

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 14 th March 2017
Report Subject	Private Sector Stock Condition survey 2016
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the key findings from the 2016 private sector stock condition survey. The survey was based on a sample of 1,223 dwellings and provides a benchmark of housing condition in Flintshire compared to a 2010 survey and the wider Wales or England context.

Generally the condition of the private sector housing stock is similar to that across Wales and England. The stock has improved in condition since the 2010 benchmark survey. The greatest incidence of poorer quality dwellings is in the growing private rented sector.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) programme in Deeside has improved the condition of the housing stock compared to comparator neighbourhoods. The programme is half way through delivery but future funding from Welsh Government is now uncertain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members review the key points arising from the 2016 private sector stock condition survey.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PRIVATE SECTOR STOCK CONDITION SURVEY 2016
1.01	<p>Local authorities have an obligation under the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions in their area under review for all tenures, including private sector housing. To meet this obligation, Flintshire County Council commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to carry out a survey on a random sample of private sector housing within the County. The data collected provides a significant evidence base to inform the Council's Housing Strategy. The survey sampled 1,223 private sector dwellings. This report summarises the key findings from the survey.</p>
1.02	<p>The private rented sector has grown in significance in Flintshire (20% of dwellings compared to 14% in 2011) although is still smaller than many other areas (24% average across England - England Housing Survey). The sector has a number of key areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 40% of tenants had been living at the address for less than 2 years; with a consequent impact on the stability of households and on community cohesion; • Private rented homes are more likely to be in a poor condition with 25.4% in a non-decent condition compared to 18.1% for Flintshire as a whole. • Private rented homes are likely to be more energy inefficient with an average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 56 compared to 59 for Flintshire as a whole. <p>With the sector growing in importance and the Council discharging its homelessness duty into the sector the condition of dwellings is of particular importance.</p>
1.03	<p>The level of unfit dwellings in Flintshire has decreased significantly since the last survey in 2010. The number of dwellings with Category 1 hazards has dropped from 23.5% to 8.4%. Incidence of non-decent homes has reduced from 27.5% to 15.9%.</p>
1.04	<p>Energy efficiency across dwellings in Flintshire has improved with average SAP ratings increasing from 55 to 59.</p>
1.05	<p>The Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) programme, declared in 2012 in Deeside, has significantly reduced the incidence of Category 1 hazards to a level much closer to the Flintshire average. The NRA has seen a fall in dwellings with Category 1 hazards from 13.5% to 11.4%. In the 20% most deprived areas outside of the NRA the rate is 14.1% and for Flintshire as a whole it is 9.2%. The programme has only operated for half of its original 10 year programme and future delivery is uncertain due to Welsh Government funding constraints.</p> <p>For non-decent dwellings, the NRA now has an incidence of 25.3% compared to 29.7% for the most deprived areas and 18.1% for the county as a whole. Average SAP ratings have increased from 47-52 in 2010 to 58 in 2016, compared to an average of 59 for Flintshire as a whole.</p>

1.06	The Council will continue to seek external funding to deliver improvements to the condition and energy efficiency of the private sector housing stock in the most deprived areas of Flintshire.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None arising from this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The survey undertook a sample of 1,223 properties in Flintshire.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	No specific risks identified arising from this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Presentation on summary of high level responses.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Niall Waller Telephone: 01352 702137 E-mail: niall.waller@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Category 1 hazards – The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The Act differentiates between Category 1 and Category 2 hazards. Local authorities have a duty to take ‘the most appropriate course of action’ in respect of any hazard scored as Category 1. Authorities have discretionary power to take action with Category 2 hazards (which do not score past the threshold for Category 1). Examples of Category 1 Hazards are excess cold, carbon monoxide, fire risk, and electrical safety. Decent Homes Standard – The Decent Homes Standard is a broad measure of housing condition which was introduced in England to ensure all public sector housing met a minimum standard by 2010. It was used as a benchmark for this report as more recent data was available. Decent homes

must meet a series of criteria including being free from hazards, capable of being heated effectively and with reasonably up to date facilities.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) – declared in 2012, the NRA programme combined Welsh Government and Council funding to improve the condition of the private sector housing stock. The programme has operated in Deeside where the highest proportion of poor quality dwellings had been identified.

Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) – “The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used by the Government to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. Its purpose is to provide accurate and reliable assessments of dwelling energy performances that are needed to underpin energy and environmental policy initiatives”. (Source: UK Government)