducing through the work being undertaken with partners to (1) extend extra care housing provision, (2) develop further accommodation designed for the frail elderly and (3) develop existing programmes aimed at integrated approaches to deliver health and social care services; the likelihood remains high given the growing demand for specialist services.

3.10d **Securing sufficient funding to maintain the Council's recycling service** – sub-priority Carbon Control and Reduction
Whilst the likelihood of the risk has been mitigated to a medium level the impact still remains high. Work is planned to investigate areas of good practice in other local authorities with the aim of helping to increase participation of local residents and boost potential income. Work is also planned which will improve the standards of 'meet and greet' at Household Recycling Centres to further encourage recycling and divert waste from landfill.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet Members are invited to determine if enough action has been taken to manage delivery of the Improvement Priority impacts.

4.02 To note the following: -

- the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of key activities which seek to deliver the impacts of the Improvement Plan;

- the performance against improvement plan measures and the predicted level of performance for year end; and

- the current (net) risk levels and targeted risk levels for the risks identified in the Improvement Plan and the arrangements to control them.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 There are no specific financial implications for this report. However the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan is aligned to resource the priorities of the Improvement Plan and the monitoring will help to inform future iterations.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 There are no specific poverty implications for this report. However poverty is a priority within the Improvement Plan and reporting against

activity to protect people from poverty is included in the Improvement Plan monitoring report.

7.00   ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01   There are no specific environmental implications for this report. However the environment is a priority within the Improvement Plan and reporting against activity to improve the environment is included in the Improvement Plan monitoring report.

8.00   EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01   There are no direct equality implications for this report.

9.00   PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01   There are no direct personnel implications for this report.

10.00   CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01   The Improvement Priorities are monitored by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees according to the priority area of interest.

11.00   CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01   All directorates have been consulted with regarding the reporting of relevant information.

12.00   APPENDICES

12.01   Appendix 1 – Improvement Plan Monitoring Summary

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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