

**Draft 2015/16 Improvement Plan
(Final Draft)**

DRAFT

Contents Page

- 02 Welcome to Flintshire County Council's Improvement Plan for 2015/16
- 03 Setting our Priorities and Judging our Performance
- 04 Priorities for the 2015/16 Improvement Plan
- 05 Following the Plan – An Easy Guide
- 05 What's changed for 2015/16?
- 07 Regulation, Audit and Inspection
- 07 How Consultation Informs our Plan
- 08 Priority Navigation Page
- 09 Priority: Housing
- 11 Priority: Living Well
- 15 Priority: Economy and Enterprise
- 17 Priority: Skills and Learning
- 21 Priority: Safe Communities
- 22 Priority: Poverty
- 25 Priority: Environment
- 28 Priority: Modern and Efficient Council
- 32 Statement of Responsibility
- 32 Contacts for Feedback and Review

Page numbers to be confirmed once document has been through Design

Welcome to Flintshire County Council's Improvement Plan for 2015/16

The latest version of our Improvement Plan sets out our priorities for the 2015/16 Council year and what we aim to achieve. Flintshire prides itself on being a council which performs highly for its local communities and one which is motivated by a set of strong social values.

Flintshire is a well-governed and progressive council. We are performing well as a direct provider and commissioner of public services, and as a partner to others. Our recent track record in key services such as education, social care, housing, anti-poverty and environment show that we do deliver on what we say we will do.

Everything we do is important to someone, so selecting a set of priorities for the year is never an easy task. We have set three shared priorities with our partners at a County level, and eight priorities for the Council itself. The Council's framework of eight priorities has been in place for several years and will be familiar.¹ Through our priorities we aim to make a real and noticeable impact.

We are under huge financial pressure during this period of unprecedented austerity. Despite this we still aim high on our priorities. If we fall short against our priorities it will be because of under-funding and not because we are not committed or are not capable.

The plan sets out the Council's eight priorities and all the detailed sub-priorities for action, where we will make a bigger impact this year, page by page. An explanation for the choice of each one is given.

For 2015/16 the priorities and sub-priorities have been reviewed to set:

- those that will continue into 2015/16 for sustained attention;
- those that can now be removed as further work is part of our day to day business e.g. Achieve the Wales Quality Housing Standard;
- those which could be merged e.g. Traffic and Road Management with Transport Infrastructure and Services; and
- emerging sub-priorities for e.g. Safeguarding and Developing Communities.

Over the five year life of the Council, 2015/16 being the fourth year, the full set of priorities will adapt, and the annual set of priorities selected for special attention will change according to need and circumstance.

We hope that you find the Plan both informative and uplifting. Your feedback on the Plan itself, and on what we aim to achieve, would be very welcome.

Insert pictures of Chief Exec and Leader

¹ Our priorities reflect the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to include the improvement aspects of: strategic effectiveness; service quality; service availability; fairness; sustainability; efficiency; and innovation.

Setting Our Priorities and Judging our Performance

The priorities for Flintshire as a County are set by the Council and its local public sector partners. We work together as a Local Service Board (LSB) combining our resources for the benefit of Flintshire.

The sub-priorities shown with a (insert shaking hands symbol) symbol (see diagram overleaf) denote those we share with our partners. These have been selected for special attention where we believe that concentrated effort by the partners working together will make a big difference to the communities of Flintshire. The sub-priorities are:

- Apprenticeships and Training
- Community Safety
- Integrated Community Social and Health Services

Partners include: Coleg Cambria, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Wales Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Welsh Government

The Council has also set a number of priorities for itself as an individual partner organisation. Setting priorities helps us focus our attention and resources on the things that matter most; these priorities are echoed in the Council's business plans. We are legally required to set priorities known as Improvement Objectives (under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009). We call these our Improvement Priorities.

In setting our Improvement Priorities we have to take a number of things into account from Welsh Government policy, to the expectations of our key partners, to our legal responsibilities, to the views of local people.

We then set our targets, and judge our performance against them by using a wide range of information both quantitative (performance judged by numbers) and qualitative (performance judged by feedback, the results of consultation etc.).

To ensure that we know how well we are doing in meeting the expectations for our priorities we have a series of 'measures' which we keep under regular review. These performance measures are set out for each of our priorities page by page. They are detailed more fully in the supporting document 'How we measure achievement'.

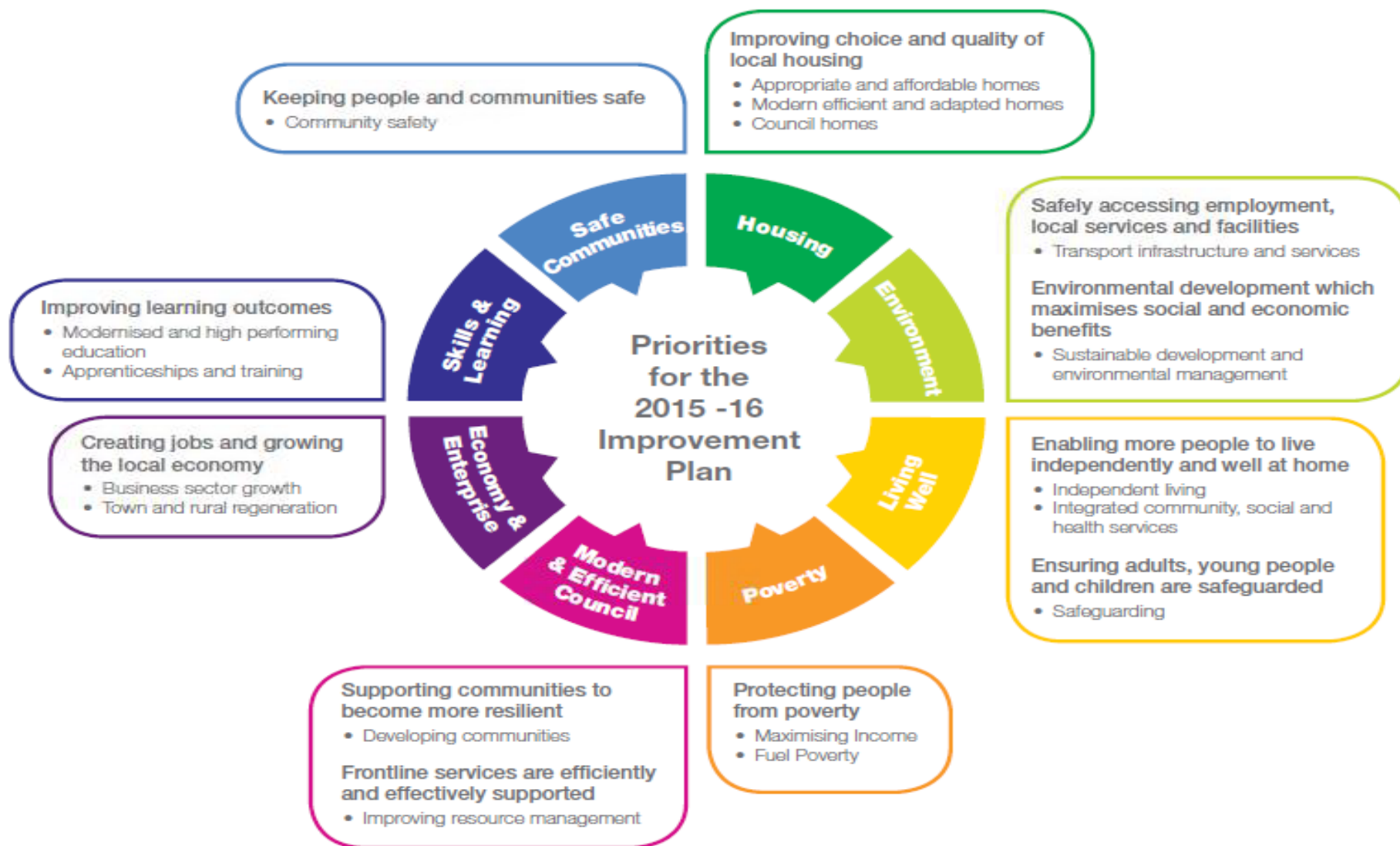
Each of our sub-priorities is described individually on the following pages. We provide information about:

- The impact - what difference will be made
- Why the priority is important in 2015/16
- What we will do
- How we will measure achievement
- What risks we need to manage
- What some of our language means

We will let you know how well we have performed against our outcomes in two ways:

- 1) regular reports to the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny committees, and
- 2) next years published Annual Performance Report for 2015/16.

Priorities for the 2015/16 Improvement Plan (Diagram requires some minor amends to reflect the updated sub-priority titles and impacts. Shaking hands symbols also to be inserted).



Following the Plan – An Easy Guide

The previous page sets out the Council's eight standing priorities and the sub-priorities which support them, where we aim to make a big impact in 2015/16.

Each standing priority is illustrated with a different colour. For example, **Skills and Learning** is dark blue and **Housing** is green. This colour coding should make the priorities easier to follow as the reader works through the document and also the supporting document 'How we measure achievement'.

On the graphic illustration we have set out against each priority the impacts we aim to make. Under each impact we list the sub-priorities where action and achievement will help achieve the impact. A sub-priority is simply a specific programme of work on a given theme. Taken together, success in achieving the aims of a set of sub-priorities will deliver the ambition for the bigger, standing priority of the same theme.

Every organisation has to prioritise its attention and its resources to make an impact. The Council has selected a number of the sub-priorities for special attention in the 2015/16 Council year. Each of these selected sub-priorities then has a dedicated page to itself later in the document.

For example on page 4, you will see the priority for **Poverty**.

This has a single impact:-

- **Protecting people from poverty**

This impact has two sub-priorities selected for attention in 2015/16. The reason for selection is explained on their dedicated pages (pages 22 and 24):-

- **Maximising Income**
- **Fuel Poverty**

What's changed for 2015/16?

We recognise that when reading the Plan from one year to the next it can be difficult to see why some priorities have not been carried forward. For this reason we have included a table overleaf to summarise why priorities have not been carried forward. In most cases this is because they are now considered to be 'business as usual'.

For example, the 2014/15 Plan included a sub-priority about achieving the Wales Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) which focused on three key activities that needed to be completed in order that operational works to meet the WHQS by 2020 could begin. Their successful completion means that we are now progressing with our detailed business plan for this programme. However, the work of the programme is still evident in the 2015/16 Plan as it supports other sub-priorities, including:

- Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes (page 10)
- Business Sector Growth (page 15)
- Apprenticeships and Training (page 17)

2014/15 Sub-Priorities	Why has this sub-priority not been carried forward into the 2015/16 Plan
Extra Care Housing	The development of the extra care facilities in Flint and Holywell now feature as part of a wider sub-priority about the supply of appropriate and affordable homes (page 9). The key activities for 2014/15 concerning the agreement of the business model and funding arrangements were successfully completed.
Achieve the Wales Housing Quality Standard	The key activities for 2014/15 were successfully completed and operational works can commence to deliver the detailed business plan for the programme. The WHQS programme features in the 2015/16 Plan as a supporting activity for 3 sub-priorities as referred to above.
Social Enterprise	The activities undertaken by the Council to support the development of social enterprises is now well established and supports the sub-priority 'Developing Communities' (page 28).
Traffic and Road Management	A key activity for 2014/15 was the completion of the first phase of 20mph zones outside schools which was successfully completed. The remaining activities (implementation of road safety schemes and maintenance of road infrastructure) are on-going activities which support the sub-priority 'Transport Infrastructure and Services' (page 25)
Welfare Reform	The activities being undertaken to support people to manage the impacts of Welfare Reform continue. Work in this area now supports the broader sub-priority 'Maximising Income' (page 22).
Carbon Control and Reduction	The activities being undertaken to reduce and control our carbon emissions continue and now support the wider sub-priority 'Sustainable Development and Environmental Management' (page 27).
Organisational Change	These are all on-going areas of activity which have been pulled together under a single sub-priority 'Improving Resource Management' (page 30) which seeks to ensure that front line services are efficiently and effectively supported.
Financial Strategy	
People Change & Development	
Asset Strategy	
Procurement Strategy	
Access to Council Services	

Regulation, Audit and Inspection

As a public organisation the Council is regularly inspected to examine and challenge its performance and effectiveness. This work is mainly undertaken by a number of appointed bodies including Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW).

The latest report from the Wales Audit Office was the Corporate Assessment report of March 2015 (link to Corporate Assessment Report). It stated that *“the Council has established a wide-ranging set of clearly-stated priorities that have a broad base of support within the Council and among partners”*.

In addition the report commented on: *“The Council sets out its vision clearly within its Improvement Plan, as required by the Local Government Measure 2009 (the Measure). For 2014-15, the Council’s coherent set of eight strategic priorities is underpinned by more detailed sub-priorities, some of which are identified clearly as areas of particular focus during the year. Though wide-ranging, the Council’s vision demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement, reflected by targets for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its services, particularly those associated with its in-year Improvement Objectives.”*

The format and content of the Plan was also commented upon: *“The Council has worked hard to improve the quality of this key plan and the Improvement Plan for 2014-15 is a clear and accessible document that sets out far more clearly than before what the Council plans to do and how its success might be measured and evaluated.”*

Our Annual Performance Report 2014/15 will contain more detailed findings of the work of our Auditors/Regulators along with our responses.

How Consultation Informs our Plan

The priorities set for the Improvement Plan were, from the outset, based on a wide range of previous consultations in service areas with both partners and representative groups (e.g. community safety, anti-poverty, education, economic development) and, in some cases, service users directly (e.g. housing).

There has been no one intensive consultation exercise on the Plan itself, by local choice, given this background. Elected members, on behalf of the communities they represent, have contributed to setting the priorities of the Council and used their representative role to test the relevance of the Plan against local public opinion. This has been facilitated through the sharing of the draft plan with all elected members and through its presentation at a workshop to which all elected members were invited. Feedback has been used to develop this final version of the Plan. In addition, elected members have been consulted on the targets and milestones to be used to measure achievement of the Plan and ensure there is sufficient pace and ambition.

Consultation on all parts of the Plan is continuous with stakeholders and Welsh Government. The Council remains open to feedback on the plan and amending it at any time following receipt of feedback as well as through new service based consultations.

Sub-priority Navigation Page

Pages	Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact	Corresponding page numbers in the 'How we measure achievement' supporting document
9	Housing	Appropriate and Affordable Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing	2 & 3
10		Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes		4 & 5
11&12	Living Well	Independent Living	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home	6 & 7
13		Integrated Community Social and Health Services		8 & 9
14		Safeguarding		Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded
15	Economy & Enterprise	Business Sector Growth	Creating jobs and growing the local economy	11 & 12
16		Town and Rural Regeneration		13 - 15
17&18	Skills and Learning	Apprenticeships and Training	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes	16 - 17
19&20		Modernised and High Performing Education		18 - 20
21	Safe Communities	Community Safety	Keeping people and communities safe	21 & 22
22	Poverty	Maximising Income	Protecting people from poverty	23 - 25
24		Fuel Poverty		26 - 27
25	Environment	Transport Infrastructure and Services	Helping people to access employment, local services and facilities	28 - 30
27		Sustainable Development and Environmental Management	Developing and protecting the environment	31 & 32
28	Modern and Efficient Council	Developing Communities	Supporting communities to be resilient	33 - 35
30		Improving Resource Management	Supporting front line services to perform well whilst being efficient	36 - 38

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Housing	Appropriate & Affordable Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Support the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population.
- Build on the success of existing extra care schemes in meeting changing needs and expectations.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Meet the new homeless prevention duties of the Wales Housing Act 2014.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Working more closely with the private rented sector:
 - The number of households where homelessness is prevented by the use of the private rented sector
 - The number of households where the Council has discharged its full statutory duty into private rented accommodation
- Maintaining the percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months (HHA/013)

2. Stimulate the growth of affordable housing.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Increasing the numbers of new Council and affordable homes through the SHARP programme
- Increasing the numbers of gifted new homes using the community infrastructure levy
- Adopting a Flintshire House Standard Design Specification for new build council led housing

3. Meet the duties of the Wales Housing Act 2014 for the traveller community.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Completing a Gypsy / Traveller accommodation assessment

4. Develop our extra care provision to provide units in Flint and Holywell.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Agree the design and delivery model for both schemes
- Securing full planning approval for both sites
- Commencing the building of both schemes

Risks to manage:

- Homelessness will remain a growing area of demand due to the current economic climate.
- Demand and aspirations for independent living will not be met.
- The supply of affordable housing will continue to be insufficient to meet community need.
- Customer expectations for the timeliness of adaptations undertaken through disabled facilities grants will not be met due to competing demands on resources.

What we mean by:

SHARP – Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme - programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years.

Community Infrastructure Levy - a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities in England and Wales to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area.

Extra Care – providing self-contained homes for people with varying levels of care and support needs on site.

Gypsy / Traveller Community – people with a cultural tradition of nomadism or who choose to live in a caravan.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Outcome / Impact
Housing	Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Provide good quality housing for residents and maximise funding opportunities to improve homes.
- Reduce the number of empty properties in Flintshire.
- Meet Welsh Government's target for all social housing to be brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Deliver financial support to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Repairing / improving 40 private sector dwellings through the Council's capital programme and Welsh Government's national Home Improvement Loan
- Improving the timeliness of adaptations, particularly those delivered through Disabled Facilities Grants (PSR/009a&b)

2. Reduce the number of long term vacant homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Bringing empty homes back into use for residential living through the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme

3. Deliver the six year asset management strategy to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard across all Flintshire Council homes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Completing WHQS work schemes to a value of £21M, in line with the Housing Asset Management Strategy

Risks to manage:

- The increased work programme to deliver the WHQS will not be met due to the scale of the programme.
- Council funding for adaptations and home loans will not be sufficient to meet demand.
- Financial assistance available to repair residents' homes is not taken up by residents.

What we mean by:

WHQS - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing.

Home Improvement Loan – a national loan scheme delivered by Local Authorities, that enables short to medium term loans to be provided to owners of sub-standard properties who meet the affordability criteria.

Adaptations – changes to a person's home to enable her/him to live as independently as possible.

Disabled Facility Grant – a grant available for larger adaptations to a person's home

Houses into Homes Scheme – A Welsh Government scheme to provide loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Independent Living	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Help people to live independently as they get older.
- Meet the challenges of dementia.
- Develop a model of support for persons with a disability which encourages independent living.
- Support whole families to live independently.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Ensure Care Home Provision within Flintshire enables people to live well and have a good quality of life.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Delivering the key Local Authority actions from the plan developed in response to the Older People's Commissioner's report on care home provision including:
 - Implementing the 'One Page Profile' in residential care settings
 - Delivering the dementia awareness training programme to all care homes
- Monitoring care home inspection reports
- Evaluating the impact of the pilot project being undertaken with Age Concern 'Listening Voices'
- Improving the quality of care through implementing pre-placement agreements for all care homes

2. Support greater independence for individuals with a frailty and / or disability.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Continuing the success rate of reablement (SCAM2L)
- Piloting a night support service and evaluate
- Establishing a baseline for the people offered advice and support through the single point of access

3. Strengthen and enhance prevention and early intervention services for vulnerable children and families.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Changing the operating arrangements to better support a new delivery model for prevention and early intervention services
- Ensuring service users are provided with advice and assistance from the Family Information Service (FIS) that enables them to make an informed decision about childcare and family support.

Risks to manage:

- Service users and carers do not take advantage of community and universal opportunities that would encourage greater independence.
- The quality of care home services will not meet required standards.
- Children and vulnerable families are not fully supported where multi-agency services and partners do not move toward an early intervention and prevention approach together.

What we mean by:

Reablement - an intense, short term approach to social care for individuals to gain or regain the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.

Older Peoples Commissioner - an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales.

One Page Profile - document stating how each residents would like to be cared for.

Listening Voices - pilot project aimed at improving social interaction for care home residents.

Family Information Service - provides free and impartial expert advice, information and guidance on childcare and early education places.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Integrated Community Social and Health Services	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Work with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to develop Health and Social Care models for the future.
- Avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and support early and successful hospital discharges.
- Co-ordinate the provision of support for service users more effectively with BCUHB and other providers.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Continue integrating community based health and social care teams to provide consistent service across localities.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Continuing to support people effectively through the use step up and step down beds where Health and Social Services can work together to avoid hospital admission and delayed discharge
- Increasing the number care homes in Flintshire who sign up to the Six Steps to Success which support high quality care for people at the end of their life
- Reviewing and agreeing funding arrangements for people in residential care through the Continuing Health Care (CHC) programme

2. Ensure that effective services to support carers are in place as part of the integrated social and health services.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Reviewing the Carer's Strategy to redefine the priorities for the next 5 years
- Agreeing and implementing plans to support carers
- Establishing a Dementia Respect Empathy and Dignity (RED) project within GP surgeries offering advice and information to carers

3. Influence the use of Intermediate Care Funds to support effective discharge from hospital and ensure a smoother transition between Health and Social Care services.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Reducing the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons (SCA/001)
- Gaining commitment from BCUHB to the continued funding of current provision

Risks to manage:

- Common goals between the Council and BCUHB are not achieved.
- Increased costs to the Council are incurred through new ways of working with partners and other providers.
- The transfer of funding between the Council and BCUHB may not go smoothly.
- Reductions in future funding to the Council and BCUHB may impact on the sustainability of services.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Living Well	Safeguarding	Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Safeguard and protect vulnerable people.
- To safeguard and protect people who are at risk of child exploitation or being trafficked.
- Develop further awareness and profile of the Council's approach to safeguarding including the wider issues of prevention of human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Prepare for the new / additional safeguarding requirements of the Social Services and Well Being (SSWB) Act.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Create a single Safeguarding Unit to manage safeguarding and protection processes for adults, young people and children.
2. Prepare for the new and additional safeguarding requirements of the SSWB Act.
3. Strengthen arrangements within all council portfolios to have clear responsibilities to address safeguarding.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Managing the risks identified through adult protection referrals (SCA/019)
- Establishing a Flintshire Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF) panel to manage the risks of sexual exploitation of children in the County and encourage wider ownership of safeguarding across the authority
- Meeting child protection conference timescales (SCC/004)
- Completing child protection reviews on time (SCC/034)

Risks to manage:

- Safeguarding arrangements do not meet the requirements of the SSWB Act.
- Adults, young people and children are not sufficiently safeguarded.

What we mean by:

Human Trafficking – 'trade in people, most commonly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labour or for the extraction of organs or tissues.

Sexual Exploitation – the use of another person in non-consensual sex for profit.

Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 - An Act to reform social services law to make provision about improving well-being outcomes.

Adult at Risk – A person over the age of 18 who is (a) experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

SERAF – Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework

Priority	Sub-Priority	Outcome / Impact
Economy and Enterprise	Business Sector Growth	Creating jobs and growing the local economy

This is a priority in year because we need to:

- Meet the employment needs of local people.
- Attract businesses to the area to support economic growth.
- Develop the energy and advanced manufacturing sectors in line with regional and national priorities.
- Grow the local economy creating opportunities for all sectors of our community.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Promote Flintshire as a recognised centre for energy and advanced manufacturing.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Converting enquiries to investment within Flintshire

2. Support the growth of the existing businesses in Flintshire, to maximise opportunities for investment.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Creating and safeguarding jobs within Flintshire
- Creating jobs within Flintshire through our large scales capital programmes (WHQS and SHARP)

3. Improve the local broadband infrastructure to encourage investment in economic growth.

Achievement will be measured through: -

- Rolling out superfast broadband across Flintshire in line with the Welsh Government programme of works for 2015/16

Risks to manage:

- Some areas within Flintshire will not be covered by superfast broadband if the joint project between Welsh Government and BT stalls.
- Businesses are not sufficiently supported to maximise opportunities presented to them through major transformational projects within Flintshire.

What we mean by:

Enterprise Zone – a Welsh Government initiative to stimulate growth and support business in designated areas.

WHQS – Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing

SHARP – Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme - programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years

Superfast Broadband - download speeds in excess of 24 Megabytes per second (Mbps)

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Economy and Enterprise	Town and Rural Regeneration	Creating jobs and growing the local economy

This is a priority in year because we need to:

- Protect the commercial and business viability of our town centres and rural areas.
- Protect the vitality of town centres as centres for economic activity and social contact.
- Support the local and regional economy through the provision of sustainable infrastructure.
- Develop the visitor economy to maximise benefit to the County.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Deliver an integrated programme of regeneration for Deeside.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Implementing the key actions of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme, including:
 - i) redeveloping vacant sites and properties
 - ii) providing grant assistance to high street businesses
 - iii) providing skills and training opportunities
- Developing an over-arching regeneration strategy for Deeside

2. Develop and implement long-term regeneration plans for Town Centres.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Completing key actions as set out in the Town Centre plans through the completion of the streetscape improvement projects
- Progressing the Flint regeneration programme through:
 - i) the completion of the maisonette demolition;
 - ii) the successful appointment of a lead contractor for their replacement; and
 - iii) the completion of the St. Mary's Church square improvements.
- Monitoring trends in ground floor commercial vacancy rates

3. Increase the economic benefits to Flintshire of visitors coming into the County.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Developing new electronic promotion and communication tools e.g. website
- Using alternative methods of distribution for promotional materials
- Monitoring the value and volume of tourism expenditure in Flintshire

Risks to manage:

- Opportunities to access external funding programmes to invest in our urban and rural areas are not maximised.
- Opportunities to access funding to invest in the promotion of tourism are not maximised.
- External funding sources are often weighted towards urban regeneration with funding for rural regeneration being limited.

What we mean by:

Vibrant and Viable Places – Welsh Government's regeneration framework launched in March 2013 with the vision that everyone in Wales should live in well-connected, vibrant, viable and sustainable communities with a strong local economy and good quality of life.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Skills and Learning	Apprenticeships and Training	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Extend and improve the education, employment and training opportunities available for people.
- Improve the employment prospects of local people to meet the needs of local employers.
- Help young people take the step from education to employment.
- Reduce barriers to engagement, ensure equality of access and participation opportunities for all children and young people.

What we will do in 2015/16

1. Work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities, communicated through the Common Application Process (CAP).
2. Increase training and apprenticeship opportunities for local people through our major capital programmes (WHQS and SHARP).
3. Support the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network.
4. Support the development of two academies focusing on Retail and Construction for over 18's leading to employment.
5. Implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework for learners in danger of disengaging through:
 - Targeting vocational and employability skills
 - Enhancing personal support, including coaching, mentoring and help with transition
 - Increasing the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for young people in the youth justice service; to better engage with post-custody education, training and employment prior to release.

Achievement will be measured through

- Increasing the numbers of training and apprenticeship opportunities started as a result of the WHQS and SHARP contracts.
- Improving the local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects through improved qualifications.
- Increasing the numbers of learners achieving the Level 1 Threshold
- Securing high levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training
- Reducing the number of 18 – 24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance
- Rolling out ROTL to new institutions/partners

Risks to manage

- Local employers and learning providers do not work closely enough to identify and meet the skills based needs of the future.
- Training places will not match current and future employer aspirations and needs.

What we mean by:

Common Application Process (CAP) – online application process, supporting the introduction and roll out of the new Youth Guarantee.

Young Entrepreneur Programme – an opportunity for young people to work with mentors on their business ideas.

Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network – employers working together to support Entrepreneurship Programmes.

Construction and Retail Academies – deliver construction and retail training to meet the current needs of the labour market.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework – This framework aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Youth Justice Service – aims to prevent children and young people under 18 from offending or re-offending.

Level 1 Threshold – 16 year old learners achieve five or more A*-G grades at GCSE or equivalent.

WHQS – Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing

SHARP – Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme - programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Skills and Learning	Modernised and High Performing Education	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

This is a priority this year because we need to

- Achieve the best educational outcomes for children and young people who are at risk of child exploitation or being trafficked.
- Support the national Welsh Government priorities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment.
- Respond to national reforms to curriculum and assessment models.
- Work effectively with partners across the region to successfully implement the National Model for Regional Working.
- Make more efficient use of education resources through School Modernisation.

What we will do in 2015/16

Make a difference through our Education & Youth Improvement and Modernisation Strategy by raising standards through: -

1. Working effectively with the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) to:
 - share best teaching practice and resources across schools and the region;
 - identify and target support for those schools most in need;
 - develop the capacity of schools to respond to national initiatives and curriculum reforms; and
 - improve skills in literacy and numeracy.
2. Reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage, including through the Families First Programme (2015-17) and Flintshire's Integrated Youth Services Strategy, (2014-18), "Delivering Together".
3. Improving outcomes for Looked After Children and young people exiting the Youth Justice System.
4. Developing and implementing a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, including continuing to implement the 21st Century School (Band A) programme.

Achievement will be measured through

- Improving outcomes in Mathematics, English/Welsh 1st Language and Core Subject Indicator at Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 & 3 (includes EDU/003 & EDU/004)
- Improving outcomes in Key Stage 4 including Level 2 Inclusive Threshold, Capped Points Score and A*-A Threshold (EDU/017)
- Raising standards achieved by learners who are entitled to free school meals.
- Improving the number of hours in education, training or employment that young people in the youth justice system have access to
- Completing key milestones for the 21st Century School and School Modernisation programmes

Risks to manage

- Schools do not receive and/or make best use of the support they need from the Council and GwE.
- Numbers of school places will not be sufficient to meet the future demands of changing demographics.
- Limited funding to address the backlog of known repair and maintenance works in Education & Youth assets will be further reduced to meet new pressures on the Education and Youth budgets.

What we mean by:

Families First Programme – a sub-regional programme providing multi-agency systems and support, focusing on prevention and early intervention, particularly for those living in poverty.

Youth Justice Service – aims to prevent children and young people under 18 from offending or re-offending.

Core Subject Indicator – learners achieve the expected level in Mathematics, English or Welsh 1st language and Science

Level 2 Inclusive Threshold – 16 year old learners achieve five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including Mathematics and English/Welsh First Language

Capped Points Score – 16 year old learners are awarded points for each grade they achieve. The best eight subjects then make their Capped Points Score.

A*-A Threshold – 16 year old learners achieve five or more A* or A grades at GCSE

21st Century Schools – a national programme of funding to improve school buildings and environments

School Modernisation – the process by which the Local Authority ensures there are a sufficient number of high quality school places, of the right type in the right locations

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Safe Communities	Community Safety	Keep people and communities safe

This is a priority this year because we need to

- Support victims of domestic abuse.
- Minimise the impact of substance misuse on the individuals, their families and communities in the County.
- Continue to manage anti-social behaviour and increase public confidence in how we do that.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Develop a plan to deliver the key outcomes of the North Wales Safer Communities Board (NWSCB) Community Safety Plan.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Agreeing a delivery framework by the NWSCB
- Flintshire Local Service Board (LSB) adopting the key priorities of the regional Community Safety Plan

2. Contribute to the delivery of the North Wales Community Safety Plan priorities:

- Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on high risk repeat victims
- Manage the impacts of anti-social behaviour in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Manage the impacts of substance misuse through improved service provision

Achievement will be measured through:

- Addressing high risk repeat instances of domestic abuse
- Formally agreeing a procedure to allow public space protection orders (PSPOs) to be granted
- Monitoring the number of formal consultations for PSPOs
- Continuing to meet Welsh Government targets for 'Completed treatments' and waiting times for substance misuse services

3. Reduce fear of crime by making best use of the latest technologies including closed circuit television (CCTV).

Achievement will be measured through:

- Developing a new sustainable model of CCTV provision within Flintshire

Risks to Manage:

- New Community Safety Partnership arrangements will not be effective enough to fully deliver its priorities.
- Funding for the provision of CCTV with local partners will not be sustainable in the long term.

What we mean by:

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) – behaviour likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress to members of the public not of the same household as the perpetrator.

Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 – introduces reforms to existing legislation by providing professionals and organisations with greater flexibility to deal with ASB situations.

PSPOs - provides councils with a flexible power to put into place local restrictions, to address various ASB issues in public places.

Substance Misuse – the continued use of drugs or alcohol despite negative consequences to the individual using, their friends, family and the community.

CCTV – to prevent and respond to crime and disorder.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Poverty	Maximising Income	Protecting people from poverty

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Support people to manage the ongoing impact of Welfare Reform.
- Help people claim the benefit they are entitled to.
- Help people manage their financial commitments.
- Reduce the risk of poverty for families, children and young people.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Help children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty achieve their potential.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Increasing the numbers of free quality, part-time childcare sessions provided for 2-3 year olds through the Flying Start Programme.
- Increasing the numbers of parents receiving an enhanced Health service through the Flying Start Programme.
- Increasing the numbers of parents accessing Parenting programmes
- Increasing the number of speech, language and communication structured and unstructured sessions for parents and children (Flying Start)

2. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Assisting Flintshire residents to maximise their income
- Supporting Flintshire residents to claim additional benefits
- Assisting Flintshire residents to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits to which they are entitled
- Assisting people with Welfare Reform changes through the effective application of the Council's DHP Policy
- Supporting Flintshire resident to better manage their financial commitments
- Monitoring the speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims: i) new claims ii) change of circumstances

3. Support the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) within Flintshire.

Achievement will be measured through

- Assisting Universal Credit claimants referred for Personal Budgeting support
- Assisting Universal Credit claimants assisted with on-line access
- Processing enquiries received from the Universal Service Centre by Flintshire County Council's Housing Benefit Service relating to housing costs

Risks to manage

- Demand for advice and support services will not be met.
- Debt levels will rise if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent.
- The local economy will suffer if residents have less income to spend.
- Resources to meet the requirements of the Universal Credit roll-out will not be sufficient.

What we mean by

- **Welfare Reform** - a range of measures introduced by Central Government to reform the Welfare Benefits system
- **Flying Start Programme** - A Welsh Government early years programme for families with children in key areas of Flintshire which aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children aged under 4.
- **Parenting programmes** - designed to improve parental effectiveness by providing a clear parenting philosophy and a set of positive parenting skills and strategies.

- **Universal Credit** – new benefit which replaces the current means tested benefit for working age claimants

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Poverty	Fuel Poverty	Protecting people from poverty

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Reduce the impact of welfare reform.
- Reduce the impact of rising fuel costs.
- Help meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for council stock.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Help residents to access funding support to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes.

Achievements will be measured through:

- The number of private homes receiving energy efficiency measures
- Reducing the overall annual fuel bill for residents
- Reducing annual carbon emissions

2. Deliver energy efficiency measures to Council homes.

Achievements will be measured through:

- The number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures
- Reducing the overall annual fuel bill for tenants in Council homes

3. Develop a best practice procurement solution for energy efficiency and renewable energy across Wales.

Achievements will be measured through:

- Creating and launching a national energy efficiency materials and supplier framework

Risks to manage:

- Residents do not take up the energy efficiency measures available as we hope.
- Available funding falls short of public demand.

What we mean by:

Funding support – access to grants or loans offered by the Council or delivered through partners.

Procurement solution – the establishment of a national framework agreement comprising energy efficiency retrofit suppliers and installers.

Renewable energy - Energy derived from natural processes (e.g. sunlight and wind) that are replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Environment	Transport Infrastructure and Services	People being able to safely access employment, local services and facilities

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Maintain accessibility to and between employment, homes, leisure, health and social activity.
- Support and enable safe and affordable travel services.
- Minimise congestion and delays on our highway network.
- Facilitate economic growth.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Use available funding to support Council priorities for accessing employment, health, leisure and education.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Successfully delivering WG funded schemes/feasibility studies funded through the Local Transport Fund 2015/16
- Consulting on the draft Active Travel Network Maps
- Publicising the Active Travel Network Maps for designated settlements
- Promoting and developing “Active Travel Routes” through partnership working

2. Prioritise the Council’s road infrastructure for repairs and maintenance and implement network improvement programmes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the condition of the highway’s infrastructure (THS/012)
- Monitoring the percentage of permits issued for road works for the purposes of coordinating and minimising disruption to Flintshire's highway network

3. Use available funding to support the Council's priorities to improve road safety on the County's highway network.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Delivering WG funded Grant Aided Safety Schemes to address collision trends and concentrations on the road network through the Welsh Government’s Grant Aid Programme
- Delivering WG funded schemes identified as part of Safe Routes in Communities
- Delivering WG funded road safety initiatives to reduce the risk of collisions of high risk groups

4. Develop and support community transport arrangements.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Reviewing the Council’s subsidised bus services
- Working with local communities to develop a Community Transport Strategy

Risks to manage:

- Sufficient funding to ensure our highways infrastructure remains safe and capable of supporting economic growth is not found.
- Sustainable transport options do not remain attractive to users.
- Sufficient funding will not be found to continue to provide subsidised bus services.

What we mean by:

Infrastructure – Facilities, systems sites and networks that are necessary for the County to function.

“Active Travel” – Walking and cycling as an alternative means to motorised transport for the purpose of making every day journeys.

Community Transport – Passenger transport schemes which are owned and operated by local community groups.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Environment	Sustainable Development & Environmental Management	Environmental development which maximises social and economic benefits

This is a priority in year because we need to:

- Balance the need for sustainable development with the protection of the natural environment.
- Continue to reduce our carbon emissions to meet Welsh Government targets and play our part in helping to address the consequences of climate change.
- Reduce the Council's energy costs.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Agree the Local Development Plan's vision, objectives and options to accommodate growth.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Agreeing a revised timetable and delivery agreement with Welsh Government
- Publicising the pre-deposit plan

2. Identify and develop large scale renewable energy schemes.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Securing planning approval for four solar farms on Flintshire County Council land
- Creating two solar farms on Flintshire County Council land
- Reducing our carbon emissions (EEFLM1)

3. Minimise waste sent to landfill and maximise opportunities for energy generation from waste.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Improving recycling performance (WMT/009b & WMT/011)
- Undertaking a feasibility study into the development of local waste streams e.g. wood waste into usable biomass energy generation resources
- Securing planning approval for the introduction of a waste transfer station in Greenfield

Risks to manage:

- Agreement and funding for the renewable energy schemes is not secured.
- Funding for the waste transfer station is not secured.
- The necessary planning approvals are not secured.
- Recycling and energy efficiency programmes are not supported by the public and employees.

What we mean by:

Renewable energy schemes – schemes designed to use energy from a source that is naturally replenished e.g. sunlight

Carbon reduction commitment – a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions in large public sector and private organisations.

Energy Generation – generation of heat and electricity.

Biomass – biological material derived from living, or recently living organisms.

Waste Transfer Station – Facility to bulk and bale waste for onward transportation.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Modern & Efficient Council	Developing Communities	Supporting communities to become more resilient

This is a priority in year because we need to:

- Develop the community and social sectors to support local communities to be more self-sufficient.
- Create alternative delivery models within the community and social sector to sustain very important public services.
- Develop social enterprises, who are able to act for the benefit of local communities and create both employment and economic opportunities.
- Realise social benefits in the community e.g. increasing volunteering and training opportunities for young people; keeping local money in the community.
- Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are recognised for their commitment.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Develop the community and social sectors through developing and growing social enterprises in Flintshire, in turn supporting and creating new forms of local business.

Achievement will be measured through

- Monitoring the number of new social enterprises developed
- Monitoring the number of social enterprises supported to thrive and prosper

2. Encourage volunteers and active citizens.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the impact of the local volunteering policy

3. Ensure community benefit through our commissioning of goods and services.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the percentage of community benefit clauses included in new procurement contracts.

4. Design and implement alternative delivery models (ADMs) to sustain important services to meet future need.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the level of efficiencies ADMs have supported.
- Monitoring the number of services sustained through delivery via alternative models.

5. Empower communities to run and manage facilities in their locality through Community Asset Transfers (CATs).

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the number of public assets safely transferred to the community

6. Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are not disadvantaged when accessing Council Services.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Risks to manage:

- The capacity and appetite of the community and social sectors.
- The willingness of the workforce and Trade Unions to embrace change.
- Market conditions which the new alternative delivery models face.
- Limitations on public funding to subsidise alternative models.

What we mean by:

Social Enterprise – businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are mainly reinvested for that purpose in the business or community.

Community Benefit Clauses - benefits to local communities from major procurements e.g. training and employment opportunities, community facilities.

Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) – new approaches to service delivery designed to sustain important services and meet future need.

Community Asset Transfers (CAT) – the leasehold transfer of a Flintshire County Council asset to an organisation with a social purpose who plans to use it for the benefit of the local community.

Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact
Modern & Efficient Council	Improving Resource Management	Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported

This is a priority in year because we need to:

- Manage with reducing resources.
- Continue to aim high despite reduced financial and people resources.
- Make the best use of our capability and capacity in challenging times.
- Have the right buildings in the right places for the right uses.
- Make our money go further through smarter purchasing.
- Achieve the highest possible standards of customer services.

What we will do in 2015/16:

1. Develop and implement a four year financial plan that reflects anticipated funding, costs and efficiencies to support strategic decision making.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Adopting an achievable plan to meet the £50m funding gap for 2015-2018
- Matching our priorities with revenue and capital investment
- Achieving our efficiency targets
- Achieving our big plans for change which modernise services and generate efficiencies

2. Implement the People Strategy to ensure the council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Monitoring the impact of the renewed appraisal system on performance
- Monitoring the impact of the new Employee Development and Talent Management scheme on retention of our capability
- Monitoring the impact of the People Strategy in service portfolios (CHR/002)

3. Rationalise the Council's use of corporate accommodation.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Reducing the floor space and costs of occupied office accommodation
- Increasing the number/percentage of employees who work in an agile way

4. Optimise purchasing efficiencies through the use of regional and national procurement collaborations and through the increased use of electronic solutions.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Making efficiencies through regional and national procurement collaborations
- Reducing the cost of procurement through the use of end to end electronic purchasing

5. Extend and improve customer access to Council information and services using technology and our Flintshire Connects Centres.

Achievement will be measured through:

- Increasing the number of services available through the Connects Centres and the number of customers using them
- Increasing usage of and positive customer feedback on our website

Risks to manage:

- The scale of the financial challenge.
- The capacity and capability of the organisation to implement necessary changes.
- The pace of procurement collaborations and our limited control over their development.
- Public attitude to accessing services on-line.

What we mean by:

Employee Development and Talent Management scheme – our scheme that seeks to encourage employee engagement, talent management, behaviour and competencies development, learning and skills development.

Procurement Collaborations – ways of purchasing goods and services within agreed terms and conditions.

Flintshire Connects Centres – simpler and more ‘joined up’ access to Council and other public sector services in County towns in a modern and welcoming environment.

Statement of Responsibility

This publication fulfils in part the statutory requirements to publish an annual Improvement Plan as part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure (2009). This is our ‘forward-looking’ document for the year. The second part of the statutory requirement is the Annual Performance Report which is our ‘backward-looking’ document and reviews performance against our objectives set for the previous year. This second report is published in October.

Contacts for Feedback and Review

On-going review about the Council’s priorities and this plan is available through our website where feedback forms are available for the public, our partners, our workforce and businesses. We would like to know what you think about our priorities and those for the future. We would value your feedback and hope that you can spend a few minutes to tell us what you think.

In the meantime our contacts for any initial observations are:

Policy and Performance Team:

Tel: 01352 702744

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This document is available in alternative formats or your own language on request.