

## **COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

Minutes of the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024

**PRESENT:**                      **Councillor Marion Bateman (Chair)**

Councillors:                      Gillian Brockley, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rosetta Dolphin, David Evans, Debbie Owen, Kevin Rush and Dale Selvester, Sean Bibby, Anthony Turton, Ted Palmer, Helen Brown, Paul Johnson,

**ALSO PRESENT:**              Councillor: Bernie Attridge attended as an observer

**SUBSTITUTION:**              Councillor: Rob Davies (for Chrissy Gee)

**CONTRIBUTORS:**              Councillor Sean Bibby (Cabinet Member for Housing); Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement; Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities); Service Manager (Housing Assets); Housing & Prevention Service Manager and Business Performance Team Manager

**IN ATTENDANCE:**              Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

17.    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**  
Councillor Ted Palmer declared a personal interest as a Council tenant.

18.    **MINUTES** ([Link to Recording](#))

The [minutes](#) for the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and [minutes](#) for the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting were submitted for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

The at the minutes for the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meetings be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19.    **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** ([Link to Recording](#))

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current [Forward Work Programme](#) and [Action Tracking](#) documents.

The Facilitator advised that the following annual reports would be added to the FWP following the meeting:-

- Housing Support Grant Programme

- Homeless
- Common Housing Register

Councillor Helen Brown requested that the following reports be added to the FWP for consideration by the Committee at future meetings:-

- Estate and Property Management – to include clean and tidy neighbourhoods, protecting our investment and void properties and the re-introduction of EVA's and tenancy management inspections;
- NEW Homes – options paper on the pros and cons of keeping NEW Homes as a trading company; and
- Options on the re-designation of Sheltered Housing properties deemed in low demand.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;

(b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and

(c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

**20. HOUSING RENT INCOME ([Link to recording](#))**

The Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement presented a [report](#) on the operational update for housing rent collection rates, including the 2023/24 year-end outturn rent and the 2024/25 current position.

In response to a request from Councillor Helen Brown, the Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement agreed to speak to Service Manager (Housing Assets) following the meeting to discuss what data sets around Council Tax losses could be provide in future update reports.

The Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement Dave Barnes also agreed to provide an analysis of write offs, to include information on the reasons for the write offs in future reports.

In response to a question from Councillor Dale Selvester, the Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement agreed to review what data sets could be provided around the financial impact of no longer collecting water rates.

In response to further questions from Councillor Dale Selvester, the Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement agreed to provide anonymised analysis on some of the higher rent arrear cases in future reports.

The Chair asked if the Committee could be provided with an example of a Tenancy Contract. The Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities) agreed to provide this following the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the year end outturn for 2023/24 and the latest financial position for rent collections in 2024/25.

**21. COST OF LIVING & WELFARE REFORM ([Link to recording](#))**

The Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities) presented a [report](#) to provide information around the impacts of Welfare Reform and the cost of living crises on residents and the range of measures being implemented to help those affected to try, where possible, to mitigate the negative impacts.

Councillor Helen Brown recommended an additional recommendation, that a letter be written by the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, to the Minister for Works and Pensions to ask for consideration to be given to removing the cruel bedroom subsidy, which would elevate people out of the cost of living crisis.

Following a question around the winter fuel allowance, the Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities) said that she would circulate a link to the Council's website showing information and the location of warm hubs across the County, to the Committee following the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the Committee support the ongoing work to manage the impacts that welfare reform and the cost-of-living crisis has, and would continue to have, on some of the most vulnerable residents; and

(b) That the Committee note the support measures implemented via Welsh Government and the Council to mitigate impacts.

(c) That the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, write to the Minister for Works and Pensions to ask for consideration to be given to removing the cruel bedroom subsidy, which would elevate people out of the cost of living crisis.

**22. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024 TO INCORPORATE THE COUNCIL PLAN END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/2024 ([Link to recording](#))**

The Business Performance Team Manager presented the [report](#) which set out an analysis, of how well the Council had performed against the Well-being Objectives, Priorities and Sub priorities at the end of the financial year 2023/24 of the Council Plan (2023-28). The Annual Performance Report also provided a summary of performance regarding other key areas of focus within the Council, i.e., Partnership and Collaboration Activity and the Strategic Equality Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee support the 2023/24 Annual Performance Report, combined with the Council Plan End of Year 2023/24 Performance report, noting the performance achieved.

**23. VOID MANAGEMENT ([Link to recording](#))**

The Service Manager - Housing & Assets presented the key figures and key activities against the void action plan, as outlined in the [briefing note](#).

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

**24. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 11.23 a.m.)

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**Chair**

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