

# Pecyn Dogfen Gyhoeddus

**Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr**

Chief Officer (Governance)

Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



Swyddog Cyswllt:

Ceri Shotton 01352 702305

ceri.shotton@siryfflint.gov.uk

At:

Y Cynghorwyr: Pam Banks, Gillian Brockley, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rob Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, David Evans, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer, Kevin Rush, Ant Turton a +1 Aelod o'r Gwir Annibynwyr

5 Rhagfyr 2024

Annwyl Gynghorydd,

**RHYBUDD O GYFARFOD HYBRID**  
**PWYLLGOR TROSOLWIG A CHRAFFU CYMUNED A TAI**  
**DYDD MERCHER, 11EG RHAGFYR, 2024 11.00 AM**

Yn gywir

Steven Goodrum

Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Democraidd

Sylwch: Gellir mynychu'r cyfarfod hwn naill ai wyneb yn wyneb yn Ystafell Bwyllgor Delyn, Cyngor Sir y Fflint, Yr Wyddgrug, Sir y Fflint neu ar-lein.

Bydd y cyfarfod yn cael ei ffrydio'n fyw ar wefan y Cyngor. Bydd y ffrydio byw yn dod i ben pan fydd unrhyw eitemau cyfrinachol yn cael eu hystyried. Bydd recordiad o'r cyfarfod ar gael yn fuan ar ôl y cyfarfod ar <https://flintshire.publici.tv/core/portal/home>

Os oes gennych unrhyw ymholiadau, cysylltwch ag aelod o'r Tîm Gwasanaethau Democraidd ar 01352 702345.

# R H A G L E N

## 1 PENODI CADEIRYDD

**Pwrpas:** I roi gwybod i'r Pwyllgor pwy yw'r Cadeirydd sydd wedi'i enwebu am weddill blwyddyn y Cyngor, yn dilyn cyfarfod y Cyngor Sir ar 4 Rhagfyr 2024.

## 2 PENODI IS-GADEIRYDD

**Pwrpas:** Penodi Is-Gadeirydd ar gyfer y Pwyllgor.

## 3 YMDDIHEURIADAU

**Pwrpas:** I dderbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriadau.

## 4 DATGAN CYSYLLTIAD (GAN GYNNWYS DATGANIADAU CHWIPIO)

**Pwrpas:** I dderbyn unrhyw ddatganiad o gysylltiad a chynghori'r Aelodau yn unol a hynny.

## 5 COFNODION (Tudalennau 5 - 8)

**Pwrpas:** I Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 13 Tachwedd, 2024.

## 6 RHAGLEN GWAITH I'R DYFODOL AC OLRHAIN CAMAU GWEITHRED (Tudalennau 9 - 20)

Adroddiad Hwylusydd Trosolwg a Chraffu Cymunedol ac Addysg

**Pwrpas:** Ystyried Rhaglen Gwaith i'r Dyfodol y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu Cymuned a Tai a rhoi gwybod i'r Pwyllgor am y cynnydd yn erbyn camau gweithredu o gyfarfodydd blaenorol.

## 7 CYNLLUN GWEITHREDU GORWARIANT YN YSTOD Y FLWYDDYN 2024/25 (Tudalennau 21 - 26)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Tai ac Asedau) - Aelod Cabinet Cabinet Tai a Chymunedau

**Pwrpas:** Ystyried adrannau o'r Cynllun Gweithredu gorwariant yn ystod y flwyddyn 2024/25 sy'n berthnasol i'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu Cymunedau a Thai.

## 8 ADOLYGIAD AR SAFLE'R GAREJ (Tudalennau 27 - 46)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Tai ac Asedau) - Aelod Cabinet Cabinet Tai a Chymunedau

**Pwrpas:** Rhannu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf ynghylch yr Adolygiad ar Safle'r Garej, gan gynnwys gwybodaeth am y Matrics Parcio Ceir.

9 **Y WYBODAETH DDIWEDDARAF AM Y STRATEGAETH  
DDATGARBONEIDDIO** (Tudalennau 47 - 74)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Tai ac Asedau) - Aelod Cabinet Cabinet Tai a Chymunedau

**Pwrpas:** Rhannu'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf â'r Pwyllgor am y Strategaeth Ddatgarboneiddio.

10 **RHEOLI CARTREFI GWAG** (Tudalennau 75 - 76)

Adroddiad Prif Swyddog (Tai ac Asedau) - Aelod Cabinet Cabinet Tai a Chymunedau

**Pwrpas:** Rhoi diweddariad i'r Pwyllgor ar nifer cartrefi gwag a'r gwaith sy'n cael ei wneud i allu defnyddio'r cartrefi hyn eto.

**ARDDANGOSIAD O'R SYSTEM DRS**

Darparu arddangosiad o'r System DRS i Aelodau'r Pwyllgor ar ddiwedd y cyfarfod.

***Sylwch, efallai y bydd egwyl o 10 munud os yw'r cyfarfod yn para'n hirach na dwy awr.***

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 5

## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13 NOVEMBER 2024

Minutes of the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, 13 November 2024

**PRESENT:**                    **Councillor Rob Davies (Chair)**  
Councillors: Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rosetta Dolphin,  
David Evans, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer and Kevin Rush

**ALSO PRESENT:**        Councillors: Dave Hughes, Richard Lloyd and Andrew  
Parkhurst Bernie attended as observers

**SUBSTITUTIONS:**      Councillors: Ron Davies (for Pam Banks) and Alasdair  
Ibbotson (for Gillian Brockley)

**CONTRIBUTORS:**      Councillor Helen Brown (Cabinet Member for Housing and  
Communities); Councillor Paul Johnson (Cabinet Member for  
Finance and Social Value); Chief Officer (Housing and  
Communities); Housing & Prevention Service Manager and  
Service Manager - Housing & Assets

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

### 31. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

Councillor Ted Palmer declared a personal interest as a Council tenant.

### 32. **MINUTES** ([Link to recording](#))

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September be approved as a correct record.

### 33. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** ([Link to recording](#))

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented a [report \(agenda item number 4\)](#) to consider the current Forward Work Programme (FWP) and Action Tracking progress.

It was suggested that the Local Housing Market Needs Assessment report be moved back to the January 2025 meeting on the FWP.

In response to a request from Councillor Kevin Rush for an inspector to be present during the site visit to a void property and information on the costs pre-inspection and costs following the inspection to be provided, the Service Manager - Housing & Assets suggested that this information be provided to Members once the inspection had been completed and following the void site visit.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved, as amended; and
- (b) That the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

**34. BUDGET 2025/26 – STAGE 2 ([Link to recording](#))**

The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) and Strategic Finance Manager presented a [report \(agenda item number 5\)](#) to review cost pressures and associated risks for the Community & Education & Youth portfolio and Schools' budget, under the remit of this Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee acknowledge the Housing and Communities cost pressures, as outlined within the report, and confirm that the cost pressures should be taken forward as part of the 2025/26 budget.

**35. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 30 YEAR FINANCIAL BUSINESS PLAN ([Link to recording](#))**

The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) and Strategic Finance Manager presented a [report \(agenda item number 6\)](#) to present for consideration the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year Financial Business Plan and the proposed HRA Budget for 2025/26.

A recorded vote was requested for which the requisite number of Members stood in support.

**For the recommendations**

Councillors: Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, David Evans, Dennis Hutchinson, Alasdair Ibbotson, Ted Palmer and Kevin Rush

**Against the recommendations**

There were no votes against

**Abstentions**

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee support the HRA budget for 2025/26, as set out in the report;
- (b) That the Committee support the proposed minimum rent increase of 2.7%;
- (c) That the Committee support a garage rent increase of 2.7%;

- (d) That the Committee support the rent increase in service charges to full cost recovery;
- (e) That the Committee support the pressures and efficiencies as set out in Appendix A of the report; and
- (f) That the Committee support the proposed HRA Capital Programme for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix B of the report.

**36. INTENSIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESSNESS ACCOMMODATION ([Link to Recording](#))**

The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) and Housing & Prevention Service Manager presented a [report \(agenda item number 7\)](#) to outline 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.

It was suggested that if the recommendations were supported by Cabinet, D2 PropCo would be invited to provide a presentation to Members to provide information on successes from other Local Authorities and to showcase the service.

The recommendations/comments made by the Committee would be reported to Cabinet.

A recorded vote was requested for which the requisite number of Members stood in support.

**For the recommendations**

Councillors: Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rob Davies, Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, David Evans, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer and Kevin Rush

**Against the recommendations**

Councillor Alasdair Ibbotson

**Abstentions**

There were no abstentions

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee note the work undertaken to identify potential providers of an intensive housing management service for homeless accommodation;
- (b) That the Committee note the outcome of the Prior Information Notice (PIN) by way of testing the market; and
- (c) That the Committee support the direct award to D2 PropCo to engage them as a partner to provide an intensive housing management solution for homeless accommodation.

**37. 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 \(agenda item 8\)](#).

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

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

None.

(The meeting started at 10am and ended at 11.57am)

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**Chair**

Meetings of the Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee are webcast and can be viewed by visiting the webcast library at <http://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>



# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 6



## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December, 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
<b>Report Author</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

### RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	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.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING</b>
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?</li><li>2. Is it an area of major change or risk?</li><li>3. Are there issues of concern in performance?</li><li>4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?</li><li>5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?</li><li>6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?</li></ol>
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Community & Housing OSC

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>Improvement Plan:</b> the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME  
**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author
<b>Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2025</b>  <b>10am</b>          <b>Tudalen 13</b>	<b>Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Annual Update</b>	To provide an update on the WHQS, including information on the Voids Lettable Standards and disrepair costs.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager Housing Assets
	<b>Food Poverty Update</b>	To provide an update in relation to the work that has been ongoing and is planned in relation to the food poverty priority area.	Assurance Monitoring	Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)
	<b>Council Plan (2023-28) Mid-year Performance Report 2024/25</b>	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.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
	<b>Corporate Risk Register</b>	To review the Council's Corporate Risk Register.	Assurance Monitoring	Strategic Performance Advisor
	<b>Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site Provision</b>	To present the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.	Consultation	Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025</b>  <b>10am</b>	<b>Common Housing Register (Single Access Route to Housing - SARTH)</b>	To provide an annual update on the Common Housing Register.	Assurance Monitoring	Housing & Prevention Service Manager

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	<p><b>Housing Support Grant Programme</b></p> <p><b>Local Housing Market Needs Assessment</b></p> <p><b>NEW Homes review</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on the Housing Support Grant Programme.</p> <p>To present the Local Housing Market Needs Assessment</p> <p>To outline the outcome of the NEW Homes review.</p>	<p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Consultation</p>	<p>Housing &amp; Prevention Service Manager</p> <p>Strategic Housing &amp; Delivery Programme Manager</p> <p>Strategic Housing &amp; Delivery Programme Manager</p>
<p><b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am</b></p> <p>Tuesday 14</p>	<p><b>Housing Rent Income</b></p> <p><b>Welfare Reform Update</b></p> <p><b>Housing Strategy</b></p>	<p>To provide the latest operational update on the collection of housing rent and to set out proposed changes to the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy to strengthen the rent enforcement process.</p> <p>To provide an update on the impacts of welfare reforms and the work that is ongoing to mitigate them.</p> <p>To consider the Housing Strategy</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Consultation</p>	<p>Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement</p> <p>Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)</p> <p>Strategic Housing &amp; Delivery Programme Manager</p>
<p><b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am</b></p>	<p><b>Variation of Contracts</b></p> <p><b>Homelessness</b></p>	<p>To present the proposed variations to Tenancy Contracts. To include information on Estate &amp; Property Management.</p> <p>To provide an update to the</p>	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)</p> <p>Housing &amp; Prevention Service Manager</p>

## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

	<p><b>Sheltered Housing Review Update</b></p> <p><b>Corporate Risk Register</b></p>	<p>Committee on the Homelessness Services.</p> <p>To provide an update on the Sheltered Housing Review, to include information on options around the re-designation of properties.</p> <p>To review the Council's Corporate Risk Register.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)</p> <p>Strategic Performance Advisor</p>
<p><b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am</b></p>				
<p><b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am</b></p> <p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Communal Heating Charges 2025/26</b></p> <p><b>STAR Survey</b></p>	<p>To consider the proposed heating charges in council properties with communal heating systems for 2025/26 prior to Cabinet approval.</p> <p>To present the outcome of the STAR Survey</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)</p> <p>Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)</p>
<p><b>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2025</b></p> <p><b>10am</b></p>	<p><b>Corporate Risk Register</b></p>	<p>To review the Council's Corporate Risk Register.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Strategic Performance Advisor</p>

### Items to be scheduled

## COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

- **Rent Income Pilot Scheme** – As suggested at 12.07.23 meeting

### REGULAR ITEMS

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
Quarterly / Annual	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Six monthly	<b>Welfare Reform Update /Housing Rent Income</b>	To provide an update on the impacts of welfare reforms and the work that is ongoing to mitigate them.	Service Manager - Revenues and Procurement / Service Manager (Housing Welfare and Communities)
Six monthly	<b>Update on NEW Homes &amp; Property Management</b>	To update Members on the work of the NEW Homes & Property Management	Strategic Housing & Program Delivery Manager
Annually –	<b>WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update</b>	To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. Report to include information around the use of local labour and number of apprentices and school leavers.	Service Manager – Housing Assets
Monthly	<b>Void Management</b>	To provide a detailed update to the Committee on Void properties and the work undertaken to bring the properties back into use.	Service Manager – Housing Assets



**ACTION TRACKING FOR THE COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
11.09.2024	5. Housing Rent Income	<p>In response to requests for additional information in future reports, the following was suggested/agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dave Barnes to speak to Sean O'Donnell following the meeting to discuss what data sets around Council Tax losses could be provide in future update reports;</li> <li>• Dave Barnes agreed to provide an analysis of write offs, to include information on the reasons for the write offs in future reports;</li> <li>• Dave Barnes agreed to review what data sets could be provided around the financial impact of no longer collecting water rates; and</li> <li>• Dave Barnes agreed to provide anonymised analysis on some of the higher rent arrear cases.</li> </ul>	<p>Dave Barnes / Sean O'Donnell</p> <p>Dave Barnes</p> <p>Dave Barnes</p> <p>Dave Barnes</p>	<p>Information to be included in the next update report on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025</p> <p>Sean O'Donnell currently liaising with Dave Barnes on which void properties could be removed from the Council Tax list due to major works etc.</p>	Ongoing
09.10.2024	6. Void Management	Members of the Committee to be invited to see a void property prior to works being carried out a void property once work had been completed.	Ceri Shotton / Sean O'Donnell	The Void Site Visit will be held at 10am on 21 <sup>st</sup> February, 2025. Confirmation of which properties will be visited will be circulated to Committee Members nearer the time.	Completed

				<p>In response to a request from Cllr Kevin Rush for an inspector to be present during the site visit and information on the costs pre-inspection and costs following the inspection. It is suggested that information on the inspection and the costs will be provided following the site visit and will be based on the property being viewed.</p>	
<p>13.11.2024</p>	<p>4. Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</p>	<p>It was suggested that the Local Housing Market Needs Assessment report be moved back to the January 2025 meeting on the FWP.</p>	<p>Ceri Shotton</p>	<p>In consultation with the Chief Officer and Chair, this will be reported to the Committee in February 2025. FWP updated to reflect this.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>13.11.2024</p>	<p>6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan</p>	<p>That the recommendations made by the Committee be reported to Cabinet.</p>	<p>Ceri Shotton</p>	<p>The recommendations made by the Committee were reported by the Cabinet Member to Cabinet at its meeting on 19.11.2024</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Tudalen 18

## ACTION TRACKING

## APPENDIX 2

13.11.2024	7. Intensive Housing Management Solutions for Homelessness Accommodation	If supported by Cabinet, D2 PropCo to be invited to provide a presentation to Members to provide information on successes from other Local Authorities and to showcase the service.	Martin Cooil / Ceri Shotton	Briefing to be provided to the Committee Members at 9am prior to the start of the 11 <sup>th</sup> December meeting.	Completed
13.11.2024	7. Intensive Housing Management Solutions for Homelessness Accommodation	That the recommendations/comments made by the Committee be reported to Cabinet.	Ceri Shotton	The recommendations and comments made by the Committee were reported by the Cabinet Member to Cabinet at its meeting on 19.11.2024	Completed

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 7



## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	In-Year Overspend Action Plan 2024/25
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update members with the in-year action plan, which aims to address the projected revenue budget monitoring 2024/25 overspend position (month 6) for the Housing and Communities portfolio.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the measures within the 2024/25 action plan being considered for inclusion towards improving the financial position by the end of the financial year.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING POSITION 2024/25 (MONTH 6)</b>
1.01	<p>The revenue budget monitoring 2024/25 (month 6) report was presented to Cabinet on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024.</p> <p>As reported to Cabinet, the significant projected overspend (and impact on 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.</p> <p>As required by Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs), an action plan has been compiled by the Housing and Communities portfolio, which details the</p>

	<p>measures being put in place to improve the position by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>A copy of the 2024/25 action plan relating to the Housing and Communities measures is attached at Appendix 1.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	As set out within the Cabinet report on 19.11.2024.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	As set out within the Cabinet report on 19.11.2024.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None required.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - 2024/25 action plan relating to Housing and Communities measures.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="#">Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Month 6 - Cabinet Report 19.11.2024</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Vicky Clark, Chief Officer, Housing and Communities  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703169  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:vicky.clark@flintshire.gov.uk">vicky.clark@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> 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><b>Budget:</b> 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>

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.	
<b>3</b>	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
<b>4</b>	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
<b>Housing Programmes</b>					
<b>5</b>	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



Tudalen 25

				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).	
<b>Travellers and refugees</b>					
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
<b>Welfare Reform</b>					
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

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 8



## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Garage Site Review Update (Car Parking improvements, Garage Demolition and New Build assessment)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2001 the National Assembly of Wales approved the National Housing Strategy for Wales 'Better Homes for People in Wales'. The strategy set out Welsh Assembly Governments long-term vision for housing in Wales.

Central to that vision was the expectation that all households in Wales have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. To achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

This report focuses on the works which have been completed and continue to be delivered through the Council's environmental programme in relation to the garage demolition programme and provision of car parking. The report also details the scoring matrix used by officers for prioritising scheme requests.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1	To note the process for scoring and prioritising car parking improvement requests and council garage demolition.
2	To note the outcome of the development team review of garage sites and plot sites where demolition works have been completed.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>THE WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS</b>
1.01	<p>In the context of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards, the following Council housing owned areas are assessed, considered, and reviewed in order to remain compliant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roads and footpaths.</li><li>• Soft and hard landscaping with planting.</li><li>• Street lighting (adequate).</li><li>• Adequate and safe play space.</li><li>• Adequate and practical and maintainable communal areas.</li><li>• Dwellings clearly identifiable with definable boundaries.</li><li>• Utility services practically located and well identified.</li><li>• <b>Adequate and practically located parking clearly visible.</b></li></ul>
1.02	<p>When undertaking an evaluation of environmental works in a specific area there needs to be an objective base and criteria with which to make decisions.</p> <p>The document included at appendix 1 is the matrix used by officers when assessing schemes, this criterion has been successfully applied for a number of years.</p> <p>The officer will assess the feasibility of any proposed schemes, usually recommending several options that could meet the needs of its council owned homes whilst considering congestion risks along with access / egress provisions for emergency and service vehicles.</p> <p>Any proposals are scored through the matrix which assesses and evaluates a schemes feasibility, costs and priority.</p> <p>At times, there may be an urgent need to escalate works or schemes, such as health and safety reasons or budget requirements.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 1 – Car Parking Scoring Criteria Matrix.</b></p>
1.03	<p>Following scoring through the matrix schemes that are feasible and high priority are progressed through to the capital programme for inclusion. All schemes are subject to budget availability and resources.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 2 – Car Parking Programme Matrix.</b></p>
1.04	<p>When undertaking an evaluation of garage sites and plot sites, officers follow a similar process as per the environmental works programme.</p> <p>Again, there needs to be an objective base and criteria with which to make decisions and the garage site scoring matrix has been applied successfully for a number of years.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 3 – Garage Site Criteria Matrix.</b></p>

1.05	<p>Again, as per the environmental works programme the garage sites are prioritised as per the matrix.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 4 – Garage Site Programme Matrix.</b></p>
1.06	<p>Before the team progress with any demolition works, remediation works or car parking schemes to any garage sites, the team assess if the areas can be built upon. This is whilst ensuring the car parking for existing council owned homes is not under desirable levels, or if traffic congestion or access for emergency vehicles / council refuse services is not compromised in any way.</p> <p>If officers from the capital works team believe it could be considered for development, all areas and sites are passed over to the development team for further review and investigation.</p>
1.07	<p>If the areas and / or garage sites are not suitable, they are referred to the capital works team for consideration of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking improvement works.</li> <li>• Green / wilding areas.</li> <li>• Disposal / sale.</li> </ul>
1.08	<p>An update on the progress of garage sites which have been passed to the development team is provided at appendix 5.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Staff</b> - There are concerns relating to staff retention. Given that the construction industry is an ever-changing sector, staff may seek opportunities elsewhere i.e., new build, private sector etc.</p> <p>The Housing Assets teams have updated team structures to incorporate a degree of resilience, succession planning and robustness to the delivery model and departments risk register.</p> <p><b>Capital</b> - Sites are constrained by scale and financial viability in order to access capital funding. We are exploring access to the Welsh Government Land and Buildings Development Fund (previously the Land Release Fund) on a number of schemes. If approved, this will allow access to funding to fund abnormal costs such as demolition, clearance of contamination etc.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>As per paragraph 2.01, the Council has commenced with a full review of the Councils resources, budget requirements and procurement challenges.</p>

	The Housing Assets service are in the process of procuring various frameworks of contractors and suppliers to mitigate risks in terms of contractor resource and material supply and to also provide assurance with regards to associated costs, which impact upon our budgets etc.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	As and when scheme requests are raised, consultation will commence with Members and contract holders.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Car Parking Scoring Criteria Matrix
5.02	Appendix 2 – Car Parking Programme Matrix
5.03	Appendix 3 – Garage Site Criteria Matrix
5.04	Appendix 4 – Garage Site Programme Matrix
5.05	Appendix 5 – Development Team update on garage sites

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	N/A

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Sean O'Donnell, Service Manager - Housing Assets <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 701642 <b>E-mail:</b> Sean.O'Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Capital Programme:</b> 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.  <b>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS):</b> is a national standard of quality for homes. This is set by the Welsh Government.  It means that all tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of that household.

**Financial Year:** the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.

**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.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol



## **MATRIX - ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS**

### **PC1) Technical officers assessment of level of Congestion – Scale 1-10 points.**

0 = no evidence of serious congestion  
10 = Heavy congestion , neighbour disputes, high risk of accidents occurring.

### **PC2) Matches criteria for funding from the Housing Revenue Account:**

+5 points for each new parking space benefiting a Council Tenant  
-5 points for each new parking space benefiting an owner occupier

### **PC3) Feasibility study and cost estimate completed:**

Plan drawn up by Highways Design +5 points  
Plan & up to date cost estimate +10 points

### **PC4) Value for Money – Scale 1 – 10 points**

0 points – Either way Cost per parking bay exceeds £20k  
1 point - Cost per parking bay £18 – 20k  
2 points- Cost per parking bay £16 – 18k  
3 point - Cost per parking bay £14 – 16k  
4 points- Cost per parking bay £12 – 14k  
5 points- Cost per parking bay £10 – 12k  
6 points- Cost per parking bay £8 – 10k  
7 points- Cost per parking bay £6 – 8k  
8 points- Cost per parking bay £4 – 6k  
9 points- Cost per parking bay £2 – 4k  
10 points- Cost per parking bay £0 – 2k

### **PC5) Cost of the scheme as a proportion of the Annual Budget**

-50 points – Exceeds 100%  
0 points – Waiting updated cost estimate  
1 point - 90% to 100%  
2 points- 80% to 90%  
3 point - 70% to 80%  
4 points- 60% to 70%  
5 points- 50% to 60%  
6 points- 40% to 50%  
7 points- 30% to 40%  
8 points- 20% to 30%  
9 points- 10% to 20%  
10 points- 0% to 10%

### **PC6) Expensive and time consuming Mains Services Diversions required**

Required: -5 points  
No information: 0 points  
Not required: +5 points

### **PC7) Documented Resident Consultation with a positive result in favour**

Yes: +10 points

### **PC8) Sheltered accommodation serving vulnerable / elderly / disabled tenants**

Yes: +10 points

### **PC9) Scheme improves access for emergency services**

Documented Representation on this issue: +10 points

### **PC10) Housing Management Officers in Favour**

Yes: +5 points  
No: -5 points  
Neutral: 0 points

### **PC11) Ward Councillor in favour**

Yes: +5 points  
No: -5 points  
Neutral: 0 points

### **PC12) Time Requested during the current financial year – 0 points**

For each year preceeding - + 5 points





Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

# MARTIX - GARAGE SITES

## Points system and criteria for prioritising Garage Demolition/Refurbishment

### PC1) Condition score for each garage site - Scoring from 0-5

- 0 = New/ Already Re
- 1 = Good Condition
- 2 = Work needed
- 3 = Poor Condition
- 4 = Extremely Poor
- 5 = Dangerous struct

### PC2) Presence of Asbestos

Presence of asbestos = +5 points

### PC3) Feasibility study and cost estimate completed:

Plan & up to date cost estimate = +5 points

### PC4) Percentage of occupied garages (if being refurbished)

- 0 points- 0% to 9%
- 1 point - 10% to 19%
- 2 points- 20% to 29%
- 3 points- 30% to 39%
- 4 points- 40% to 49%
- 5 points- 50% to 59%
- 6 points- 60% to 69%
- 7 points- 70% to 79%
- 8 points- 80% to 89%
- 9 points- 90% to 99%
- 10 points- 100%

### PC5) Percentage of occupied garages (if being demolished)

- 0 points – 100%
- 1 point - 90% to 99%
- 2 points- 80% to 89%
- 3 points- 70% to 79%
- 4 points- 60% to 69%
- 5 points- 50% to 59%
- 6 points- 40% to 49%
- 7 points- 30% to 39%
- 8 points- 20% to 29%
- 9 points- 10% to 19%
- 10 points- 0% to 9%

### PC6) Documented consultation with positive feedback from tenants/Cllr

Yes = +10 points

### PC7) Scheme improves parking facilities for council tenants

Representation on this issue: +10 points

### PC8) History of Anti-Social Behaviour on this site?

Yes = +5 points

No = 0 Points

### PC9) Value for money

- 0 points – Cost per garage exceeds £20k
- 1 point - Cost per garage £18 – 20k
- 2 points- Cost per garage £16 – 18k
- 3 points- Cost per garage £14 – 16k
- 4 points- Cost per garage £12 – 14k
- 5 points- Cost per garage £10 – 12k
- 6 points- Cost per garage £8 – 10k
- 7 points- Cost per garage £6 – 8k
- 8 points- Cost per garage £4 – 6k
- 9 points- Cost per garage £2 – 4k
- 10 points- Cost per garage £0 – 2k

### PC10) Rent loss per annum if demolished

- 1 points- £4501+
- 2 points- £4001 - £4500
- 3 points- £3501 - £4000
- 4 points- £3001 - £3500
- 5 points- £2501 - £3000
- 6 points- £2001 - £2500
- 7 points- £1501 - £2000
- 8 points- £1001 - £1500
- 9 points- £501 - £1000
- 10 points- £0 - £500

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
DUNDAS STREET	QUEENSFERRY	CH5 1SX	18	1
ALYN ROAD	BUCKLEY	CH7 2JX	46	1
FFORDD PENNANT 1 + 2	MAES PENNANT	CH8 9	40	1
DEINIOLS ROAD	MANCOT	CH5 2ER	22	1
LANSDOWN ROAD (BOTTOM SITE)	BROUGHTON	CH4 0NZ	27	1
GWAENYSGOR	GWAENYSGOR	LL18 6EL	14	1
LANSDOWN ROAD (BEHIND SHOPS)	BROUGHTON	CH4 0PE	14	1
BRYN GWALIA	HOLLY DRIVE	CH7 1SE	28	1
TRINITY ROAD	GREENFIELD	CH8 7XX	17	1
FFORDD OWEN	NORTHOP GARAGES	CH7 6AU	25	1
ALLANS CLOSE	SHOTTON	CH5 1LB	12	1
NANT Y GRO	GRONANT	LL19 9TY	69	1
FIR GROVE	MOLD	CH7 1RX	1	1
Y GERDDI	MAES PENNANT	CH8 9	2	1
RIVERSIDE PARK	SEALAND	CH5 2JR	26	1
BROOKSIDE	BROOKSIDE CRESCENT	CH7 6HW	12	1

## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
GER Y PISTYLL	NERCWYS	CH7 4EZ	3	2
MAES AFON	FLINT	CH6 5HR	10	2
CAE'R RHOS	RHOESMOR	CH7 6QE	13	2
FFORDD ELDON	SYCHDYN	CH7 6ST	4	2
MAPLEWOOD AVENUE	GARDEN CITY	CH5 2JL	4	2
ERW WEN	TRELAWNYD	LL18 6DH	8	2
PEN GOCH	FLINT	CH6 5JX	23	2
SARN LANE	CAERGWRLLE	LL12 9AF	15	2
WALWEN	BAGILLT	CH6 6JN	19	2
HAWTHORN VIEW	SEALAND	CH5 2RQ	6	2
MAES GWYN	FLINT	CH6 5EE	4	2
DEANS PLACE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4ED	6	2
CLWYD STREET	SHOTTON	CH5 1LN	20	2
DERBY ROAD	CAERGWRLLE	LL12 9AB	8	2
PEN Y MAES	NANT Y COED	CH8 7AQ	90	2
MAES RHYDWEN	WHITFORD	CH8 9AP	11	2
FULBROOKE	GREENFIELD	CH8 7JW	10	2
MAES EMLYN	PEN-Y-FFORDD	CH8 9JE	15	2
SEALAND MANOR	SEALAND	CH5 2SJ	15	2
VICTORIA ROAD	SALTNEY	CH4 8ST	3	2
MCKEOWN CLOSE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4PS	12	2
COTTERILL CLOSE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4PX	7	2
NERCWYS	FFORDD Y PENTRE	CH7 4ES	6	2
REDWOOD CLOSE	SALTNEY	CH4 8NB	12	2



## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
MAES Y DRE	CAERWYS	CH7 5AS	8	3
BRYN ABER	BAGILLT	CH6 6BR	12	3
WELL STREET	TREFFYNNON	CH8 7PP	9	3
BARONS CLOSE	FLINT	CH6 5DQ	10	3
HAFOD Y BRYN	BRYNFORD	CH8 8AL	10	3
ABBAY COURT	GREENFIELD	CH8 7QX	11	3
BRIDGE STREET	MOLD	CH7 1LW	23	3
PODIUM	FEATHERS STREET	CH6 5AN	56	3
PHOENIX STREET	SANDYCROFT	CH5 2PD	6	3
MAESTEG	CYMAU	LL11 5EP	5	3
COED MOR	PEN-Y-FFORDD	CH8 9HY	8	3
PARK AVENUE	KINNERTON	CH4 9PB	10	3
MAES LYGAN	PENTRE HALKYN	CH8 8JE	8	3
CAIRNTON CRESCENT	GREENFIELD	CH8 7EX	10	3
MOORFIELDS	HOLWAY	CH8 7DZ	16	3
MAES GLAS	TREUDDYN	CH7 4LY	14	3
PRIMROSE CLOSE	NORTHOP HALL	CH7 6JS	11	3
KETLAND CLOSE	SHOTTON	CH5 1QX	10	3
Y BERTHLOG	TRELOGAN	CH8 9BN	19	3
ENGLEFIELD AVENUE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4SW	4	3
CILCAIN ROAD	GWERNAFFIELD	CH7 5DS	18	3
GWERNYMYNYDD	RUTHIN ROAD	CH7 4AP	31	3
BRON HAUL	TRELAWNYD	LL18 6DU	16	3
WESTMINSTER ROAD	BROUGHTON	CH4 0RZ	24	3
MELBOURNE ROAD	BUCKLEY	CH7 2LG	40	3
MOEL FAMMAU ROAD	NEW BRIGHTON	CH7 6QX	13	3

## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
ST CYNFARCHS AVENUE	HOPE	LL12 9NR	11	3
PEN Y LLAN COURT	NEW UNION STREET	CH5 4YT	24	3
BOUNDARY LANE	KINNERTON CLOSE	CH4 8LQ	4	3
ALYN MEADOW	MILFORD STREET	CH7 1ND	12	3
LLYS ALUN	RHYDYMWYN	CH7 5HW	7	3
KNIGHTS GREEN	FLINT	CH6 5DE	19	3
WINDSOR DRIVE	BROUGHTON	CH4 0FH	7	3
BRYN OFFA	MYNYDD ISA	CH7 6TT	6	3
WELLINGTON STREET	SHOTTON	CH5 1QW	5	3
SALISBURY STREET	FLINT	CH6 5NX	9	3
CRIB Y GWYNT	BERTHENGAM	CH8 9BB	3	3
HEULWEN CLOSE	HOPE	LL12 9PR	1	3
Y WAEN	GWERNAFFIELD	CH7 5DP	1	3

## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
GLYNNE STREET	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4QQ	0	4
MAES PENNANT	DRDD HIRAETHOG + PANDAF	CH8 9PT	0	4
WOODSIDE CLOSE	EWLOE	CH5 3RP	0	4
BRYN ROAD	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4SU	0	4
MELROSE AVENUE	SHOTTON	CH5 1LS	0	4
IVY CRESCENT	IVY CRESCENT	CH7 1RZ	0	4
PORCH LANE	CAERGWRLLE	LL12 9LS	0	4
HEOL Y BRENIN	BRYN MAWR ROAD	CH8 7AP	0	4
PRINCESS AVENUE	BUCKLEY	CH7 2LR	0	4
ST MARKS AVENUE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4XW	0	4
FRON ROAD	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4PW	28	4
WELSH LAND (SETTLEMENT GARAGE)	SEALAND	CH5 2SF	4	4
ELM GROVE	BUCKLEY	CH7 2LU	0	4
RICHMOND ROAD	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4JE	5	4
ST MARYS DRIVE	NORTHOP HALL	CH7 6JF	0	4
CORNIST LOWER	FLINT	CH6 5HR	12	4
PRINCE OF WALES CRT	BUCKLEY	CH7 3AT	0	4
LINDEN AVENUE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4SN	0	4
EATON GROVE	SALTNEY	CH4 8TL	0	4
QUEENS PARK	QUEENS PARK	CH7 1TG	0	4
CASTLE GARAGES	CASTLE STREET	CH6 5PF	0	4

## Garage Programme Scoring Matrix

Street	Town	Post Code	No. of garages	Priority
HEOL Y GORON	LEESWOOD	CH7 4RN	0	4
BERNSDALE CLOSE	SANDYCROFT	CH5 2AL	0	4
BROMFIELD	BRYN HILYN LANE	CH7 1JY	0	4
HILLSIDE AVENUE	CONNAHS QUAY	CH5 4XL	0	4
LARCH AVENUE	SHOTTON	CH5 1NF	0	4
CASTLE HEIGHTS	FLINT	CH6 5NA	0	4
CHEVRONS ROAD	SHOTTON	CH5 1LF	0	4
COLESHILL	FLINT	CH6 5BQ	0	4
JASMINE CRESCENT	MOLD	CH7 1WT	0	4
LON GROES	FLINT	CH6 5HP	0	4
REDHALL	ST MARKS AVENUE	CH5 4XN	0	4
YOWLEY ROAD	EWLOE	CH5 3AS	0	4
			<b>1258</b>	

Demolition Priority List
Demolish/ moderately occupied
Highly Occupied or previously refurbished
Not Applicable/Already developed/Demolished

1  
2  
3  
4

## **Appendix 5 - GARAGE SITE DEVELOPMENTS**

The development team have been exploring opportunities with colleagues from Housing Assets in relation to the development of garage sites. There are a number of potential constraints when considering the development of garage sites, for example, access, layout and contamination on the site. However, the main factor will often be the scale and resultant financial viability of smaller sites. As has been reported to Members previously sites of less than 10 units can be challenging.

An update on current sites is outlined below:

### **Mostyn Ffordd Panduras and Ffordd Hiraethog**

The proximity of these two former garage sites enabled us to combine them as one contract to deliver 30 new homes. The scheme was completed in September 2023. Ffordd Hiraethog produced 12 units (6 x 2 bed flats and 4 x 1 bed flats) and Ffordd Panduras (now named Ffordd Aderyn) delivered 20 units (8 x 2 bed houses and 12 x 1 bed flats in a cottage style two storey blocks).

### **Sites currently in the planned development programme**

There are three sites currently being considered for development within the planned development programme as follows:

- Station Road, Queensferry 4/6 units
- Alyn Road, Buckley 4 units
- Wirral View, Hawarden 4 units

Initial consultation has taken place with local Members in respect of Wirral View and Station Road. The site at Wirral View has passed stage one Welsh Government technical approval.

All the sites are constrained by scale and financial viability, but we are exploring access to the Welsh Government Land and Buildings Development Fund (previously the Land Release Fund) on a number of schemes. If approved, this will allow access to funding to fund abnormal costs such as demolition, clearance of contamination etc.

### **Sites currently being appraised.**

- Broughton (various) - following a walkabout with local Members six sites in the Broughton area are currently being explored. We are also liaising with colleagues from the learning disabilities service due to the scale of the sites and the potential for developing supported provision within small group homes.
- Flint Windsor Drive - following discussion with learning disability colleagues this site may lend itself to a small special need supported provision.
- Greenfield (various) - following a walkabout with the local Member a number of possible options were identified. One site has been ruled out, however there are some sites that may lend themselves to supported bungalow provision for learning disabilities.

Architects are due to be commissioned to develop outline scoping of layouts on the three locations identified above.

## **Garage Sites deemed unsuitable for redevelopment.**

A number of sites have been identified as unsuitable for redevelopment as follows:

- Philips Street and Watkins Street - possible adverse possession
- Hawthorne Avenue, Garden City - not assessed due to other development planned for the area. Retention is recommended in the garage review.
- Sealand Avenue, Garden City - not suitable due to the brook adjacent to the site.
- Barron's Close – cul-de-sac with very limited access.
- Maes Afon - site too shallow – next to sub-station
- Clywd Street (2 sites) - poor potential plus two private houses adjacent to narrow access.

# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 9



## COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Decarbonisation Strategy Decarbonisation and the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and overview regarding the Council's obligation to create a decarbonisation strategy which complies with the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS 2 2023) and the delivery of the new standards.

As a result of the new standards, the Council will be required to update specifications, work briefs and programmes of work to comply with the guidance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To support the delivery of the next phase of the capital investment programme to ensure compliance with the newly updated Welsh Housing Quality Standards requirements and the proposed Decarbonisation Strategy.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD AND THE OPTIONS WITHIN THE STRATEGY</b>
1.01	<p>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 (the Standard) sets the target for the condition of all social housing in Wales.</p> <p>The Standard was originally introduced in 2002 and has been successful in raising the quality of social housing in Wales. This level of quality must be maintained and enhanced, taking account of changes and expectations in, and impacts from, the wider world such as climate change and technical advancements in building fabric.</p> <p>The Council is committed to bringing all existing social housing up to this new Standard by 2033 (elements in Part 3 may be reached at different times). The expectation is that WHQS 2023 will be reviewed within 3 years.</p> <p>The next review will consider the improvement made to the social housing stock and the progress required to remain on track to meet 2050 climate obligations.</p> <p>The Standard sets the requirements all social housing is updated and kept in good condition, so social tenants can live in a home that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is in a good state of repair.</li> <li>• Is safe and secure.</li> <li>• Is affordable to heat and has minimal environmental impact.</li> <li>• Has an up-to-date kitchen and utility area.</li> <li>• Has an up-to-date bathroom.</li> <li>• Is comfortable and promotes wellbeing.</li> <li>• Has a suitable garden; and</li> <li>• Has an attractive outside space.</li> </ul> <p><b>A home will meet the Standard when all relevant elements are achieved.</b> It is recognised that some elements of the Standard are not applicable to all homes. It is also recognised that not all homes will be able to achieve some elements for various reasons.</p>
1.02	<p><b>New Themes</b></p> <p><b>WHQS 2023 driving towards a Net Zero Wales</b></p> <p>WHQS sets out Standards relating to the decarbonisation of social homes and aims to reduce carbon emissions from the Welsh housing stock. This Standard contributes towards governmental climate change goals expressed through the Net Zero Wales plan published in 2021 and updated in 2022. In time, it is anticipated that the Standard will apply to other types and tenures of housing, and this will be kept under regular review.</p>



	<p><b>Evaluation of WHQS 1 (2008)</b>  The evaluation concluded <i>‘that the WHQS had been effective in achieving its key objective of raising standards of social rented housing’ and ‘has benefits for tenants and should be continued into the future...’</i></p> <p>The evaluation process identified areas of the Standard that required updating and improving, areas where research and societal changes had changed expectations since the original Standard was launched, as well as new areas to include, these are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection and reporting.</li> <li>• Compliance policies.</li> <li>• Fire and electrical safety.</li> <li>• Affordable warmth and environmental impact (new element).</li> <li>• Flooring (new element).</li> <li>• Water efficiency (new element).</li> <li>• Biodiversity (new element).</li> <li>• Active travel (new element).</li> </ul>
1.03	<p><b>Timeline for achievement of the Standard</b></p> <p>By 31 March 2025, landlords must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the condition of their stock and the work necessary to meet the Standard.</li> <li>• Estimate the investment needed to achieve the Standard.</li> <li>• Complete tenant engagement on the programme.</li> <li>• Prepare and submit a Compliance Policy to the Welsh Government; and</li> <li>• Update the Business Plan to reflect the programme.</li> </ul> <p>By 31 March 2027, landlords must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce Target Energy Pathways, informed by their Whole Stock Assessment.</li> </ul> <p>By 31 March 2034, landlords should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed that all their housing stock meets the Standard.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tenant engagement on the programme</b></p> <p>It is recognised that to foster pride and belonging, tenants should be encouraged to be involved in making any decisions that affect their community and environment. It is expected that tenants are shown how the programme was developed, and how tenant and / or tenant groups views and priorities have influenced the programme. The precise process for tenant engagement is a matter for the individual landlord.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 1 - WHQS Tenant Questionnaire</b></p>
1.04	<p>The strategy will advise how the Council can plan to reduce and contribute to the elimination of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.</p>

	<p>There are some important areas to consider when developing our strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Targets:</b> set targets that are based on evidence and realistic and consider setting separate targets for different categories or locations.</li> <li>• <b>Involve all areas of the council,</b> its housing tenants, service users, clients and other customers on the council's journey towards net zero to help drive change.</li> <li>• <b>Build resilience:</b> mitigate risks related to technology, policies, and supply chain disruption.</li> <li>• <b>Create a vision:</b> have a clear vision for the future and gain support from senior leaders.</li> <li>• <b>Establish a structure:</b> develop a structure and financing requirements to govern the decarbonisation journey.</li> <li>• <b>Track performance:</b> regularly check performance against the targets set.</li> </ul> <p>The housing and assets teams have been working hard to draft the decarbonisation strategy, using the data from recent investment programmes, audits and professional reviews.</p> <p>The initial draft was reviewed by teams across the service and implementation of some of the options through a desktop exercise, reviewing past and live workstreams, implementing the measures proposed. The draft strategy was then updated to reflect any changes in working practices and responding to any lessons learnt from ongoing investment works.</p> <p>Appendix 2 details the options open to the Council which will form the strategy moving forwards.</p> <p><b>Please refer to Appendix 2 - Decarbonisation Strategy Report Nov 2024</b></p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Staff</b> - There are concerns staff retention may be difficult to maintain. Given the construction industry is an ever-changing sector, staff may seek opportunities elsewhere i.e., new build, private sector etc.</p> <p>The housing assets service have revised the team structures to incorporate a degree of resilience, succession planning and robustness to the delivery model and departments risk register has been updated.</p>
2.02	<p><b>Budgets</b> - When developing our delivery programme, budget estimates were made for the required upgrade works to our existing properties with contingency sums included for unforeseen work such as structural repairs etc.</p>

	Further works have been undertaken with colleagues in Finance and we have begun forecasting our budget requirements for the next tranche of works.
2.03	<p><b>Procurement</b> – Procuring the various WHQS works can be challenging. The Council must ensure all contracts are measured, not only by cost but by quality. Quality forms an important part of the assessment process where the Capital Works Team interviews all contractors and assesses Quality Submission Papers before any contracts are awarded. The team have been able to secure further efficiencies by merging some contracts so that internal and external resources can be shared.</p> <p>There is a risk that many contractors are opting for new build contracts rather than refurbishment contracts. Engaging with our supply chain early and sharing our Capital Investment Programme aspirations with our Contract Framework Partners assists us to procure longer term contracts and therefore reduces risk of inflated costs based on long term contract arrangements.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>As per section 2, the Council has commenced with a full review of the Council's resources, budget requirements and procurement challenges.</p> <p>The Housing and Assets service are in the process of procuring various frameworks of contractors and suppliers to mitigate risks in terms of contractor resource and material supply and to also provide assurance with regards to associated costs, which impact upon our budgets etc.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	<p>Prior to the Capital Investment Programme commencing in 2014 to comply with the WHQS (2008), the team held Member workshops, where most Members attended and were actively involved in the design and delivery of the current capital programme.</p> <p>Tenant Federation workshops were also held where we engaged with the federation with regards to what priority, and which order, the works should be completed, along with holding tenant consultation workshops in our FCC Connects Centres and community centres engaging with our tenants and discussing the Capital Programme along with ascertaining what order tenants would prefer to have components of their home upgraded first.</p> <p>Moving forwards, and as part of the next phase of the capital programme and decarbonisation retrofit programme, the Capital Works Team will again be consulting with Members, contract holders and contract holder groups to ensure their preferences and any concerns with regards to this next phase are considered and implemented.</p>

4.02	<p>In addition to the work detailed within this report, there is a wider issue that needs to be considered around the potential to undertake regeneration schemes on some of our estates rather than continue to commit funding to assets that will be expensive to continue to maintain and run, have high numbers of voids and which are expensive to heat and run for the tenant.</p> <p>Consultations will need to be held with Members and contract holders as the Council progresses with its investment plans and this will be completed prior to any works being procured and delivered.</p>
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - WHQS Tenant Questionnaire
5.02	Appendix 2 – Decarbonisation Strategy Report November 2024

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="https://www.gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard">https://www.gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard</a>
6.02	<a href="https://gov.wales/decarbonisation-homes-wales-advisory-group#content">https://gov.wales/decarbonisation-homes-wales-advisory-group#content</a>
6.03	<a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-06/welsh-housing-quality-standard-summative-evaluation.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-06/welsh-housing-quality-standard-summative-evaluation.pdf</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Sean O’Donnell, Service Manager - Housing Assets  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 701642  <b>E-mail:</b> Sean.O’Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Capital Programme:</b> The Council’s financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.</p> <p><b>The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS):</b> is a national standard of quality for homes. This is set by the Welsh Government. It means that all tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of that household.</p> <p><b>Financial Year:</b> the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.</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.

**Contract Framework:** A Contract Framework is an agreement between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators. These frameworks have Contractors, Consultants and Suppliers that have been successful in joining the specific work categories. The Council often uses these frameworks to procure works that have already gone through a tender process in line with OJEU and can be utilised to procure works or services. They are often the most economic advantage in terms of value for money and local training provision.

**HRA:** The Housing Revenue Account.

**Components:** A part or element such as an asset / amenity (kitchen bathroom, boiler, roof, windows, doors etc.).

**Decarbonisation:** Referring in this instance to Welsh Governments requirement for all Local Authorities in Wales to reduce its carbon emissions and usage.

**EPC:** Energy Performance Certificate.

**SAP:** Standard Assessment Procedure.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

The new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) has been released by Welsh Government and we wanted to get your opinion on what is important to you. By completing and returning this form, you will help us shape the service we deliver to you over the next 10 years.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Occupants \_\_\_\_\_

The new standard places a big emphasis on energy efficiency and reducing the costs of running your home; alongside key improvements such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors.

**Question 1 : Which of these areas of improvement works is most important to you? Please rank these from 1 - 4,**

*1 being the most important to you 4 being the least important:*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Internal improvements<br>(Kitchen, Bathroom,<br>Heating, Electrics etc)   | <input type="radio"/> External/Fabric improvements<br>(Roof, Walls, Windows, Doors, etc)   |
| <input type="radio"/> Energy Efficiency<br>(Insulation, Solar panels,<br>Efficient Heating etc) | <input type="radio"/> Environmental improvements<br>(Gardens, Boundaries, Car-parking etc) |

**Question 2 : What areas of improvement are most important to you, in your community?**

Please tick  one option.

Car Parking improvements  Lighting improvements  
(communal areas)

Security improvements  
(door entry, CCTV etc)  Open Spaces  
(communal gardens, green  
spaces etc)



**Question 3 : The Council is planning on publishing it's future improvements plans online.**

**Do you access any of the Council's services digitally/online? (eg. My Account, FCC Website etc)**

**Please tick  one option.**

Yes

No

Unable to access services online

Not aware of online services



Please provide any further comments you wish to pass onto us and your thoughts with regards to how Flintshire County Council can best achieve the new standards, in your home and your area.

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Your views will be taken into consideration and will help the Council develop it's future programmes of work. Please return the questionnaire by post to one of your local Flintshire Council offices or alternatively you can scan / email the form to [capital.works@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:capital.works@flintshire.gov.uk)**



## FCC Decarbonisation Status Briefing – November 2024

### Decarbonisation & Energy Efficiency

#### Contents

- 1. Background**
- 2. Current status**
- 3. The Business case**
- 4. Costs**
- 5. Funding Options**
- 6. ECO4**
- 7. Summary**
- 8. Recommendations/ next steps**

New build homes are not covered in this report as they are already required to be compliant with current building code requirements for energy efficiency during construction.

This report focuses specifically on the Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency of the HRA homes only, it is not the Council's overarching decarbonisation strategy.

This report relies on data and insight provided in a strategic outline case prepared on behalf of the Council by specialist consultants Capita, who worked closely with officers in preparation of a decarbonisation strategic outline.

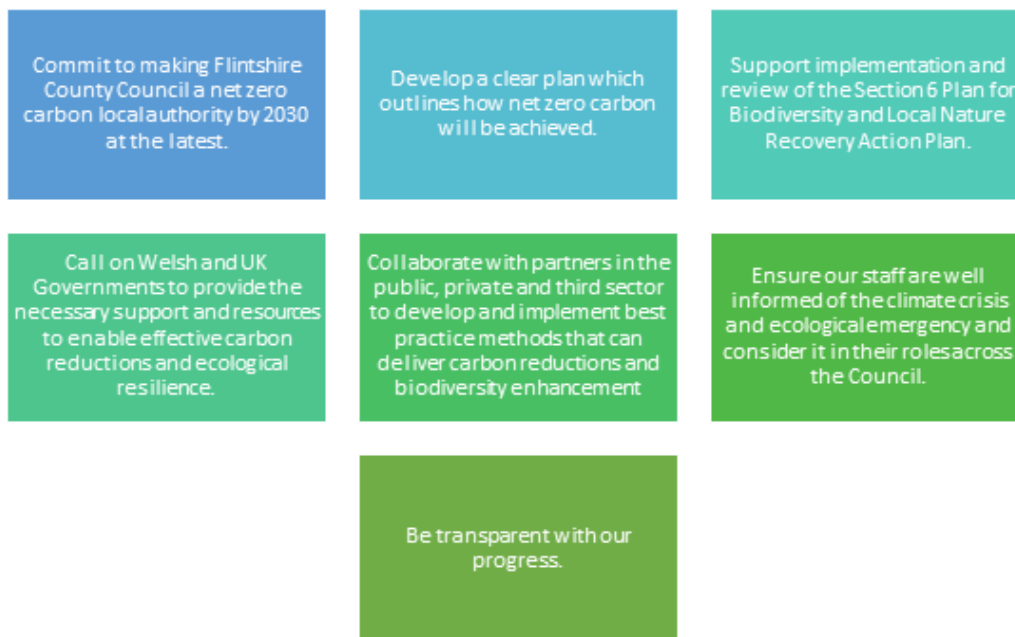


<https://gov.wales/written-statement-wales-pathway-achieve-net-zero-emissions>

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/working-together-to-reach-net-zero-all-wales-plan.pdf>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Welsh Government (WG) have declared a climate emergency. In support of a target to have Wales carbon neutral by 2050, WG had also stated an aspirational objective to make social housing carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.2 WG set out a legal commitment in February 2021 for Wales to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. This followed recommendations by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) that the ambitions were attainable with coherent central policy and a nation-wide effort. This followed the CCC's previous advice in 2017, in response to which the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in 2019, and the Covid-19 pandemic. The report concludes that, while emissions are falling and policy is improving, there are significant strides that need to be taken to secure a cohesive strategy for achieving net-zero by 2050. At the time the report was issued, Wales was not on track for an 80% reduction target. As such, policy has shifted towards promoting a green and sustainable future, investing in net-zero programmes.
- 1.3 In response Flintshire County Council have pledged to:



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- 1.4 Carbon neutral is not a clearly defined target. There are two broad definitions relating to residential property - On Site Carbon Neutral & Carbon Neutral Ready, there are very significant cost variances in terms of these definitions.
- a) On site carbon neutral means the building is energy self-sufficient and therefore independent to the power network supply grids. Estimated costs to achieve this standard (if it is even possible) are estimated at around £80k per home or to put this in full context circa 7,300 homes at £80K each would require funding of £584m, this would be on top of the existing Council Business Plan.
  - b) Carbon Neutral Ready means the property is made as energy efficient as practical and relies on a carbon neutral grid being available at a yet to be confirmed date. The anticipated costs are a more realistic £15,000 per home in addition to Business as Usual (BAU) investment budgets.
- 1.5 As stated under the contents section. New build homes are not covered in this report as they are already required to be compliant with current building code requirements for energy efficiency during construction. The significant challenge for the Council is therefore in the context of improving the energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions in existing older homes which form the vast majority of the stock. This process is described as Retrofit.
- 1.5 Retrofit is controlled by the nationally accredited PAS 2035 process and recorded and validated via Trustmark who have been appointed by WG to ensure quality and consistency. This is a set of standards under which each property is subject to a Retrofit Assessment (RA) survey. This is a detailed survey covering the build type and current condition and the thermal performance of the existing fabric (roofs, walls, floors, windows and doors), the efficiency of the heating system and ventilation capacities.
- 1.6 Based on a property specific RA, each property has a property plan which identifies the Energy Efficiency Measures (EEM's) required to bring each property to the required standard.
- 1.7 While encouraging innovation and use of renewable technologies, WG have issued overarching instruction to first do no harm in the context of mitigating rather than exacerbating fuel poverty by taking a fabric first approach to Retrofit.
- 1.8 Fabric first is therefore fundamental to the recommended approach and delivery planning set out in this document.

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## 2. Current Status

- 2.1 Working with specialist consultants, Officers had been preparing this Decarbonisation (Decarb) strategy for the consideration of Cabinet. Based on WG objectives and FCC pledges, this was focussed on the reduction of Carbon Emissions as a main aim and reporting measure, this document supersedes the draft Decarb Strategy.
- 2.2 Three types of carbon emissions have been considered in the context of the Council's housing portfolio:
- a) Embodied carbon – this is the carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases produced in the creation of building fabric and the construction of the property
  - b) Operational carbon – the CO<sub>2</sub> produced by buildings as a result of daily use
  - c) Whole life carbon – the sum of CO<sub>2</sub> across the entire building life cycle, from design, throughout use and to demolition.
- 2.3 Operational carbon is the focus when looking at decarbonisation and retrofitting existing properties, as it is this metric that has a direct impact on fuel poverty.
- 2.4 During the research, development and drafting of the Strategy, world events and high volatility in the energy sector led to extraordinary energy price increases with a far-reaching impact on the levels of fuel poverty in the County and in FCC social housing in particular.
- 2.5 Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency are not necessarily the same thing but mutually complimentary. By making buildings more energy efficient it is reasonable to expect the energy used to reduce and where the property is using a fossil fuel-based energy supply then carbon emissions will be reduced. This equation is therefore fundamental to the recommended approach and delivery of the Council's decarbonisation investment.
- 2.6 The focus of this report has therefore, by necessity, realigned to meet the critical need to mitigate fuel poverty by implementation of energy efficiency measures (and therefore carbon emissions reductions) via a coordinated retrofit programme to the Council's housing stock.

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- 2.7 Delivery of this approach will significantly reduce carbon emissions/energy usage in relation to the climate crisis, alleviate fuel poverty, and embed opportunities for economic development in terms of training and employment with a focus on opportunities in the foundational economy within the delivery of the Council's programme.
- 2.8 In the draft guidance for WHQS.2, WG had set energy efficiency targets in the format of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and by setting goals of average EPC C by 2028, EPC B by 2030 and EPC A by 2033. These have been removed and instead it is expected that the Council will, within three years, submit programme proposals to bring the Councils residential homes to EPC A (Net Zero) by 2050 with an interim target of EPC C.
- 2.9 The EPC band is set using a point score system called the Reduced Data Standard Assessment Procedure (RDSAP). This score is calculated by nationally standardised software to model and calculate a point score for the overall energy performance of the stock. The scores equate to EPC bands, the higher the RDSAP score the higher the EPC rating, the highest being EPC A.
- 2.10 To inform the strategy, a full assessment of current RDSAP - EPC performance, and cross references to previous and planned improvements to the Councils homes has identified properties with very poor performance - EPC E and below, average performance EPC C & D, and high performing properties at EPC bands A & B.
- 2.11 The average energy rating for Council homes is currently EPC C. The majority of the stock is therefore currently within the average performance range. This is because of the successful delivery of the Council's Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme completed in December 2021.
- 2.12 Not all FCC homes have an EPC as these were only required to be carried out after renewable energy improvements or at void management stage as part of the letting process.
- 2.13 FCC is relatively well placed with a higher than average EPC coverage and officers are working towards 100% of homes having an EPC to further inform the decarbonisation / energy efficiency investment strategy and eligibility for supporting grants. With this goal in mind, officers have instructed completion of EPCs to all homes by the end of this financial year.

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- 2.14 To establish a delivery strategy, it is critical to understand the current status of the council homes in terms of energy performance in conjunction with previous investment and planned continuation of the Council's WHQS programme.
- 2.15 Including 85 leasehold flats, the Council owns and manages a total of circa 7,300 general needs and sheltered homes. In the winter of 2021 works under WHQS were completed with the Council undertaking all necessary works to bring the stock up to standard by the WG deadline. The Council completed WHQS whole house external improvements and refurbishments including key building components (chimneys, roofs, roofline, walls, structural repairs, outhouses, windows and doors) to 2,220 homes to achieve the target. This is further approximated as follows:
- There are 4,000 houses of which 1,500 have had previous external improvement works under WHQS.
    - There are therefore potentially 2,500 houses needing whole house external improvements over the next 30 years of the business plan.
  - There are 1,500 flats, of which 400 have also had external improvements completed.
    - There are therefore 1,100 flats (including leasehold) needing future external improvements over the next 30 years.
  - There are 1,800 bungalows, of which 300 have had external improvements completed.
    - There are therefore 1,500 bungalows needing future external improvements over the next 30 years.
- 2.14 In summary, 2,200 FCC homes have WHQS external improvements completed, 5,100 homes are pending future investment under WHQS.2. These totals are significant in respect of plans to achieve the new EPC performance targets set out in the draft guidance for WHQS.2 and define two linked challenges – meeting the EPC energy efficiency targets on future programmed works (WHQS.2) and retrospectively bringing the previously improved homes up to the same standards.
- 2.15 It is worth noting the energy efficiency performance target under WHQS criteria was defined under SAP 2005 to achieve SAP 65 or above equivalent to EPC D - C by 2021, FCC homes achieved this overall performance target at that time.

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### 3. The Business case

- 3.1 The existing investment programme is based on a stock condition survey, which estimated the timely renewal of the key external components, based on the age and condition of these elements when set against the WG guidance for the anticipated lifecycle of each key component - roof tile, pointing, windows & doors. This survey estimated the renewal dates for each property and in effect created a pathway for each property to achieve or maintain compliance with the WHQS standard.
- 3.2 The Council identifies this future investment need by means of an annually prepared 30-year business plan. The business plan details the number of homes needing improvements over the timescale of the plan multiplied by the average cost of renewal for each component. Based on current costs the average unit rate to complete external enveloping works is £18,500. This is reflected in the Council's current business plan and is considered to be the business as usual (BAU) HRA investment plan.
- 3.3 The BAU commitment was therefore a sustainable £94,350,000 for the 5,100 homes pending external refurbishment works at £18,500 per unit or £3,145,000 per annum when smoothed over the thirty years of the business plan.
- 3.4 To buffer the additional costs for the new decarbonisation / energy efficiency targets consistent with FCC pledges and WG guidance under WHQS.2, BAU budgets have been successfully utilised as match funding to attract support from WG under the eligible costs criteria for the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP) grants. Based on bids submitted by the Council, officers have been successful in securing grant funding of £7.64m which has been awarded to Flintshire via the ORP2 & ORP3 funding rounds.
- 3.5 The £7.64m has been allocated to support pilot projects integrating energy efficiency grant funded measures alongside the planned WHQS external programme. This allows the Council to invest these specifically targeted funds by blending the grant with existing BAU budgets and contracts with further efficiency in delivery by encompassing the additional works in the work of the existing staff resource, supported by specialists.
- 3.6 The integrated approach requires extensive additional enabling and monitoring under the PAS2035 (this is the retrofit survey, design, evaluation and recording standard for Wales). Assessors and Coordinators must be PAS2035 accredited.

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The PAS 2035 specialists ensure compliance with WG standards and that all costs for energy efficiency/decarbonisation enabling and measures are grant eligible.

- 3.7 Based on an initial FCC brief issued to expert consultants in response to the WG target to make all social housing carbon neutral by 2030. The first in depth assessments identified high costs with estimates ranging from a minimum £60k - £80k for on-site carbon neutral homes (if practical).
- 3.8 In a strategic outline case study, the following high value energy efficiency/decarbonisation measures were considered essential to meet the carbon neutral target:
- Ethically sourced and manufactured Solar Voltaic Panels (£3,790 average per property)
  - Ethically sourced and manufactured battery storage (up to £15k per home including safe external storage facilities)
  - External Wall Insulation (up to £20k - £25k per home)
  - Renewable space and water heating (£10k per home) Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)
  - Underfloor insulation (£5k per home not including suitable decant arrangements)
  - Positive Mechanical Ventilation with Heat recovery (MVHR - £5k per home)
  - 100% property coverage for the installation of Intelligent Energy Systems at £2,950 per home
  - Loft Insulation (£420 average per property)
  - Low energy lighting (LED Lamps) £52 per property
  - PAS 2035 compliance (Retrofit Survey and Coordination) (£415 per property including final accreditation with Trustmark)
  - Local energy grid upgrades (significant costs circa £30k per sub-station and currently being passed to installers) provisional sum allowance £150 per property assuming 200 properties per sub-station
  - Provisional sums for heating upgrades where properties do not have the latest high efficiency condensing combi gas boilers £1,000 per property noting these are already fitted the majority of homes but are set to become unavailable after 2026 in line with current regulatory changes
  - Total estimated average £68,777 per property (EEM's only)

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- 3.9 Note that of the measures listed above EWI offers a modest EPC increase compared to new CWI. While renewable heating (ASHP) and MVHR would have a negative impact on EPC ratings. Battery storage is not yet included in EPC modelling and is troublesome in terms of ethical concerns and fire safety. These high-cost measures would therefore offer little return on investment or be negative in terms of contribution to the Council meeting the WHQS.2 targets.
- 3.10 By contrast, data from the pilot projects supports a more pragmatic essential EEM's approach and a more realistic cost which is estimated at an additional £13.5k for FCC homes to be Carbon Neutral Ready. This approach has lifted the current rating for the pilot project homes from EPC D - C to EPC B - A, making them highly energy efficient and with minimum carbon emissions pending the introduction of a carbon neutral energy network.
- 3.11 The Carbon Neutral Ready approach is based on Retrofit Assessment models and actual monitoring reports (SIMAX Portal) for FCC properties in the pilot projects.

Subject to a property specific RA to every home, the following measures are proposed:

- Ethically sourced and manufactured Solar Voltaic Panels (£3,790 average per property)
- Loft Insulation (£420 average per property)
- Clean and refill with modern bead type Cavity Wall Insulation (£4,832 average per property)
- Partial External Wall Insulation (Single leaf extensions only) (£1,210 averaged over all properties)
- Low energy lighting (LED Lamps) £52 per property
- 50% property coverage for the installation of Intelligent Energy Systems at an average equivalent of £1,475 per home
- PAS 2035 compliance (Retrofit Survey and Coordination) (£415 per property including final accreditation with Trustmark)
- Provisional sums are needed for heating upgrades where properties do not have the latest high efficiency condensing combi gas boilers £1,000 per property; noting these are already fitted in the majority of homes, but are set to become unavailable after 2035, in line with current regulatory changes.

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Total average is £13,500\_per property (Energy Efficiency only) based on the pilot projects. Actual costs may vary as works to different property archetypes are undertaken but is a reasonable benchmark.

#### **4. Costs**

- 4.1 Having set out the key property condition status, energy performance data and indicative costs for each energy efficiency/decarbonisation measure in the Business Case, consideration must be given to timescales and estimated overall costs. This has immensely significant implications in terms of the profile of potential Council expenditures.
- 4.2 4.2.1 It is critical to note that while the WHQS.2 draft guidance, that defined the timescale to achieve the target of all homes achieving EPC A by 2033, has been removed. It is replaced by concerns that with the Council's existing business plan set against a 30-year cycle of investment this implies a requirement for some tenants (Contract Holders) to wait 30 years for energy efficiency improvements. This approach might hit the overarching energy efficiency and decarbonisation target set by WG; however, serious consideration needs to be given to public opinion with reputational and social concerns being major risks alongside a potential long-term running cost inequity in terms of quality of homes on offer.
  - 4.2.2 10 years may be more palatable as a cycle of decarbonisation investment to tenants. In effect this would compress the Councils planned external refurbishment expenditures from the 30 years anticipated in the business plan to 10 years. In addition, the EPC A target also means previously completed work under WHQS will now fail the EPC target and, therefore fail WHQS 2023.
- 4.3 Two main streams of work emerge from the business case data. For the purposes of this report these are identified as WHQS Retrofit and WHQS.2 respectively.
- 4.4 To mitigate additional costs for site establishment (preliminary costs made up of site storage, welfare, site management and scaffolding) it is critical to integrate the EEM's works with the WHQS external works programme. In addition, efficiencies can be made, for example, by integrating solar panels in the roof covering, reducing the amount of slate or tile if this approach is taken. If the solar panels are fitted first they would need to be removed and reinstated after the roof is renewed doubling the fitting costs.

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- 4.5 Based on the integrated approach and the above business case estimates, funding requirements are as follows based on a ten-year spending profile:
- WHQS.2 building refurbishments - £94,350,000 (£9,435,000 per annum)
  - Matching Decarb/EEM's - £68,850,000 (£6,885,000 per annum)
  - WHQS.2 Retrofit building refurb - £7,700,000 (£770,000 per annum)
  - Retrofit Decarb/EEM's - £29,700,000 (£2,970,000 per annum)
- 4.6 WHQS.2 & WHQS Retrofit will therefore require combined expenditures of £200,600,000. This equates to £20.6m per annum for each of the next ten years for blended refurbishment and decarbonisation works.
- 4.7 The Council has identified an average of £5.9m per annum in the short term for external refurbishments leaving an annual shortfall of £14.16m if this work is integrated in the business as usual expenditures and operations of the programme and becomes a strategy supported by the Council.
- 4.8 Housing and assets would not be able to deliver the programme with the existing staff structure, however, if the current allowance of 6% of capital expenditures, which supports the salaries and costs for Housing and Assets were extended to reflect the revised capital expenditure forecasts, then this fee would cover any necessary recruitment and interim expansion of staff resources. Currently estimates at two additional teams each comprising of a contract surveyor, a contract inspector and a tenant liaison officer.

## 5. Funding Options

- 5.1 The shortfall in anticipated budgets is set out in the previous costs section. Discussions with WG have so far been limited to pilot projects and WG capacity to support EEM's as a form of match funding to the Council's investment programme BAU expenditures with WG's Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP).
- 5.2 This initial funding approach is not viable in the long term. So far the Council has been successful in being awarded two allocations of grant. An initial £2.94m under the ORP2 programme and a further £4.6m over the years 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- 5.3 Further discussions are planned with WG to review opportunities for additional grant to match the limited existing BAU budgets and to maintain the momentum of the pilot projects.

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5.4 In order to implement the retrofit solutions discussed above, the funding approach needs to be considered. There are several options available to the Council, namely:

- Option 1 – 100% Grant Based Funding Solution, Matching Zero Carbon Timeline
- Option 2 – 100% Grant Based Funding Solution, Aligned with Business Plan
- Option 3 – Private Funding Solution and Grants
- Option 4 – Private Funding Solution with New Build Support

5.5 A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the potential funding solutions is set out below:

Funding Option	100% Grant Funding by 2030	100% grant funding but business plan alignment	Private funding + grants	Private funding + grants + new build support
<b>Requirements</b>	PAS 2035 certification			
	ORP Reward of £2.985m for 196 properties, scaled up for entire housing stock required £105.8m at £30.5k per dwelling (assuming 50% match funding)	Based on ORP reward but on a delayed timeline would result in a required grant funding allowance of £52.9m with 50% match funding	Private placement solution from eco-lender Fund covers costs of development in exchange for leasehold over the properties across a fixed period of time	As with previous but with a privately funded new build housing introduced to generate additional income for the programme, supplementing grant and private monies for retrofit solutions while also meeting new build housing targets
<b>Strengths</b>	Reduced risk for FCC as backed by Welsh Government directly across the stock		Strong appetite in the funding market to support  Standard RP practice	Additional supplementary income from new build development Standard RP Practice
<b>Weaknesses</b>	Unlikely to achieve based on rate of grant funding currently available. Still reliant on match funding by Flintshire to deliver	Will not reach net zero by 2030 as staggered slower pacing of retrofit measures	Risk to the Council putting their covenant on the line during the construction period if costs overrun	Additional costs for new-build development
<b>Opportunities</b>			Right to repurchase the lease for the	Meet wider housing delivery targets that are

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			properties at the end of the period, returning rental income to the council	also zero carbon; potential to use new build properties to decant residents where necessary during intrusive works
<b>Threats (Risks)</b>	Risk of not being awarded funding	Risk of not being awarded funding	Reputation – thorough background check of funder required	Reputation

### Option 1 – 100% Grant Funding Solution 2030

- i) In order to pursue a 100% grant funded solution and for grant to be awarded PAS 2035 certification is required. Assuming a similar rate of a grant reward to the ORP pilot programme, £2.985m was awarded for 196 properties, with match funding from Flintshire to total £5.970m. Scaling this up for the entire housing stock on the basis of £31k per dwelling, grant funding of £105.8m would be required over the next 10 years, assuming 50% match funding from the Council (this would further increase if additional retrofit measures and further fabric work was implemented [to achieve onsite net zero], with cost per dwelling increasing to a potential £80k the grant funding requirement would steeply increase to £284m for the entire stock).
- ii) Based on the current rate of grant funding opportunities in Wales, assuming ORP levels of funding and assumed success of Flintshire in being awarded all monies, this would take 35 years, making it highly unlikely the stock would be able to reach EPC A by 2050. Net Zero would only be practical with a carbon neutral energy supply grid.

### Option 2 – 100% Grant Funding, Business Plan Timescale

- i) As a means to reduce grant funding requirements the Flintshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan<sup>1</sup> has been reviewed to determine the rate of retrofit interventions projected over the next few years. The HRA has a programme of works to ensure FCC's stock continues to maintain the current Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), improving properties at a rate of c.300 dwellings per annum.

<sup>1</sup> Flintshire Housing Revenue Account: Annual Business Plan and 30 Year Financial Forecasts, Flintshire County Council, 2020-21

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- ii) As such, at 300 dwellings per annum less than 2,000 properties would be retrofitted by 2030. While this reduces the strain on grant funding requirements it results in not achieving the Welsh Government target of reaching net zero by 2030 or the WHQS.2 target of EPC A by 2050. Again, Net Zero would only be practical with the transformation to a carbon neutral energy supply grid.

#### Option 3 – Private Funding and Grant

- ii) An alternative to 100% grant funding solution is to also pursue a private placement solution from eco-lender where the fund covers the costs of the development in exchange for a leasehold over the properties across a fixed period of time.
- iii) The Council would enter into a bond arrangement with a funder, having tendered the process competitively. The Council would receive a range of capital sums locked in at a fixed rate of interest across a period of 25-40 years and could defer the taking of funds to suit its development programme and capacity. The bond would be serviced by income from the housing rental receipts.
- iv) Initial anonymous conversations with potential funders have shown strong appetite in the market to back a large scale retrofit solution across housing stock that match the scale of Flintshire's social housing.
- v) The main source of funding being privately placed reduces the overreliance on grant funding. Assuming the ORP funding rate per annum is made available by Welsh Government, by 2030 c.£23.88m could be awarded. This would help support 780 properties at £31k per dwelling, as per the interventions noted within the ORP application, or c.300 properties based on the c.£80k per property outlined within the indicative upgrade path above.
- vi) Further scoping is required to understand the potential ratios between grant and private funding in the case of the retrofit strategy and modelling to ascertain the ability to service the borrowing. However, this combined approach is deemed to be the most deliverable funding solution given the commitment to 2033 (in terms of and acceptable cycle of investment), based on grant funding and the strong appetite in the financial markets to support council-led retrofit housing programmes.

#### Option 4 – Private Funding, Grant, and New-Build

- i) There is an additional option to supplement income with the delivery of zero carbon new-build homes as a means to meet housing demand, with the option to decant tenants into the new build properties during any intrusive works that may arise.

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- ii) This would be the least viable option due to complexity and uncertainty of delivery and therefore the unreliability of cost modelling.

## **6. ECO 4**

- 6.1 The business case above sets out the context for the financial and resource efficiency of accelerating and enhancing Energy Efficiency and Decarb works as an addition to the business-as-usual committed budgets and resources in a programme linked to the FCC stock condition survey and planned WHQS programme. The planned programme is a pathway to broad compliance with the WHQS targets. To date it has not been linked to EPC performance so this strategy does not need to include EPC status as a factor in prioritising properties in the running order, instead as discussed above, all homes will reach the WHQS standard upon completion of the programme.
- 6.2 It should be noted that current EPC data has so far identified an initial 321 FCC homes below the stock average EPC C-D. These are considered to be the worst performing homes in terms of energy efficiency and carbon emissions. Priority for EEM's is therefore necessary under both fuel poverty and emissions reduction targets.
- 6.3 Noting the urgency to improve the 321 homes as quickly as possible a further grant opportunity has been identified. Recently implemented and funded from the energy providers Green Levy this is the ECO4 initiative. This is immediately available and is specifically targeted to all FCC homes with an EPC status of E or below, this is the ECO4 grant.
- 6.4 ECO4 applies to all homes including social housing homes but only at EPC E or lower, it is intended to appoint the incumbent Heating and Renewables contractor to manage and deliver ECO4 funded works including the property grant applications under the supervision of FCC's Energy Team.
- 6.5 Utilising the existing links to the private sector developed by the FCC Energy Team and the Heating and Renewables Contractor, the ECO4 initiative will be extended to private homes and private sector social housing landlords operating in Flintshire.
- 6.6 By appointing the Heating and Renewables Contractor as managing agent for ECO4 mitigates any risk to the Council in terms of the grant applications, non-compliant applications can be declined. Obtaining the correct level of grant to fund the EEM's will be at the contractors' risk in what is a highly complex and precise process.

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- 6.7 The overall strategic delivery, scope and performance of the ECO4 funded works will be managed and monitored by Council energy officers under the recently procured heating and renewables contract.
- 6.8 It should be noted that the ECO4 grant funding is estimated against the future household energy usage and the amount of savings energy efficiency measures will deliver over the life of the energy efficiency improvements. The majority of properties will save more on energy than the cost of the measures to supply and install, particularly in the private sector where the equation is more generous. All of these surplus grant funds will be passed to the Council to offset any shortfall on grant to Council homes. In practice therefore the ECO4 programme is expected to be entirely self-funding with any surplus being available to invest in further EEM's to the Council homes.

## **7. Summary**

- 7.1 WG have declared a climate emergency and a legally binding commitment to the decarbonisation of Wales. The decarbonisation and optimum energy efficiency of the Councils housing stock presents a significant technical, logistical and funding challenge.
- 7.2 This report sets the context of these challenges on the basis of existing stock condition, carbon emissions & energy performance, the new targets being set by WG and the cost to the Council in terms achieving the targets and compliance with WHQS targets and related regulations.
- 7.3 Subject to a suitable funding solution being identified, blending the energy efficiency improvements with an accelerated WHQS programme including retrofit of properties already completed, offers a pragmatic and cost-effective route to compliance with the EPC targets.
- 7.4 The current availability of public funding means it is unlikely that a wholly grant funded solution would be achievable. As such, a combined approach of Council BAU budgets, government grant money and private financing is the recommended way forward; based on advice there is ample support in the market.

## **8. Recommendations / next steps**

- 8.1 Officers are authorised to extend the principles being established on the pilot projects to the external improvements programme utilising the Councils BAU budgets to match fund WG decarbonisation-based grants in the short term.
- 8.2 Officers are authorised to explore and develop funding options as set out in this paper in more detail.

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- 8.3 Officers are authorised to utilise the incumbent Heating and Renewables contractor as managing agents for the ECO4 initiative.
- 8.4 Void standards are reviewed to establish if EEM's can be incorporated to mitigate disruption to tenants and allow for disruptive measures, sub-floor insulation being the best example.
- 8.5 Procurement of related training for the Tenant Federation, relevant Members, Housing Assets and Maintenance and the wider Housing portfolio.

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Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn bwrpasol

# Eitem ar gyfer y Rhaglen 10



## Communities and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Voids Management Update Reporting period: Nov 2024

Key figures			J	J	A	S	O	N
Number of new void properties in reporting period			37	39	36	33	33	32
Number of properties completed ready for allocation			46	44	43	41	64	35
Number of lettings			40	37	42	43	52	45
<b>Total voids</b>			<b>197</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>146</b>
Breakdown of total void figures	Housing Assets	Major voids	140	150	138	124	95	88
		Minor voids	35	26	17	30	40	34
		TBC	22	16	33	26	14	24
	Housing Management	High Demand	174	171	169	160	128	124
		In Progress	1	0	0	0	0	15
		Low Demand	22	21	19	20	21	7
Property Type	General Needs		97	98	97	76	76	64
	Sheltered		100	94	91	104	73	82
Property Type	1 bed		63	61	55	50	48	51
	2 bed		68	69	75	72	56	56
	3 bed		60	57	57	54	44	39
	4 bed		4	4	4	3	1	0
	4 bed plus		2	1	1	1	0	0
Capital District Areas	Buckley		17	18	19	18	17	16
	C'Quay & Shotton		31	29	27	28	24	23
	Deeside & Saltney		27	25	23	23	22	18
	Flint		54	55	54	51	33	36
	Holywell		40	36	37	38	33	34
	Mold		28	29	28	22	20	19

## **Additional information**

*Provision of other information to Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

*Top reasons for terminations:*

- *Nov*
  - *Deceased (11)*
  - *Moved to alternative accommodation (6)*
  - *Residential Care (4)*

### **Work Allocation**

*Total number of voids being worked upon - 92*

### **Low Demand assets**

- **Llwyn Aled**
- **Llwyn Beuno**

Reasons – Due to access and egress issues. Existing tenants (contract holders) along with any applicants who have refused an allocation offer, have expressed difficulties and or concerns with regards to the number of steps/ internal staircases.

- **Knights Green**

Reasons – Due to access and egress issues. Existing tenants (contract holders) along with any applicants who have refused an allocation offer, have expressed difficulties and or concerns with regards to the number of steps/ internal staircases.