

CABINET

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday 24 March 2009 in the Assembly Rooms, Town Hall, Ruthin.

PRESENT

Councillors P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing; H H Evans, Leader and Lead Member for Education; S Frobisher, Lead Member for Communities; R W Hughes, Lead Member for Personnel and Business Management; M M Jones, Lead Member for Children's Services; P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Modernisation and Improvement; J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Finance; D A J Thomas, Lead Member for Environment: Regeneration and E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment: Sustainable Development.

Observers: Councillors J R Bartley, G C Evans R L Feeley and D I Smith.

ALSO PRESENT

Acting Chief Executive; Corporate Director: Environment; Corporate Director: Social Services and Housing; Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning, Interim Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning, Principal Solicitor and the Principal Management Accountant.

APOLOGIES

County Clerk and the Financial Controller.

Chair: Councillor H H Evans chaired the meeting.

Councillor Evans welcomed Hywyn Williams, the new Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning to Denbighshire. He also took the opportunity to thank Mohammed Mehmet, Interim Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning for his professionalism, dedication, expertise and hard work over the past months.

1 URGENT MATTERS

There were no urgent items.

2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING 17.02.2009

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 February 2009 were submitted.

Item 17 Capital Plan: Report of 16.12.2009 – Councillor R W Hughes thanked Councillor J Thompson Hill for providing full details of the Victoria Bridge Refurbishment project.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

3 TRANSFORMATION OF POST 16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN DENBIGHSHIRE

Councillor H H Evans presented the report Members to note the progress on the development of a Strategic Outline Programme by the Interim Denbighshire Learning Partnership for submission to the Welsh Assembly Government. Following approval from the Welsh Assembly Government, Members were asked to note that the WAG will fund the engagement of consultants to facilitate progressing the Transformation of the post 16 learning network in Denbighshire. This would culminate in a detailed report in the format of the Treasury 5 Case Business Model providing draft models for change.

The rationale was to widen the options available for students at 14-19, develop increased levels of collaborative curriculum planning and delivery and raising the quality of the students' learning experience. The proposal was for post 16 provision to be re-organised in three main areas – the coast, the Vale of Clwyd and the Dee Valley – developing partnerships with colleges and schools. There would be close links to the Council's priorities and strategies. Good partnerships and practice with schools and progression of the transformation agenda would enhance the choice to post 16 learners and open opportunities. The Authority's commitment to the Rhyl Sixth Form development was fully supported by the Minister and was being seen as the first phase of the transforming agenda and an integral part of the modernising agenda.

Councillor P A Dobb reminded colleagues about the importance of adult learning and the wellbeing of older people. She requested reassurance that post 16 education proposed included provision for older learners. Referring to the Skills Shortages and Growth Sectors, Councillor P A Dobb said the private sector should be involved, which would ensure the actual skills shortages were known and would provide a background to improve the situation in the two areas. The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning said the Authority recognised that education did not terminate at age 19 and this would form part of the feasibility study. Regarding skills shortages, he said the Authority would not just consider the supply of people into the workforce but would also want to reflect workforce demands. He agreed it was important to ensure this was covered adequately in the feasibility study.

The decision to vacate ICT Centre, Middle Lane, Denbigh site had been taken but a number of considerations as to its use were under consideration. Councillor P J Marfleet said options for a skill site in the Vale of Clwyd would be considered and included in the Asset Management programme, and the Denbigh site and others would be included in this consideration.

Councillor E W Williams referred to his comments made at the last Council meeting and said an opportunity had been lost to have training in the workplace – are areas to be a silo mentality that training must be carried out by the Council and not industry. He felt that the travel time caused by 14-19 year old pupils from say Ruthin to Denbigh for training was "lost time" from the curriculum if training could be arranged closer to the

school premises. He wanted training to be available as close as possible to the high schools and suggested a feasibility study consider the setting up of a motor mechanic workshop or hairdressing facility for 1 day a week in Ruthin, in partnership with private business be given consideration. If feasible, this could be an opportunity for such training to be provided in schools.

Councillor R W Hughes said incredible opportunities were available and it was important to be open-minded. She felt many businesses would say pupils were leaving schools without skills as education was usually university led rather than practical. She would welcome an opportunity to work closely with business and make great changes. She agreed with Councillor Dobb that employers have been recognising that there are many benefits of having many older people in work. They help younger people understand their requirements through their skills and experience. It was important that young people were listened to and the new Programme had much potential.

The Interim Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning encouraged all to see the Programme as an opportunity and as a strategic way forward. The consultant, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, would look at options best fitting to the County of Denbighshire. He suggested the Cabinet be given an opportunity to consider the consultant's brief. It was important to consider what neighbouring authorities were doing.

Councillor D A J Thomas suggested that further information be included on the percentages included in the Appendix to the report.

The Acting Chief Executive said principles which were in the Council's agreed Statement of Intent should be taken into account when developing the Post 16 Education and Training Policy or any other policy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet supports the Interim Denbighshire Lifelong Learning Partnership's decision to approve the Strategic Outline Programme for submission to the Welsh Assembly Government.

4 CORPORATE EXECUTIVE TEAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Acting Chief Executive presented the report for Members to consider the progress against the Corporate Executive Team's key actions as provided at Appendix 1 and agree further actions as appropriate.

The Acting Chief Executive gave a brief update on some of the key issues of Single Status. At present the proposals had been submitted to the National Unions and responses were currently awaited. The Support Services' Review had been paused and would have a revised workplan which would be considered in depth and was now part of a review of the role of the Corporate Centre. The External Reference Group would have its first meeting in Denbighshire during the week and the Wales Audit Office Relationship Manager was a member of this group. Discussions were currently taking place with the Wales Audit Office to agree the Audit questions for the Corporate Governance work.

The Corporate Director: Environment was taking over as project sponsor for the Hyfrydle project to identify the future use of the site. Much work was being carried out on the Medium Term Financial Plan and this was a key element, particularly in relation to tighter funding settlements. The Local Service Board meeting during the coming week would consider local delivery agreements and the need for the Board's work to fit in as closely as possible with the Council's priorities.

Referring to a recent meeting with the Wales Audit Office, Councillor P J Marfleet said the timescale for the annual letter had now altered and this year's annual letter would be received in October. The Wales Audit Office would therefore be reporting on progress in the October letter. The Wales Audit Office considered Corporate Governance to be evidence based.

Accepting the report was an update from the Corporate Executive Team and that many new groups were being formed, Councillor R W Hughes suggested that Personnel should be involved in some of the groups, particularly when discussing change as it affected staff. The Acting Chief Executive said he would discuss the concerns and suggestions with the Head of Personnel.

RESOLVED that Cabinet notes progress against the Corporate Executive Team's key actions as provided at Appendix 1 and agreed further actions as appropriate.

5 RISK AND OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Councillor H H Evans presented the report seeking Members' approval of the Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy. The Wales Audit Office report on Corporate Governance had said that some progress in developing risk management had been made but needed to be more effectively implemented. There was a need to focus on risk management in the Authority and focus on issues to be improved. The strategy develops a framework which ensures both risks and opportunities are effectively managed and the process ensures Members and officers know what the risks are and their impacts. As a Council, it was important to share concerns on risks at an early stage and to act upon those concerns. The Joint Risk Assessments have been linked to Cabinet portfolios for monitoring.

The Head of Internal Audit said although the current strategy had not been updated the processes were robust and had been in place for over 3 years. It had been agreed with the Wales Audit Office that a new Strategy be developed and a detailed procedures manual would be shortly produced. The Strategy had been considered by the Corporate Executive Team and the Monthly Management Conference and was being looked at as a positive way of development for the Authority. Staff would be encouraged to consider developments which also had some risks. Members would note that all Cabinet reports now included a section on risks and he suggested these needed to be both robust and quality controlled. The aims and objectives and risk and opportunity management were included in the Strategy. One of the main challenges was to embed risk and opportunity management into daily work. This would be

considered in further detail later in the year for full implementation in April 2010. The benefits would be a Council able to move forward and effective corporate governance.

Councillor P A Dobb said she was pleased that a more detailed outline of risks would be provided and suggested that issues should be presented informally at an early a stage as possible. Every project should be risk assessed and the assessment included in the project. The Head of Internal Audit agreed and said both major and minor projects would be risk assessed. In response to Councillor E W Williams' comments on higher or lower risks, the Head of Internal Audit said that risks were scored corporately and not only on Service.

Councillor R W Hughes agreed risk assessments should be quality controlled. She also suggested that an element of the Cabinet's awayday meeting could discuss risk elements.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy.

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Councillor M M Jones presented the report seeking Members' agreement to the Local Authority Partnership Agreement (LAPA) set up between Denbighshire's LAPA project team and the Sports Council for Wales. Members were asked to endorse the structure and management of the LAPA, the reporting structure for the LAPA (at appendix I to the report) and the process of integrating the sport and physical activity delivery plan within the 4 high level Local Authority delivery plans. Appendix II detailed the sport and physical activity delivery plan.

The report detailing the draft structure, physical activity plan and additional programmes had been presented to Scrutiny Committee in December 2008. It aimed to have both young and older people involved in more physical activity and £62k was made available in addition to the 400k already provided by SCW annually for the core funded schemes. £32K has been allocated as part of the additional £62K with the possibility of the remaining funding being available in September 2009.

Councillor H H Evans stressed the need to ensure that services were provided at a consistent level throughout the county, not only in sports centres, he went on to cite the inconsistent opening hours of swimming pools as an important issue which would need to be addressed. The Head of Leisure Services agreed that sometimes the focus would not just be on provision in leisure centres but on the gaps in physical activity and delivery across the Authority area. Service Level Agreements should address issues such as opening hours of swimming pools. Councillor P A Dobb agreed with the suggestions that increased swimming hours should be available, through different access times so that older people could make use of facilities.

Councillor Dobb also referred to active adults and said that although cycling, swimming etc were detailed, no reference was made to dance. The Head of Leisure Services

confirmed that although dance was not in the programme, it formed part of a separate programme.

Standards of Excellence were suggested by Councillor P J Marfleet as a way forward. He suggested that the County was not large enough to provide many standards of excellence but Denbighshire should be working with neighbouring authorities to provide international swimming facilities, for example. It was important to ensure collaborative discussions with the 6 North Wales Authorities. The Head of Leisure Services confirmed that that focus was part of the plan and future service delivery. Councillor R W Hughes reminded colleagues that there had been a common agreement at the North Wales Chief Executives' meetings to progress such issues.

Responding to a query from Councillor J Thompson Hill regarding walking / cycling programmes, the Head of Leisure Services said the Service was working inclusively with partners on these issues and the cycle routes, for example, were a partnership between Countryside Services, Transport & Highways and the Welsh Assembly Government. He also informed Councillor R L Feeley that various forums were in place and that these would be reported on in the future.

Councillor D A J Thomas reminded colleagues that parts of the agreement would also affect Tourism as well as Leisure Services and that monitoring would take place once the system had commenced. The Head of Leisure Services said that the LAPA would feed into the CYPP and the lead officer group for HSCWB. It would be possible to identify whether key targets would be met.

RESOLVED that Cabinet agree Denbighshire proceed with the LAPA process, support this year's Sports and Physical Activity plan and agree the reporting structure and monitoring process.

7 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN UPDATE 2008-2009

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to note the forecast outturn position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing Capital Plan for 2008-2009. Members were asked to note the potential for the Assembly Government to revise guidance on rent increases for 2009/10 and possibly reduce rent increases that Councils have already proposed. Members were further asked to note that the Assembly Government may remove leased properties from the housing subsidy scheme in 2009/10. Approval was also sought for amendments to heating charges proposed for 2009/10.

The latest forecast suggested an in-year revenue surplus of £267k would be generated by the end of the financial year, which was £163k less than originally forecast in February 2008. The Authority was on target with its major refurbishment programme, the total of which stood at over 1000.

There had been a minor error in the heating charges quoted for four sheltered housing schemes in the previous month's report. Although the increase would remain at 10%, in

fact this would amount to a reduction of approximately 50p. The Head of Housing Services confirmed that heating charges were retrospective and costs had increased by up to 35% over the last 12 months. However, if costs dropped dramatically during the year, the costs would be re-considered.

Referring to rent increases, Councillor Dobb said that the Housing Minister in England had announced a reduction in Guideline Rent increases from 6.2% to 3.1%. The reduction in Council rents in England was said to have been funded within the Department of Communities and Local Government and would not have a direct "consequential" impact for Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government was very unlikely to adjust rents for 2009-2010.

The Welsh Assembly Government now indicated, despite previous assurances to the contrary, that the HRA subsidy for private sector leases for homeless people may not be available for 2009-10 and they had not yet completed discussion with H M Treasury. The Assembly were considering compensation for the loss but only if the rents were increased to the maximum housing benefit cap. It was therefore recommended that rents for the leased properties be increased to £157.75 per week with effect from 06.04.2009 unless the HRA private sector leasing was restored.

Councillor P J Marfleet referred to discussions with the Head of Revenues and said it would be possible for Council Tax to be paid over a period of 12 months in future, rather than 10 monthly instalments. This information would be included in the next newsletter to the Authority's housing tenants.

RESOLVED that Members note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account for the current financial year. Members also note the potential late changes to the rent setting policy and the leased property subsidy and approve the amendments to heating charges for four sheltered properties for 2009/10.

8 REVENUE BUDGET AND SUMMARY CAPITAL PLAN 2008-2009

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to note the estimate of the likely outturn figures for the current financial year as detailed in Appendix 1 attached to the report and the summary capital plan performance for 2008-2009 as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

An overall underspend of £539k was forecast, excluding the schools' delegated budgets. Little had changed since the last month in the Lifelong Learning Directorate, the overspend forecast at £610k. Both Social Services and Housing and Environment were forecasting underspends of £472k and £329k respectively, substantial increases to previous reports.

The money market investments continued to be an issue and base rate cuts of 1% meant a reduction of approximately £400k annually on the Council's investments.

RESOLVED that Members note the projected outturn figures for 2008-2009 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and note the summary capital plan performance figures for the 2008-2009 financial year as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

At this juncture (11.25 a.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

9 ROUTINE REPORTING ON PERSONNEL

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report for Members to note the statistics on Personnel. The current report provided more detailed information on sickness absence. An analysis of sickness absence had been undertaken by the Personnel Officer - Sickness Absence which had identified the number of staff who had been sick for 20 days or more. It was important to understand the reasons for this for the welfare of staff and also because it resulted in a potential high cost for the Authority.

The Personnel Officer - Sickness Absence provided Members with a breakdown of the average number of days lost as an example and said the information would be analysed by teams to allow any sickness absence patterns to emerge. She would be working with Occupational Health to look at absence in the early days of sick leave. She stressed the need for managers to be accountable and said that training and support would be available for all managers. The responsibility for sickness absence ultimately rested with managers and they needed to follow the framework for managing absence. The Environment Directorate was cited as an example of good practice, they had a sick absence co-ordinator who oversaw excellent sick absence monitoring. She said the raw data available would show whether disciplinary or grievance procedures, for example, had an effect on sickness figures.

In response to Councillor S Frobisher's query regarding Occupational Health, the Head of Personnel confirmed that 2 Occupational Advisers were employed although there was no manager in post. Consideration could be given to providing the service in partnership with either the Local Health Board or another Local Authority.

Councillor P J Marfleet said the Authority was making progress on managing sickness absence levels and again stressed the need to know underlying causes. It was possible that managers required more training. He asked whether it was possible to know the level of pressures on individual groups of staff, where some officers called in sick when in fact it was their children who were ill. It was important to take account of the work / life balance and the Worksmart project being launched soon could improve absence levels. It was also noted that the management of staff working from home required a different approach. Councillor P A Dobb supported Worksmart but said it would take time to embed. The Senior Personnel Officer said absence levels before and after the introduction of Worksmart would be available. She confirmed that managers training would be identified for those not following the framework and confirmed that it is mandatory for managers to attend the sickness absence management courses.

Following Councillor Marfleet's suggestion, Cabinet agreed that the report recommendation include the Corporate Executive Team further investigate the low uptake of compulsory training by managers.

Following a suggestion by Councillor D I Smith, the Personnel Officer - Sickness Absence indicated that absence levels would be detailed on staff notice boards at some point in future as this had reduced absence levels in some workplaces. Councillor E W Williams agreed this would improve levels initially but felt management of sickness absence was integral to improvements.

Councillor R W Hughes provided an update on performance appraisals and said the figures for Lifelong Learning were now averaging over 91% and improvements were seen across the board. A review of headcount statistics would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting. Councillor Hughes reported that the joint agency project was already producing up to 10% savings in costs in recruiting the majority of agency workers.

Councillor R W Hughes was in the process of setting up a working group, consisting of Members from each of the Scrutiny Committees, to consider various absence and personnel issues.

***RESOLVED** that Members note the information in the report. Members further agree the Corporate Executive Team investigate the low uptake of compulsory training courses, particularly in relation to absence management.*

10 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor R W Hughes presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme. Members would be discussing strategic objectives to be addressed in the following meeting.

***RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, as amended.*

11 ISSUES REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Acting Chief Executive informed members that this would be a standing item on the Cabinet Agenda in future and would afford an opportunity for Scrutiny Committees to raise any important issues. There were no issues to be raised at this meeting.

***RESOLVED** that Members note the information.*

12 URGENT ITEMS

There were no Urgent Items.

PART II

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13 CAPITAL PLAN 2008-2009

Councillor J Thompson Hill presented the report for Members to note the latest position on the 2008/09 element of the Capital Plan. Members were asked to approve the extension for the Ramps and Rails project to 30 June 2009. He detailed the current position regarding the major projects and reported that it had been agreed further funding be provided for the Clawdd Offa project, to complete the contract. However this additional funding would form part of a claim against the main contractor's insurance bond. Both the Heather and Hillforts and Ysgol Dinas Bran Dining Hall projects were progressing well.

The Denbigh Ramps and Rails project had again asked for a further extension to 30.06.2009 and Councillor Thompson Hill suggested they be informed that this would, if agreed, be the final extension. He reminded colleagues that such projects should identify land for projects before seeking any grant funding. However, Councillor E W Williams suggested this was rather harsh and could jeopardise possible funding being applied for. Members agreed to inform the project sponsors that no more extensions would be allowed, if the issue arose following 30.06.2009.

RESOLVED that Members note the latest position on the 2008/09 element of the Capital Plan and approve an extension for the Ramps and Rails project to 30 June 2009

The meeting concluded at 12.30 p.m.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE – ALAN EVANS
DATE 28 APRIL 2009
SUBJECT CORPORATE EXECUTIVE TEAM – PERFORMANCE REPORT

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 That Cabinet consider progress against the Corporate Executive Teams' key actions as provided at Appendix 1 and agree further actions as appropriate.
- 1.2 That Cabinet agree to receive these reports on a bi-monthly basis (i.e. every two months) from June 2009.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING A DECISION

- 2.1 Following receipt of a number of regulatory reports, including the Corporate Governance Report, and the appointment of the Acting Chief Executive, the Corporate Executive Team (CET) worked together to agree some key issues which it was felt required immediate attention. These related to:
- Staffing, particularly raising staff morale
 - Improving the Council's reputation and both its internal and external communications
 - Responding effectively to the Corporate Governance Inspection and other regulatory work
 - The Council's budget, particularly in the context of longer term financial planning
 - Achieving the Council's priorities and supporting the work of the Focused Agenda Board and Improvement Boards
 - Ensuring the Authority runs effectively and efficiently

Additionally, Recommendation 1 of the Corporate Governance Inspection report states that the Council should "put in place performance management arrangements that ensure reporting of the collective effectiveness of CET as well as the effectiveness of individuals". This performance report from CET is based on issues which the team have agreed they have collective responsibility for addressing. The actions are based on issues which need to be dealt with urgently, but the report is becoming more strategic and outcome focused over time.

Members will note that significant progress has been made since the last report was presented to Cabinet on 24th March. The Corporate Executive Team is working effectively together and progress has been made in all areas.

It is proposed that this report becomes bi-monthly in order to allow sufficient time for meaningful progress to be made and reported to Cabinet.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Performance management and monitoring is a key element of the Wales Programme for Improvement which is underpinned by the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 1999.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications

There are cost implications to some of the actions although some actions, such as the support services review, should lead to cashable efficiencies. Individual actions have not yet been costed.

4.2 Staffing / Accommodation Implications

Some actions have significant staffing/accommodation implications.

4.3 I.T. Implications

There may be I.T. implications which will be identified by the projects associated with each action.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with NOT agreeing recommendation(s)

There are significant risks associated with not progressing the issues identified by the Corporate Executive Team.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing recommendation(s)

There are no risks identified.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

- 6.1 The cost of recruiting the new Chief Executive should be contained within the budget concerned. The cost of interim management and related costs are reported regularly to Cabinet as part of the budget monitoring report. There are financial implications associated with many aspects of this report. The costs of Single Status have been reported regularly to Members as negotiations have progressed. Any further cost implications from this exercise will need to be identified along with a funding source. Several actions have the potential to deliver efficiency savings in the medium term.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 7.1 The key issues identified by the Corporate Executive Team have been discussed and agreed with the Leader and the subject of a verbal report to Council by the Acting Chief Executive.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities

Resolving the key issues identified by the CET will support achievement of the Council's priorities.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability

The actions proposed will have a positive impact and put the Council in a stronger position to deliver the County's Vision and Community Strategy and to take account at a strategic level of equalities and sustainability issues.

9 ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
CET to progress actions and provide monthly updates to Cabinet	Acting Chief Executive Monthly	CET Weekly
CET to work with Cabinet Members to progress actions	Corporate Executive Team Ongoing	CET Weekly

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Cabinet consider progress against the Corporate Executive Teams' key actions as provided at Appendix 1 and agree further actions as appropriate.
- 10.2 That Cabinet agree to receive these reports on a bi-monthly basis (i.e. every two months) from June 2009.



Corporate Executive Team (CET) Performance Report

* **Note:** although some Key Actions have an individual lead in terms of delivery, CET has collective responsibility for driving forward all of these Key Actions:

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
1. Staffing Issues	Appointment of New Chief Executive	Linda Atkin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-list interviews completed. Short-listing for Assessment Centre held on 14th April. • Assessment Centre taking place 20th and 21st April, with final interviews by Full Council on 22nd April 2009.
	Single Status	Sally Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from all three trade unions now received. The package itself is deemed to be recommendable. Protection within the package remains an issue unless we agree to "level up", the cost of which the Council consider to be disproportionate and unaffordable. Feedback from Unison Solicitors still awaited on this element. • Roadshows have been planned for a 3 week period commencing 21 April, with ballot taking place in mid-May. However, this is dependant on response regarding protection. • If the package is accepted by staff, then implementation will begin immediately after the ballot results are announced. Implementation will be staged over a number of months. • Since the results of job evaluation review were announced, almost 200 appeals have been received and, in line with the process, Stage 1 Appeals have been completed and employees informed of outcome. Appeal Stage 2 meetings have commenced.
	Developing CET leadership and collective performance	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective responsibility for delivery of a number of corporate challenges agreed. Progress against these challenges are reported to Cabinet via quarterly performance reports for Corporate Directors and this monthly report on CET performance. • A programme of Cabinet and CET Awaydays began in December 2008, and monthly events have been organised up until, and including, 28th May 2009. The next event is planned for 1st May 2009. • A monthly programme of CET Corporate Planning Days, with external facilitators, has been organised to discuss developmental issues. The first session was held on 14th January 2009, and further monthly sessions have been arranged up until, and including, May 2009. The next event is planned for 29th April 2009. • CET developing a clear strategic plan to take the Authority forward which is based upon the key theme of 'bringing the Council closer to the community', making sure that

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<p>we focus on service delivery. Strategic and business planning will be revised to reflect this focus. A draft 'Statement of Intent' has been produced by Members and was approved by Council on 17th March. The Council's Strategic Planning Framework was discussed at the Cabinet/CET Awayday on 4th March. A paper which proposed a model which will provide more local information and knowledge to support the financial and business planning process was also approved by Council on 17th March 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal performance appraisals of CET members will include corporate effectiveness by setting strategic objectives as well as individual effectiveness. • Leader and external adviser to be involved in performance appraisal of Chief Executive, and Lead members in appraisals of Corporate Directors.
	Transition from long term interims in Lifelong Learning to permanent appointees	Hywyn Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recruitment process for the Lead Officer for Inclusion post was unsuccessful in terms of attracting a suitable candidate. Options for the future of this post are to be considered by the new Corporate Director of Lifelong Learning. • Catherine Simpson has been retained until September 2009.
	Review staffing requirements for efficient & effective running of authority	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2008 information was provided to staff on the Efficiency Programme and staff were invited to send in expressions of interest for Voluntary Redundancy, Flexible Retirement and/or a Reduction in Hours. Employees who are eligible and can be released have now been informed and invited to formally apply by 24th April 2009. Once formal applications have been received, employees will be given notice and will leave the authority where applicable in July 2009. Further details on this issue are being reported to Cabinet as part of the Routine Reporting on Personnel.
	Support Services Review	Iwan Prys-Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deadline for the Service Support Review has been moved back, as the initial focus of our attention is on responding to other aspects of the Corporate Governance report. • It is expected that terms of reference for the Service Support review will be agreed by the end of April 2009, with an options report being prepared by the end of July. The remit will be changing to reflect the fact that what is needed is a review of the corporate centre, ensuring that we have the right support services to deliver the Statement of Intent and support service delivery. A report is then likely to be presented to Cabinet in November 2009.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
2. Communication and reputation	Communicating Current Events to Members and Staff	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Corporate Communication Strategy is being developed, and is currently in draft form. It is expected that it will be presented to Cabinet shortly. A staff communications survey is being planned by April 2010 which will test the effectiveness of the strategy. • A Reputation Campaign Action Plan has been agreed and is in the process of being implemented. Some of the actions are currently being implemented, and the remainder have been included in the Corporate Communication Strategy. • A programme of monthly meetings between the Leader, Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Communications Manager and the media began in April. • Communications Development Group to investigate new ways of communicating internally (as a result of the Corporate Governance Strategy). • Staff have been very positive about the CET Brief and the Leader's section has now been included. The brief is now also being sent to all Councillors. These are now being produced on an ad-hoc basis. • Members feedback on the Daily 'Press Digest' has been extremely positive. • Staff roadshows with the Leader and Acting Chief Executive are being rearranged to begin in April when clearer messages can be communicated. They have been delayed due to the Single Status staff roadshows. • Media awareness session designed which will be offered to groups of staff. One session delivered. The purpose of these sessions is to raise awareness of the need for people to improve communication and highlight the need for more good stories to appear in the media. The sessions are currently being advertised to staff.
	Customer Service Focus	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff suggestion scheme currently being revamped. First panel meeting was held on 26th March. Responses will be issued to staff by end April, followed by more publicity of the scheme in the summer. • Customer Service Strategy 2008-11 published. • Customer Care Service working with the Performance Managers in each Directorate to gain baseline data on new Corporate Customer Care Standards. Corporate targets have now been agreed for 2009/10. • Service delivery standards/timescales for the Authority to be created and made available to the public. Officer commenced employment on 6th April and the project is currently being scoped.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authority's complaints policies have now been revised resulting in the amalgamation of the three separate policies. A single document has been created to ensure cohesion and equity. Consultation on the draft complaints policy has now been completed; suggestions were successfully incorporated and improvements made. The draft policy is tabled for ratification at April Cabinet meeting. Following ratification, the scheme will be launched in June 2009.
	Building relationships with WAO and other regulators	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings between the Acting CEO and Wales Audit Office (WAO) arranged. WAO Relationship Manager is member of External Reference Group (see below). Work commencing on audit of the Corporate Governance Action Plan.
	Improving External Political Relationships	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Public Affairs Strategy is being incorporated into the Corporate Communications Strategy, will be presented to Cabinet for approval in April. The Leader and Acting Chief Executive continue to meet regularly with Assembly Members and other politicians. AMs and MPs have been invited to express interest in holding quarterly meetings. External Reference Group established with WAG, WAO & WLGA representation, plus the two external consultants hired by Denbighshire County Council. The first meeting of this group was held on 8th January 2009. The group has been meeting every 4 weeks, and it has now been agreed that the frequency will change to 6-8 weeks. The next meeting is arranged for 14th May 2009.
	Improving Relationships with Partners	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings arranged between Leader, Acting CEO and all key partners. Meetings with North Wales NHS Trust and North Wales Police have taken place. Excellent progress has been made on arrangements for the LSB Conference on 19th June. Speakers, including the Deputy First Minister and the Chief Executive of the WLGA, have confirmed their attendance and invitations will be sent to 120 invitees within the next few weeks. In addition to attendees gaining valuable policy insights and networking opportunities, the Conference will consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the global recession and climate change on Denbighshire; the impact of initiatives such as making the connections; spatial planning; reorganisation of the NHS in Wales; and the proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure, on how services are delivered; and how we can make the most out of partnership working and community engagement.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
3. Responding to the Corporate Governance Inspection and regulatory work	Corporate Governance Action Plan	Alan Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Action Plan, which includes detailed Workplans, was formally adopted by Council on 17th March 2009. • The Action Plan forms the starting point of the broader change management project that is required (see below).
	Statement of Intent	Alan Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft Statement of Intent was approved by Council on 17th March 2009. This outlines the key strategic direction of the Council, which is "to bring the Council closer to the Community". • The Statement of Intent indicates what needs to be done to deliver this overall strategic direction. There is a clear emphasis on service delivery and providing a high level of customer service. The Statement of Intent therefore forms a pivotal part of our future service planning. • Internal consultation is currently taking place, and managers have been asked to discuss the document with their teams and submit responses by the end of April. • Council will be asked to finally adopt the Statement in June 2009. In the meantime, staff will be asked to refer to its guiding principles when planning and delivering services.
	The Broader Change Management Programme	Alan Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will follow from the direction provided by the Statement of Intent. Business planning processes need to be reviewed to make sure that identifying community needs; service delivery; customer service standards; and the citizen are at the heart of what we do. • The process needs to be completed by the end of May 2009 to ensure that the foundations are in place for the business planning cycle for 2010/2011 and beyond. • Alongside the review of our service and corporate planning processes, work has begun on determining the future needs of the county and the Council. Steps that have been identified include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – development of area profiles and the agreement of these with Members and our strategic partners; – understanding the future service delivery requirements based upon local and national drivers; – development of a more detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy, which will also drive the Efficiency Strategy;

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of supporting workforce planning, information technology and asset management strategies; - a review of how Support Services are delivered across the organisation; - a series of Value for Money reviews. • In essence, a review of the systems, processes and structures of the whole authority will be undertaken. Detailed planning is now being undertaken and it is planned that there will be opportunities for staff across the Council to be involved.
	Responding to Hyfrydle Reports	Hywyn Williams / Sally Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan being monitored by Lead CET members & CET collectively. First progress report was presented to CET on the 2nd February 2009 and Cabinet on the 17th February. The next quarterly progress report will be presented to Cabinet on 26th May 2009. • The majority of recommendations within the action plan relate to corporate governance issues such as project management, partnership working, accountability and leadership. This action plan will be incorporated into the Corporate Plan in future, where appropriate.
	Preparing for Estyn re-inspection & Youth Support Services monitoring	Hywyn Williams / Sally Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal feedback was received at the end of the inspection visit on 27th March. This was generally positive, and acknowledged the considerable distance travelled since the original inspection in 2007. The final report is due for publication in June 2009. The Authority will then produce a robust action plan in response to the recommendations, and elements within this action plan will feature prominently in the Directorate's future Business Plans.
	Responding to other regulatory work	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client files and detailed supporting evidence were prepared for the Baby P Inspection (Safeguarding Review) following submission of analysis and information in February and March. The inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) took place from 23rd-25th March. Publication of the report will coincide with the Estyn report. • Joint Protocol agreed with the Wales Audit Office for regulatory work, and internal process for responding to regulatory reports has been formalised. All regulatory reports since November 2008 have followed this new process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WAO report on Fleet Management; - WAO report on Information Security

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WAO Follow-up Review of PARIS Social Services System Implementation; and - WAO Review of Leisure Services.
	Agree regulatory activity for coming year	Alan Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting took place on 15th December 2008 with WAO, CSSIW & Estyn to agree the Joint Risk Assessment (JRA) which the auditors will use to decide which inspections and audits to carry out for the coming year. The JRA was agreed subsequently finalised and agreed. • Denbighshire County Council has now received the WAO Annual Letter which sets out the key messages from work undertaken over the last 12 months and highlights the focus of audit and inspection work for the coming year. • The Regulatory Plan for the coming year (2008/09) will be presented by the WAO and discussed at the Regulatory Plan meeting in May 2009.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
4. Budget / Financial Planning	Budget 2009/10	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final budget proposals for 2009/10 were presented to, and approved by, full Council on 10th February 2009. Council Tax was set by full Council on 24th February 2009. The level of increase was the second lowest in Wales and the lowest in North Wales.
	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MTFP is one of the key elements of the Broader Change Management Programme. The first meeting of the group set up to develop and regularly update the Council's MTFP was held on 27th February. The remit is to align more closely the Council's Business and Financial Planning and develop a 3 year financial plan to assist future business planning. As part of its work, the group will consider a range of potential financial scenarios. An exercise has been completed to identify the cost of services compared to other Welsh Councils to provide a challenge to services' existing budgets. The process, based on statistical analysis, will aid the process of identifying cost reductions and increased income opportunities. The process of identifying Efficiency Gains achieved in 2008/9 will take place in March to May 2009. For future years, identifying and recording of gains will rest with service managers. The initial 5 year period of the Making the Connections exercise is due to end in 2009/10. It is likely that the reporting process from 2010 will be refined and simplified. The Council's Chief Financial Officer is part of an all-Wales group that is developing the reporting process and definitions of efficiency gains. WLGA have devised a form for collecting information by Authority that will provide better evidence of spending pressure and lead to a more timely and evidence backed bid for future resources. The timescale was extremely tight and WLGA officers are currently refining the data with WAG officials. CET will review the first draft version of the MTFP 2009-12 at an Away Day on the 28th April. Review by Cabinet in informal session will follow.
	Efficiency Strategy	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External support has been sought to develop a challenge process for current service budgets taking account of best practice. This will feed into the review of the Efficiency Strategy which will be completed by July 2009 to feed into the financial and business planning process for 2010/11. Efficiency savings will be captured and recorded in the Financial Planning Forms and will be regularly monitored via quarterly performance reports.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
5. Focused Agenda Board	Focused Agenda Board	Alan Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Terms of Reference for the Focused Agenda Board (FAB) have been amended and were agreed at the FAB meeting on 2nd March 2009. • The Focused Agenda Board is a strategic programme board which aims to hold senior officers to account for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The delivery of the Council's Strategic Aims and Objectives and Corporate Priority Outcomes as identified in the Corporate Plan; and – The delivery of the Corporate Governance Action Plan and the overall improvement of the Council's Corporate Governance. • FAB will not have any formal decision making powers, but will review, challenge and monitor actions and work programmes of the Chief Executive, Directors and Improvement Boards, prior to reports to formal decision making bodies such as Cabinet and Council. • The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 11th May 2009.
	Modernising Education Board	Hywyn Williams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Modernising Education priority has been ongoing for 18 months. The Board meets regularly and there are external updates available from Estyn and the Denbighshire Education Independent Recovery Board. • The outcomes have been clearly defined and were considered as part of the Estyn re-inspection in March 2009. The Authority is also increasingly moving towards the broader modernising phase with Education policies currently being the subject of extensive consultation. • Following the re-inspection of Education and Youth Support Services in March 2009 the Board has agreed to continue to meet in its present format. The Board will focus, until the publication of the findings of the Estyn Re-inspection, on reviewing support services provided by the Authority for schools. The Board will also consider within its work programme the implementation of the Modernising Education Policy Framework.
	Regeneration Board	Iwan Prys-Jones	<p>Regeneration Improvement Board last met on 3rd February 2009, with the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreement to use indicators to monitor achievement of outcomes agreed at last meeting • agreement of 6 workstreams to achieve the 3 outcomes (reducing deprivation, strategic targeting, sustainable growth): 1) Strategic Regeneration Area; 2) Rural Development Plan; 3) Economic Regeneration; 4) Housing; 5); Environment; and 6) Anti Poverty. • agreement of officers for membership of the Strategic Regeneration Area thematic groups • received and commented on the draft Denbigh Area Profile and agreed that a timetable for completion of the remaining Area Profiles to be brought to the next meeting

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a project register was presented and it was agreed that updates be brought to future meetings <p>The next meeting of the Regeneration Improvement Board is scheduled for 23rd April. Principle agenda items include: Housing; Rural development Plan; and economic recession. Forward list of items, to allow for completion of initial consideration of workstream by end of July, also to be agreed at this meeting.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Regeneration Officers Group was held on 1st April 2009.</p> <p>The next meeting of the North Wales Coast Strategic Regeneration Partnership Board was scheduled for 2nd April, but is to be rescheduled by the Minister.</p>
	Demographic Change Board	Sally Ellis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three workstreams were agreed by Focused Agenda Board to be prioritised in Phase 1: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Older People who need Care: Strategic Objective - to undertake detailed modelling and implementation of a 3 - 5 year costed Business Plan for care services for older people ensuring the maximum number of people possible are able to remain independent, supported or cared for within available resources Wellbeing and Communities: Strategic Objective - to deliver some short-term "wins" to reinforce the need, both for council departments and local communities, to redesign activities to take account of the needs of an increasing population of older and disabled people Adults with Learning Disabilities who need care or support: Strategic Objective - to track implementation of the current "transformation" plan (which is a detailed costed Business Plan) particularly focusing on how the Council, corporately, can contribute to containing costs through supporting some of its most vulnerable citizens Draft outcomes have been identified for each of these 3 workstreams, and were approved by the Improvement Board in February 2009. A Project Manager has been identified and begun work. The next Demographic Change Improvement Board meeting is on 23rd April and will update from the Regional learning Disability project and regional procurement work.
	Improve Community Engagement and Develop Area Profiles	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Project Plan for the Community Engagement Plan has been produced. Draft Community Engagement Plan for consultation to be completed by June 2009. Community Forums: 6 held during November, with approximately 150 citizens participating. The next round of meetings has been taking place throughout April and, so far, citizen attendance and participation has increased.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has been recruiting members for a new Denbighshire's Citizens' Panel since September 2008. The Citizen Panel now has 260 members and feedback from their first survey has been included in the draft Area Profiles. Recruitment for the Panel is continuing. The Panel received their first survey in January around the idea of 'What matters to you?'. The surveys responses have been returned, and the analysis of the information obtained from the surveys will be completed by the end of March. Since the start of January 2009, 6 surveys with Denbighshire's citizens and key stakeholders have taken place, e.g. Citizens Panel Survey, School Transport Survey, Equality Plan Survey. The surveys are carried out by the Strategic Policy Unit and the results analysed on behalf of departments. First drafts of the 6 Area Profiles have been completed, which include nationally collected data. The methodology for producing the profiles has been externally validated by the Data Unit. Meetings have taken place with the Data Unit with a view to implementing a web-based Area Profile solution by the Autumn which can be accessed by the public, Members, officers and partners.
	Local Service Board (LSB) and thematic Partnerships	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSB priorities will be identified via the Community Strategy development process and the Local Delivery Agreement process. The statutory timescale meant that the LSB's priorities were not able to direct the current Health Social Care and Well-Being (HSCWB), Children and Young People Partnership (CYPP) and Community Safety (CS) plans. However, this will be remedied in the next planning cycle where strategic partnerships will be able to refer to community strategy priorities when developing their strategies. Denbighshire's Local Service Board Local Delivery Agreement was submitted to the Assembly by the 1 April 2009 deadline. Denbighshire LSB conference "Working together in Denbighshire" is aimed at bringing together the wider partnership including the Countryside Council for Wales, the Ambulance Trust and others to inform them of the work of the LSB and Partnerships and to look at how they too can become involved. Conwy Borough Council will also be giving a presentation on their LSB's projects. The conference will be held on 19th June 2009. The strategic partnerships; HSCWB, CYPP and CS continue to work well and clear outcomes for the partnerships are developing. The relationship between the LSB and other

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
			<p>strategic partnerships has been strengthened and work on the Local Development Plan is on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings arranged between Leader, Acting CEO and all key partners. Meetings with North Wales NHS Trust and North Wales Police have taken place.

CET Priorities for Action	Key Actions	Lead for Delivery *	Progress to Date
6. Ensuring the Authority runs effectively and efficiently	To identify and effectively manage the Council's strategic and high risks	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet on 24th March 2009. The following activities are now planned as part of the Strategy implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide risk management training for all Departmental Management Teams and major partnership management teams (May to Aug 2009) – Provide risk management training for elected members (Sept 2009) – Risk assessments conducted for all services and major partnerships (Mar to Apr and Sept to Oct 2009) – Identification of key risks to major projects (Mar to Apr and Sept to Oct 2009) – Develop a Strategic Risk Assessment with CET (29th April 2009)
	Ensure achievement of the Councils Improvement Agreements	CET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAG and the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government provided feedback to say that Denbighshire's Improvement Agreement is one of the best in Wales. • Progress against 2008/09 milestones was reported as part of the Quarter 3 Performance Report to Cabinet in February 2009. • Internal Project Team meeting arranged for 5th May to ensure that Denbighshire has sufficient evidence to demonstrate success against the agreed actions & targets for year 1 of the Improvement Agreement (2008/09). • Meeting arranged with WAO and WAG for 15th June to present the Year 1 evidence and confirm actions & targets for Year 2 (2009/10).

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR P A DOBB LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING

DATE: 28th April 2009

SUBJECT: DENBIGHSHIRE'S EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

1. DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 For Members to approve the proposed Empty Homes Strategy as outlined in Appendix 1 and for this Strategy to be adopted by the Council as the Empty Homes Strategy for Denbighshire.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 Empty private sector properties are a major issue within Denbighshire. Given the previous buoyant state of the local housing market, both locally and nationally, it is perhaps surprising that various reports have identified up to 1,800 empty homes within the county.

2.2 Long term empty properties, can attract crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, tying up the resources of the authority, the police and fire services. They can impact adversely upon the visual environment, particularly empties strategically located at the gateway to towns and villages. They can also impact on adjoining properties through damp and other infestations.

2.3 Changes to the housing market and demand for affordable accommodation have made empty homes an even greater waste of resource. When house prices soared, affordability become a major issue. With the market slowing developers have stopped building and our main source of affordable housing through the planning system has dried up. Without intervention the number of empty homes is likely to rise as owners struggle to sell and possessions increase.

2.4 A long-term empty property is one which has been unoccupied for more than 6 months, which is inactive in the housing market and has previously been used as a residential dwelling.

2.5 Denbighshire does not currently have an Empty Homes Strategy but we recognise the wasted resource of the empty homes within the county. Through an innovative partnership between Denbighshire and North Wales Housing Association an Empty Homes Officer has been employed to develop and implement this strategy

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

3.1 Housing Act 2004

Sec 11 (Improvement notice category 1 hazard)

Sec 12 (Improvement notice category 2 hazard)

Sec 40(2) (emergency remedial action)

Sec 49 (powers to charge for certain enforcement action)

Sec 50 (recovery of charges under Sec 49)

Local Government Act 2003 Sec 85 permission to use C/Tax data to identify empty homes and assist in implementing strategy.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications:

Empty Homes Officer has been in post since May 2008. Denbighshire and North Wales Housing Association(NWHA) have joined in an innovative partnership to employ an Empty Homes Officer with the post being funded by NWHA. Accommodation is provided by Denbighshire at Russell House offices.

4.2 Staffing / Accommodation Implications:

None

4.3 IT Implications:

None

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s

Denbighshire will be unable to bring empty homes back into use

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s

None

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

6.1 Costs to be funded by the Council, as detailed in the appendix, will need to be contained within the capital provision available.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

7.1 Public consultation

Consultation event was held at Rhyl Fire Station on 19th January 2009 and was attended by all invited relevant local agencies including Housing Associations, Estate agents, National Landlords Association and relevant internal departments

Environment and Social Services Scrutiny committees

All consultation was supporting of the Strategy framework document

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

Regeneration – bringing empty homes back into use contribute to regeneration

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

We will fully support the Vision of the Council through respect by treating customers equally and with fairness through application of the strategy.

We will fully support the Vision of the Council through our integrity, by ensuring Officers work within boundaries of the law and the strategy whilst promoting the positive image of Denbighshire

9 ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
Implement Empty Homes Strategy with immediate effect	Wendy Barnsley with immediate effect	Empty Homes Steering Group every quarter
Arrange inspections of 20 most prioritised homes identified by the strategy and engage with the owners	Wendy Barnsley by September 2009	Empty Homes Steering Group every quarter

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 For this Strategy to be adopted by the Council as Denbighshire's Empty Homes Strategy.

10.2 Lead Member for Health, Social Care and Well-being to have delegated power to make any subsequent minor changes to the Strategy once adopted.

Denbighshire Empty Homes Strategy



2009 - 2012



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Appendices:

1	Empty Homes Survey Form
2	Empty Home Survey Results
3	Llangollen Pilot
4	Empty Homes Scoring Matrix
5	Empty Homes Action Flowchart
6	Empty Homes Grant Criteria & Conditions
7	Performance Indicator Definition
8	Empty Homes Action Plan

1. Foreword

Imagine it ... the eyesore on the street, rundown, boarded up and overgrown. It been like this for years - a family home forgotten about and neglected.



Now imagine that you are homeless and desperately looking for somewhere to live. How do you feel looking upon this waste?

That's what this strategy is all about - turning wasted and neglected housing into quality affordable accommodation for those who need it.

It sets out how, in partnership, Denbighshire County Council and North Wales Housing Association will bring long term empty homes back into use.

We won't just be looking at obvious empty homes, but also the many invisible ones. These homes are well maintained and in good condition, they just need us to find someone to live in them.

We wish our officers good luck with this project as we know it won't be easy. Each empty home has its own story to tell and understand, but whilst there is such a need for affordable housing we can not sit back and do nothing.

We want to work with rather than against owners, developing services to support them and overcome the hurdles they face. We are not, however, afraid of getting serious and, where necessary, will use our enforcement powers to make things happen.

If you own an empty home or live near one please contact Denbighshire's Empty Homes Officer to find out how we can work together.



Cllr David Thomas
Lead Member for
Regeneration
Denbighshire County Council



Cllr Pauline Dobb
Lead Member for Health,
Social Care and Well-being
Denbighshire County Council



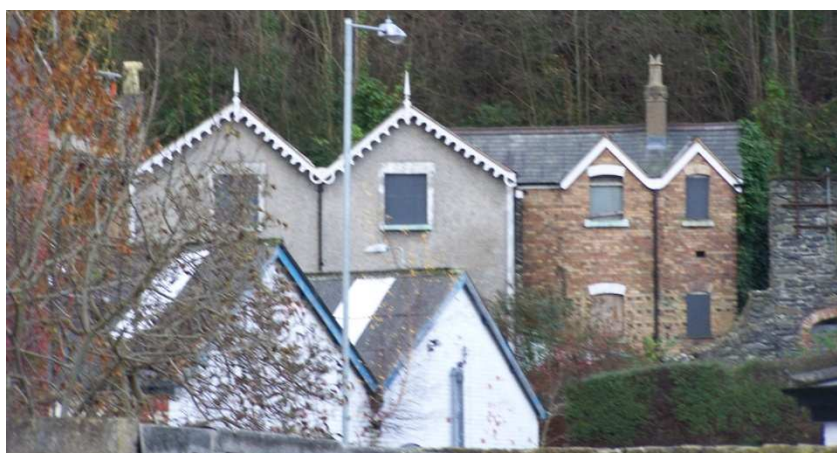
Ms Kathryn Beard
Board Member for North Wales
Housing Association Ltd



2. Introduction

Welcome to Denbighshire's first Empty Homes Strategy. This document sets out our plans for bringing the County's empty homes back into use over the next 3 years. It outlines our proactive, co-ordinated approach to tackling the problem of empty homes with our partners. Tackling Denbighshire's 800 long-term private sector empty homes is very much a positive project for all:

- **For those in housing need** – there's an empty home for every four households on the Council Housing Waiting List and seven for every homeless household who the Council had a duty to re-house in the last 12 months. There are real opportunities to use these homes to increase the supply of housing available to these households.
- **For those living nearby** – deteriorating empty homes can blight a street and undermine the community's confidence in an area. It is estimated that adjoining homes may be devalued by up to 18% (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors).
- **For the owner** – it costs money to leave a home empty.
£5,700 in lost rent (2 bedroom average rent)
£1,150 on Council Tax (Band D – full charge payable after 6 months)
£1,500 through dilapidation, management, security and insurance
That's £8,350 per year – it just doesn't make sense to leave it empty.
- **For the Council and emergency services** – Dealing with complaints and being called out to empty homes costs the Council, Police and Fire Service thousands of pounds each year which could be used on other services.
- **For the environment** – it would take 12 football pitches (probably of greenfield land) to rebuild the 800 homes that lie empty. It's far more sustainable to use up what we've got first.



Deteriorating empty homes can blight a street and undermine a community's confidence in an area.

3. Objectives

With all this in mind our objectives for this strategy are to:

- return as many empty homes as possible back into residential use
- improve the physical condition of the existing built environment by targeting the most prominent empty homes
- utilise empty homes for affordable housing thus reducing the demand for greenfield development by maximising the use of the existing housing stock
- recover debts owed to the Council by empty home owners

We also want to explore the wider benefits of bringing empty homes back into use, such as opportunities for training and skills development and developing specialist housing schemes (see 10.).



There are real opportunities to use these homes to increase the supply of housing available to these households.

4. Background

The Empty Homes Agency predicts that there will be 1 million empty homes in the UK by the end of 2009. Over 60,000 of these will be in Wales representing 5% of the total number of homes.



The **Empty Homes Agency** is an independent campaigning charity, which exists to highlight the waste of empty property in England and works with others to devise and promote sustainable solutions to bring empty homes back into use.

Changes to the housing market and demand for affordable accommodation have obliged us to look at these empty homes. When house prices soared affordability became a major issue. With the market slowing developers have stopped building and one of our main sources of affordable housing through the planning system has dried up. Without intervention the number of empty homes is likely to rise as owners struggle to sell and re-possession will increase.

4.1 Definition

This strategy focuses upon “long-term empty homes” which have been unoccupied for more than 6 months and have previously been used as a residential dwelling.

We want to target properties where there is no viable plan to bring them back into use. In the current housing market this includes properties that are for sale and we will advise and assist owners who have actively marketed their property for 6 months or more.

It is not within the scope of this strategy to provide assistance in the following circumstances:

- **new build empty homes** – there is a separate Welsh Assembly Government initiative to assist developers who have unsold, newly completed units
- **partly empty houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and non-self contained flats** – the Local Authority Housing Enforcement Team regulate HMOs. This is done using the Housing, Health & Safety Rating System, mandatory licensing and the proposed additional licensing scheme.
- **agricultural homes and business premises**

We will review this definition annually to ensure that it continues to meet current priorities and conditions.

4.2 The National Context

The need to tackle empty homes has become more widely recognised in Wales in recent years. Both the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Commission report into Rural Housing in Wales (June 2008) and the “Essex Review” into Affordable Housing (September 2008) recognised the role that empty homes had in increasing housing supply.

“It is likely that actions on empty homes can potentially make an important contribution to meeting rural housing needs” JRF Commission

“Local authorities should develop an ongoing programme of tackling empty private housing in their area, working with landlords, housing associations and developers where appropriate.” Essex Review



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

In response the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is clearly promoting increased action on empty homes in the draft National Housing Strategy, Sustainable Homes (January 2009).

*“..any unnecessarily empty home is one less available for someone in need. Action plans to quantify and address empty homes need to be part of the armoury of affordable housing delivery.”*WAG

Local Authorities are now required by the WAG to produce an Affordable Housing Delivery Statement setting out how they will improve delivery of affordable housing, including the use of long-term empty homes.

To assist Local Authorities, WAG are re-writing their guidance on bringing empty homes into use and have provided funding to Shelter Cymru to support and build up the capacity of Empty Homes Officers.

Shelter
Cymru

4.3 The Regional Context



In North Wales the empty homes issue is gaining momentum. In August 2008 a Daily Post headline announced that there were 8,000 empty homes across the region whilst 35,000 people waited for accommodation.

All North Wales Council's have recognised the need to tackle empty homes and are at various stages of bringing them back into use. Talks have begun to set up a network of the regions Empty Homes Officers to share experiences and good practice.

4.4 The Local Context

A concerted effort to bring Denbighshire's 800 empty homes back into use began in July 2008 with the launch of the Denbighshire Empty Homes Project and appointment of a dedicated Empty Homes Officer.

An innovative partnership with North Wales Housing Association has been formed to employ the officer and clearly make the link between empty homes and increasing the supply of affordable housing.



**The Denbighshire
Empty Homes Project**

Key milestones have been set for the 3-year project to:

- **develop an Empty Homes Strategy for the County**
- **create a database of empty homes**
- **source funding opportunities**
- **develop options for bringing empty homes back into use**

The project is steered by a group of representatives from both organisations including the Council's Lead Member for Regeneration and a Board Member of North Wales Housing Association.

The project has a key role to play in increasing the supply of affordable housing and contributing to regeneration initiatives such as the North Wales Coast Regeneration Area. It also has close links with the strategies and business plans of both Denbighshire County Council and North Wales Housing Association.

Relevant Denbighshire County Council Strategies include:

- **Community safety**
- **Health Social Care & Well-being**
- **Local Development Plan**
- **Community strategy**
- **Local Housing Strategy**
- **Affordable Housing Delivery Statement**

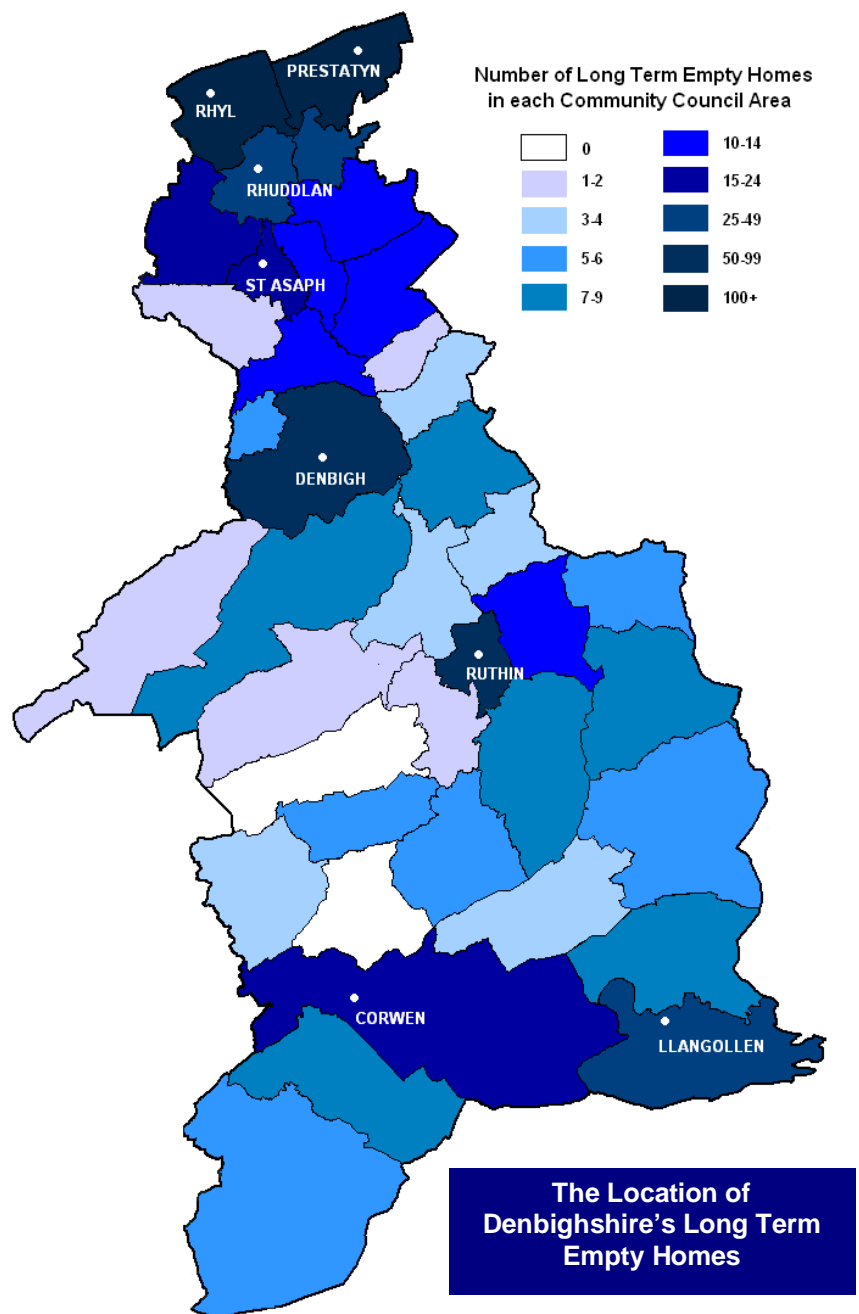
Whilst North Wales Housing Association's main aim is to "*ensure that the homes and services we provide make a positive contribution to the quality of life in the communities where we work.*"

5. Understanding the Problem

A survey of Denbighshire's private housing stock completed in 2008 estimated that there were a total of 1,890 empty homes in the County, 5.1% of the housing stock.

Further research by the Empty Homes Officer has provided more detail and located around 800 (as at 1st April 2009) which have been empty for 6 months or more.

As figure 1 illustrates, these properties can be found throughout the County. Whilst there are concentrations in the larger communities, when added together, a significant number of empty homes are located in rural areas.



5.1 The Empty Homes Database

A key milestone of the Empty Homes Project was to develop a database of long term empty homes and an understanding of which homes are empty within the County and the reasons why.

A survey form ([Appendix 1](#)) was sent to the property owners initially identified from the Council Tax Register and Electoral Role, to gather more information about the property and to introduce the empty homes project.

In this survey we took the opportunity to ask owners if they'd be willing to work with us to bring their property back into use. 20% responded positively giving us over 160 empty homes to potentially work with without the need for enforcement. Further details of these properties can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

The Empty Homes Officer is also continually adding to the database when new reports of empty homes are received by owners, concerned neighbours and Council Officers.

It is our intention to review the database annually against the Council Tax Register and Electoral Role to determine the number of long term empty properties in the County and the number brought back into use.

5.2 The Llangollen Pilot

We believe that the best way to know if our plans would work was to test them out.

Whilst we've been developing this strategy we've been running a small pilot scheme in Llangollen. This has given us the opportunity to work with owners and understand the issues and opportunities that empty homes present.

Further information on the homes we have worked with can be found in [Appendix 3](#).



The Llangollen Pilot has given us the opportunity to work with owners and understand the issues and opportunities that empty homes present.

6. Identifying Solutions

6.1 Working in Partnership

The existence of the Empty Homes Project itself is the result of close partnership working between Denbighshire County Council and North Wales Housing Association. The partnership sitting behind this strategy is, however, far wider.



Empty homes and the problems associated with them are dealt with on a daily basis by many different Council departments (Environmental Health, Building Control, Planning, Council Tax etc.) as well as the Police and Fire Service. Empty homes may attract anti-social behaviour or vermin, they may be dangerous structures or be listed and they may owe debts for unpaid taxes or works completed in default.

Estate agents, lettings agents and private sector landlords also have some involvement with empty homes and understand their role in the market place, whilst housing associations, renewal officers and legal advisors are key to finding solutions for bringing empty homes back into use.

We've sought the views of all of these partners when developing this strategy. A consultation event was held on the 19th January 2009 which brought together 40 professionals who work with empty homes. The views expressed at this event have helped to shape this strategy and ensure that it encompasses the whole range of work associated with empty homes. An annual event will be held to review the success of the strategy and ensure on-going engagement with our partners.

6.2 Involving the Local Community

From an early stage in the project we have taken every opportunity to raise awareness of the empty homes issue within the local community:



Jessica, the winner of our drawing competition

- We've talked to many of Denbighshire's Town and Community Councils, interested Community Groups and the Private Sector Landlord's Forum about the need to bring empty homes back into use.
- We've received coverage in the local press and displayed posters asking people to report empty homes.
- We've asked local children attending summer holiday clubs to design our logo.

The community have also been given the opportunity to comment on our draft strategy by making it available for public consultation on www.denbighshire.gov.uk

7. Engaging with Owners

It is essential that a good working relationship is developed between the Empty Homes Officer and property owners to encourage voluntary re-use of long term empty homes. Only where voluntary approaches have been declined or ignored will we consider the use of the Council's statutory enforcement powers.

We are keen to ensure that we do not discriminate either directly or indirectly, against any person on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion, age, disability or illness. Both Denbighshire County Council and North Wales Housing Association Ltd. will comply with all relevant equalities legislation and monitor any action taken in relation to this strategy to ensure that discrimination against any person or group of persons does not occur.



7.1 Prioritisation

We recognise that one Empty Homes Officer cannot tackle all 800 long term empty homes at once and that our funding is limited. For these reasons we will prioritise the empty homes that we work with.

Our Empty Homes Officer will focus upon our top 20 empty homes. This is a rolling list and as homes are brought back into use new ones will be added.

The top 20 will be those homes which receive the highest score when assessed against the Empty Homes Scoring Matrix ([Appendix 4](#)).

This aims to prioritise properties where the owner is willing to work with us as well as harder enforcement cases and takes into account the following factors:

- The funding opportunities available to bring a home back into use
- The willingness of the owner to work with us
- The location of the property and its impact on the local community
- The potential of the property to fulfil identified housing need
- The length of time that the property has been empty

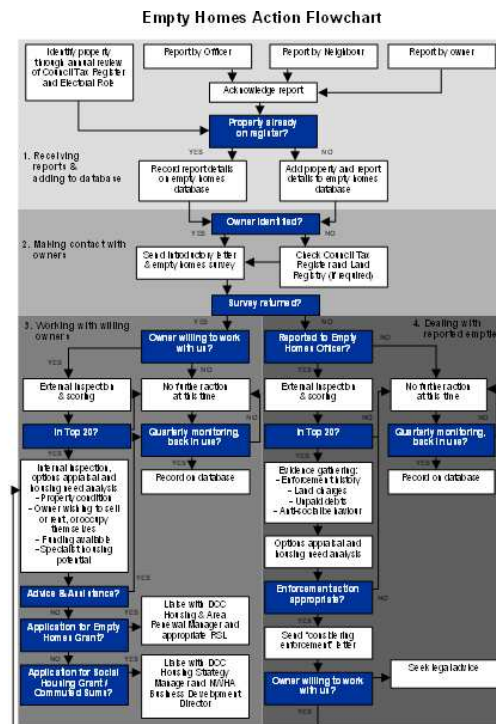
The matrix system will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to our priorities.

7.2 Taking Action

Each empty home and owner will require an individual solution but there will be specific stages in all cases to ensure that all empty homes are investigated thoroughly and dealt with fairly.

Appendix 5 provides a flowchart of the actions our Empty Homes Officer will follow when:

- Receiving reports and adding new empty homes to the database
- Making contact with owners
- Working with willing owners
- Dealing with reported empty homes



8. The Range of Options

Each empty home has a different story to tell and therefore different solutions need to be found to bring them back into use.

There are a wide variety of reasons why a property may be left empty such as lack of funds, fear of renting, inability to sell, bereavement, care needs, imprisonment etc. To be truly successful in bringing them back into use we must have a wide range of options available for owners from supportive advice and assistance to proactive enforcement.



8.1 Advice and information

[For those looking to sell...](#)

- Information about estate agents and auctions
- Access to the interested purchasers database providing interface between empty home owners and interested purchasers and developers.
- Liaison with Registered Social Landlords and Local Authority Officers to explore opportunities to purchase the property for affordable housing. This would be dependent upon a specific need being identified and the property meeting Welsh Assembly Development Quality Requirements.

For those looking to rent...

- Information about being a private landlord and accreditation schemes
- Invitation to Denbighshire's Private Sector Landlords' Forum

For those renovating for their own occupation...

- Information about undertaking repairs and renovations
- Details of Denbighshire County Council's approved contractors
- Signposting to available grants

8.2 Management & Leasing Schemes

For those nervous or inexperienced about renting ...

- Free no obligation internal inspection, options appraisal and liaison with appropriate organisations
- Signposting to Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Opportunities to lease the property or have it managed on their behalf by a Registered Social Landlord where there is a housing need for the property. Lettings will be made from the Local Authority's Housing Waiting List and rent levels set at Local Housing Allowance levels.



8.3 Empty Homes Grant

For those with insufficient funds to refurbish their empty home ...

- Free no obligation internal inspection, options appraisal and liaison with appropriate organisations
- A grant of £10,000 maximum (or 50% of eligible works) where the property is in an area of housing need for applicants who have owned the property for 3 years (except where recently inherited).
- "Business plan" detailing the amount of grant available and the rental income they will receive.

The owner must:

- Work with a Registered Social Landlord to provide affordable housing through a management or leasing scheme (see 8.2) for 5 years
- Re-pay the grant in full if the property is sold or removed from the affordable housing scheme within 5 years
- Become an accredited landlord

This grant is also available to first time buyers who have a local connection with the community in which the property is located and who would otherwise be unable to fund the work or buy an alternative property on the open market.

Details of the eligible works and the application process are outlined in [Appendix 6](#)



8.4 Enforcement

For owners of problematic empties who are unwilling to work with us ...

- Enforcement action to improve the condition of the property
- Enforced sale to recover land charges placed on the property by the Council. The owner is forced to sell to a 3rd party through auction or to a preferred developer of the Council
- Compulsory purchase by the Council where there is a wider strategic agenda e.g. regeneration.
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders where the property is in an area of housing need and there is no prospect of the property becoming occupied in any other way.

9. Funding

Capital funding for the empty homes project is sourced from a variety of existing funds.

9.1 For empty homes grants

- Denbighshire County Council private sector renewal funding
- Area based renewal scheme funding

9.2 For property purchase by a Registered Social Landlord

- Welsh Assembly Government Social Housing Grant
- Strategic Regeneration Area funding made available by the Welsh Assembly Government
- Denbighshire County Council Commuted Sums for Affordable Housing
- Privately sourced finance from the RSL

Other services offered, such as leasing and management schemes, are already operational and would be self-funding.

We will seek to harness any new funding sources and investigate the funding that is available from other organisations e.g.CADW, Town Heritage Initiative.



10. Maximising the Benefits

As well as creating more affordable housing and improving the built environment, we believe that there can be many added benefits to bringing empty homes back into use.

10.1 Specialist Housing Schemes

The private housing sector has great potential to assist the local authority in meeting specialist housing needs. Some families require types of properties that simply do not exist within the existing social housing stock, e.g. larger family homes or adaptable bungalows.

We are working with Denbighshire's Housing Services, Homelessness Team, Social Services, Occupational Therapists and Supporting People officers to find uses for our empty homes. This may include supported housing, "move-on" accommodation or alternatives to disabled facilities grants.

Wherever possible we hope to utilise the County's empty homes to fulfil specific housing need and will look at purchasing, managing or leasing suitable homes on the Empty Homes Database before building new or buying occupied ones.



10.2 Wider Regeneration Initiatives

Since beginning our project we have learnt that the northern edge of the County has been included in the Welsh Assembly Government's new North Wales Coast Strategic Regeneration Area. This brings a multi-million pound plan to transform the seaside towns, aiming to boost tourism, improve the environment and raise skill levels and job opportunities.

Bringing empty homes back into use is a key element of the plan. It has been recognised that our work will not only improve the physical appearance of this area but also offer opportunities to address tenure and house type imbalances in areas where the private rented sector and houses in multiple occupation dominate.

10.3 Training Opportunities

We plan to work with the Department of Work and Pensions Programme, the Rhyl City Strategy, to provide construction skills training when refurbishing empty homes.



There are many good practice models where future residents are involved in the works on their new homes. We hope to learn from these and adopt a similar approach.

We also recognise the potential to provide work opportunities for the Probation Service and community groups.

10.4 Fire Safety



Working with the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service, we will promote their work and ensure that every empty home we directly bring back into use has a free Fire Safety check.

11. The Way Forward

We have a lot of work to do to achieve our aims but we know that the rewards will be great. Our efforts will be monitored by the Empty Homes Project Steering Group to ensure that targets are met.

11.1 Targets

Denbighshire County Council is required to report their success in bringing long term empty homes back into use through a National Strategic Indicator ([Appendix 7](#)).

We have set targets against this indicator for us to strive to bring 50 long term empty homes back into use over the duration of the Empty Homes Project. Through our Empty Homes Grant and purchasing arrangements we would hope to make 30 of these homes available for affordable housing.

Number of long term empty homes (over 6 months) brought back into use over period

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	During 3-year project
5	15	30	50

Number for affordable housing

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	During 3-year project
0	10	20	30

11.2 Action Plan

We have also set ourselves a detailed action plan ([Appendix 8](#)) to guide our future development of the Empty Homes Project. This will ensure that we develop the capacity and skills to tackle the most problematic empty homes and not lose sight of the additional benefits we can achieve.

Appendix 1 - Empty Homes Survey Form

Survey of Empty Homes

Please complete this questionnaire for:



Denbighshire
Empty Homes
Project

1 Are you currently the owner of this property or responsible for it? *Tick one box*
Yes

Owner
Responsible
No, not owner/responsible

2 Is anyone currently living in this property?
Tick one box

Yes No
If YES, please stop here

3 What type of property is this? *Tick one box*

House
Bungalow
Flat/maisonette

4 Please rate the condition of this property
Tick one box

Very good
Fairly good
Neither good nor poor
Fairly poor
Very poor
Don't know/no opinion

5 How/why did you come to own/be responsible for this property? *Tick one box*
Bought it

to live in myself
for family/friends to live in
as an investment
for income from renting
included with other properties
Inherited it
Received it as a gift
Manage it for someone else
Other *Tick box & write below*

6 How long has it been empty? *Tick one box*

0 - 6 months 3 - 5 years
6 - 12 months ... 5 - 10 years
1 - 2 years 10 years +

7 Does owning this property cause you any problems? *Tick one box*

Always
Often
Sometimes
Never

8 Why is this property currently empty?
Tick all that apply

It's being repaired/renovated
It needs repairs/renovation
Trying to sell it
Trying to let it
Bought for investment
No separate/usable entrance
Planning issues
Legal dispute
No reason/don't know
Other *Tick box & write below*

9 Which of these services might encourage you to get this property occupied?
Tick all that apply

Grant for repairs/renovation
Loan for repairs/renovation
Service to manage repairs/renovation
Help/advice to find a tenant
Guaranteed rental income
Help/advice to find buyer
Legal advice/mediation
None of these

10 Would you be interested in working with us to bring this property back into use? *Tick one box*

Yes
No
If yes, please give us your day time telephone number or e-mail address.

Appendix 2

Empty Home Survey Results – Owners willing to work with us

Where are their empty homes? What type of properties are they?

Community Council Area	Bungalow	Flat	House	Total
BODELWYDDAN	1		1	2
BRYNEGLWYS			1	1
CEFN MEIRIADOG	1			1
CORWEN	1		6	7
CYNWYD			3	3
DENBIGH	1	6	7	14
DERWEN			1	1
DYSERTH		1	1	2
EFENECHTYD			2	2
HENLLAN		1	1	2
LLANARMON YN IAL	1		2	3
LLANBEDR DYFFRYN CLWYD		3	2	5
LLANDEGLA			2	2
LLANDRILLO			2	2
LLANDYRNOG			4	4
LLANELIDAN			1	1
LLANFAIR DYFFRYN CLWYD			1	1
LLANFERRES	1		1	2
LLANGOLLEN	1	1	8	10
LLANRHAEADR YNG NGHINMEIRCH	1		2	3
PRESTATYN	11	3	7	21
RHUDDLAN	3		2	5
RHYL	6	30	16	52
RUTHIN		4	9	13
ST ASAPH	3			3
Grand Total	31	49	82	162

How long have they been empty?

Time Empty	Total	%
Unknown	8	5%
0-6 months	9	5%
6-12 months	35	22%
1-2 years	64	40%
3-5 years	20	12%
5-10 years	12	7%
10 years +	14	9%
Grand Total	162	

Why do they own/are they responsible for them?

Ownership Reason	Total
Investment	28
For family/friends to live in	6
To rent out	19
Included with other properties	16
To live in myself	29
Inherited it	42
Manage it for someone else	11
Other	4
Unknown	7
Grand Total	162

Why are they empty?

Empty Reason	%
Being repaired/renovated	17%
Needs repairs/renovations	36%
Trying to sell	35%
Trying to let	16%
No separate entrance	1%
Planning issue	6%
No reason	1%
Other	1%

What services should we provide?

Service	%
Grant for repairs/renovation	62%
Loan for repairs/renovation	17%
Service to manage repairs/renovation	15%
Help/advice to find a tenant	37%
Guaranteed rental income	41%
Help/advice to find buyer	32%
Legal advice/mediation	6%
None of these	3%

Appendix 3 - Llangollen Pilot

Princess Street

A three bedroom terraced house which has been empty for 3 to 5 years. The owners plan to live here when they retire. Health issues may make this necessary in the next few years. The property requires some damp proofing work and decoration throughout. The owners were hoping to have financial assistance with the work.

Action

The Empty Homes Officer explained that an Empty Homes Grant would require owners to let the property for 5 years. The owners did not want to take this up as they may require the property themselves during this time. The owners were given advice about energy efficiency schemes that they could access when preparing the house for them to live in.

Market Street

A three bedroom, three-storey terraced house which has been empty for around 4 years. Bought to provide an affordable home for a young family, much of the renovation work has done to this property by the owners but a lack of funds has prevented them from finishing the project. A growing family now makes the property unsuitable for their needs. The cost of completing the work and redecoration is estimated at £10,000.

Action

The Empty Homes Officer discussed the Empty Homes Grant option with the owners and arranged a meeting with a Registered Social Landlord to discuss the practicalities of having the property managed. The owners decided that they would prefer to raise the funds themselves and rent the property out privately. The Empty Homes Officer provided them with information leaflets about becoming a landlord.

Hall Street

A one bedroom terraced house which has been empty for over 2 years since the death of a family member. The property was extended to create a separate kitchen and bathroom. This extension was poorly constructed and wet rot has spread extensively. The owners wish to retain ownership but have little knowledge of building work and are worried by the extent of the works required. The cost of remedial works is estimated at £25,000.

Action

The Empty Homes Officer discussed the Empty Homes Grant option with the owners. The owners are keen to work with a Registered Social Landlord. The next steps are to fully assess and cost the works before making an application

to DCC for an Empty Homes Grant. A meeting will also be arranged with a Registered Social Landlord to discuss the practicalities of having the property managed.

Birch Hill

A three bedroom end terraced property with basement accommodation. The owner, a small property developer, has gained Planning Permission to turn the basement into a self contained flat. He is hoping to have financial assistance with the work.

Action

It was decided by the Empty Homes Steering Group that there was a viable plan for bringing this property back into use. The Developer had brought the property as an investment and was progressing with the project. From discussion about this case it was decided to only make Empty Homes Grants available to applicants who have owned the property for 3 years (except where recently inherited). If someone has bought a property recently they are more likely to have a viable plan to bring it back into use.

Willow Street

The Willows is a Grade 2 Listed, 3-storey town house holding a prominent position. Due to its height and elevation it can be seen from other areas of the town centre. It is associated with Plas Newydd and the “Ladies of Llangollen”. The site is made up of the main house, a brick extension and a derelict coach house. Planning permission has been granted to demolish the coach house in order to widen Willow Street. The property has been owned by a developer and is thought to have been empty for over 20 years. It is in extremely poor condition, is boarded up and requires extensive works both internally and externally to secure its stability.

Action

An agreement has been reached in principle to convert the property into 3 self contained social housing units with the potential for them to be used for supported housing. This will be a package deal giving much needed work to the developer in the current economic climate. It is hoped that funding can be secured through the Social Housing Grant Programme, from CADW and from the commuted sums pot for Llangollen.

Appendix 4 – Empty Homes Scoring Matrix

Category	Criteria	Score
1. Funding Opportunities (may be awarded for more than one criteria)	SHG already secured for type and location of property	20
	Within ward with commuted sums for affordable housing	10
	Within renewal / regeneration area	10
2. Owner Response	Positive response, willing to work with us	10
	Negative response / Survey unanswered	0
3. Location	Main Road	10
	Side Street/Estate	5
	Rural/Isolated	0
4. Community Impact	High	15
	Medium	10
	Low	5
	Nil	0
5. Housing Need	Required for specialist housing	20
	Suitable for move-on	15
	Rural housing need	10
	Suitable for single person with support	10
6. Time Empty	10 years +	20
	5 – 10 years	15
	1 – 5 years	10
	6 – 12 months	5
	Less than 6 months	0

Definitions & Rationale

1. Funding Opportunities (may be awarded for more than one criteria)

Definition

Properties which match the type and location needed for a specialist housing and where Social Housing Grant has already been secured will receive a score of 20. The score will only be awarded where the Empty Homes Officer has been advised of these circumstances by DCC's Housing Strategy Team.

Some communities within the County have access to commuted sums funding which are ring-fenced for affordable housing. DCC will advise the Empty Homes Officer where this is the case.

There are currently 3 designated Renewal Areas within the County which are managed by DCC's Area and Housing Renewal Team. When scoring properties the Empty Homes Officer will refer to the published maps of these areas.

Rationale

We have a greater opportunity to bring empty homes back into use where there is greater funding. We also recognise that both Commuted Sums and Social Housing Grant which has been secured must be spent within a given time period. By linking our Empty Homes work to this funding we can ensure that it is not lost to the County.

2. Owner Response

Definition

A score of 10 will be awarded to properties where the owner has indicated a willingness to work with the Empty Homes Project in their completed Empty Homes Survey.

Rationale

Whilst much of the Empty Homes Officer's time will be spent on this proactive work we recognise that there will be more straightforward opportunities to bring empty homes back into use where the owner is looking for help. In order to maximise the number of empty homes re-occupied it is important to support and advise these owners.

3. Location

Definition

Main Road = a principal route into or within a community

Side Street = a road leading off a main road

Estate = a predominantly residential area which is not on a main road

Rural/Isolated = a location outside a community boundary where the property is isolated from amenities.

Rationale

By combining location with the community impact score, obvious empty homes in prominent locations will be prioritised.

Rural/isolated homes receive no score as they have the least potential to be returned back into use for affordable housing. Rural homes within established communities will be awarded the other scores based on their location within the community.

4. Community Impact

Definition

High = highly noticeable empty, very poor condition

Medium= noticeable empty, starting to deteriorate

Low = noticeable empty, good condition
Nil = not noticeably empty

Rationale

By combining location with the community impact score, obvious empty homes in prominent locations will be prioritised.

5. Housing Need

Definition

Required for specialist housing = where the type and location of the property is required for a specific household in housing need

Rural housing need = where a rural housing survey has been conducted by the Rural Housing Enabler and the property is able to fulfil the need identified

Suitable for single person with support = where the type and location of the property is required for a specific supported housing project

Suitable for move-on = where the type and location of the property is required for a specific move-on project

Scores will only be awarded following consultation with the relevant agency and DCC Housing Strategy Team.

Rationale

We recognise the potential for empty homes to be used for specialist housing schemes and want to prioritise suitable homes. Higher scores are given to specialist housing where there is a specific household in housing need as these are likely to be urgent cases. A higher weighting is also given to properties suitable for move-on accommodation as the need for more of this accommodation is recognised in both DCC's Supporting People Operational Plan and Local Housing Strategy.

6. Time Empty

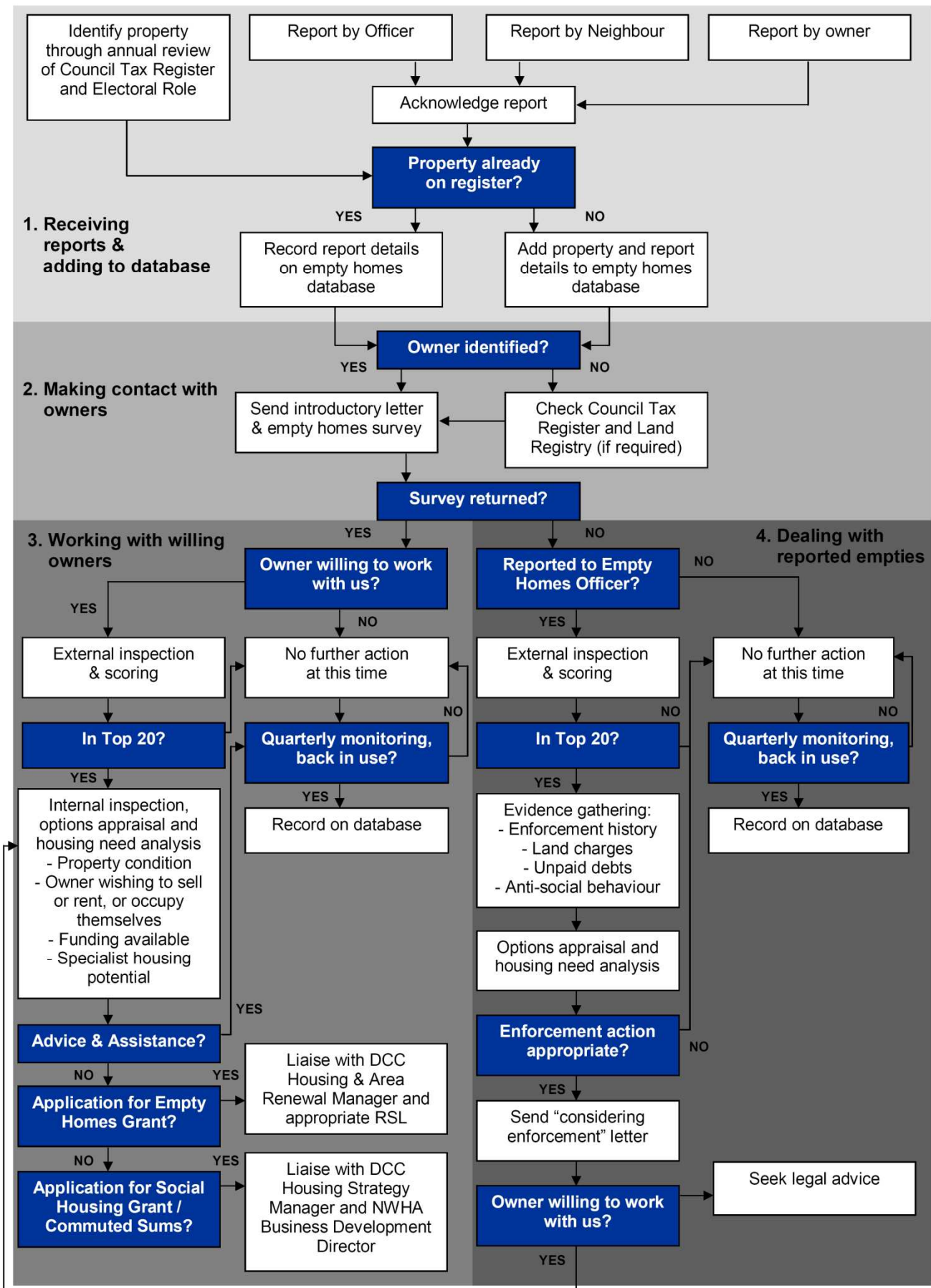
Definition

This is the amount of time that the property has been empty as declared by the owner in their completed Empty Homes Survey or recorded on Denbighshire County Council's Council Tax Register.

Rationale

The longer a property is empty, the greater the impact it will have on the community through deterioration etc., the less likely that there will be a viable plan to bring it back into use and also the greater the waste in terms of housing supply.

Appendix 5 - Empty Homes Action Flowchart



Appendix 6 – Empty Homes Grant Criteria & Conditions

Extract from Draft Housing Renewal Policy

Assistance Type	Empty Homes Assistance (EHA)
Purpose	To bring back long term empty properties into use, with the aim of providing additional affordable accommodation in order to meet local housing need.
Eligibility	Anyone with an owners interest in the property. Property must have been empty at least 6 months. Owned by applicant for 3 years prior to application or a first time buyer with local connection.
Eligible Work	Property would be eligible work to be determined by the council having regard to the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of a Category 1 hazard as defined by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System need to have been identified. • Weather tight roof is not present. • Provision or replacement of basic amenities is identified. • Bring property up to an approved standard.
Financial Arrangements	Assistance available at 50% of eligible works up to a maximum of £10,000 (net of VAT and associated fees) .
Application	An application for EHA will be made through the LA application process and using the LA application form and must be accompanied by the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of ownership. • Landlords certificate of occupation. • All applications dealt with in order of receipt and dealt with as soon as possible after receipt. • Applications will be prioritised in accordance with Empty Homes Strategy priority.
Approvals	Approvals remain valid for twelve months from the date of the grant approval. Approvals will be made within the adopted policy and subject to budgets available at the time of application. Approvals will be made by the Housing Renewal Manager following receipt of a valid application.
Conditions	EHA will be secured by way of a local land charge for 5 years. Must work with an RSL to provide affordable housing for a minimum period of 5 years. Lettings will be made from DCC waiting list. Home Fire Safety Check must be carried out before approval. Landlord must be part of landlord accreditation scheme. Property must have buildings insurance.

Appendix 7 – Performance Indicator Definition

Extract from National Performance Indicator Guidance for Wales 2008-09

Service/policy area	Housing - Private Sector Renewal		
Domain	Strategic Outcomes		
Reference	PSR/C/F/004/02-001 (PSR/004)		
Headline	Vacant dwellings returned to occupation		
Indicator	The percentage of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority		
Guidance	<p>For a full definition of dwelling please refer to the Private Sector Renewal glossary.</p> <p>A vacant dwelling is vacant of people. This excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second or holiday home • A newly completed dwelling that is awaiting occupation • An existing dwelling that is being converted or modernised • A dwelling that is in use but for non-residential purposes <p>The following are examples of the types of direct action that can lead to a dwelling being returned to occupation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants, loans or other financial assistance either provided or facilitated by the authority • Providing advice, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Literature on the authority's empty homes strategy ○ Advice on letting, including legal and housing benefit requirements ○ Advice on grants and other financial assistance including tax concessions available ○ Details of landlord forums or accreditation schemes ○ Advice on repairs, including details on building contractors meeting minimum requirements • Referral to partner Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) or other intermediary with relevant expertise • Enforcement action including statutory notices • Enquiries made to establish ownership of property and follow up action <p>A property should only be counted once, regardless of whether it has been subject to more than one action/intervention that led to it being returned to occupation.</p> <p>Where properties are sub-divided into additional units in an effort to return a dwelling to occupation, the number of units created should be included. For example, a house that has been converted into three flats and then returned to occupation would count as three dwellings having been returned to occupation.</p> <p>The data for this indicator can be obtained from the Revenue Section of the local authority, who should have information relating to whether council tax is being paid on the private sector dwellings.</p> <p>The number of dwellings that have been vacant for at least 6 months should be counted at the 1 April. This figure should not be adjusted to include any properties that reach the 6 month limit during the year.</p>		
Calculation	<p>Numerator: The number of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April which were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority</p> <p>Denominator: The total number of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April</p> <p>Formula: $\frac{\text{Numerator}}{\text{Denominator}} \times 100$</p>		
Data Source	-	Decimal Place	2
Explanation	This indicator measures the extent to which local authorities are bringing dwellings that have been vacant for long periods of time back into occupation.		
Disaggregation	Disaggregation should be considered to suit local context and knowledge.		

Appendix 8 – Empty Homes Action Plan

Strategy Area	Action	Target Date(s)	Responsible Officer(s)
Understanding the Problem	Maintain and develop the Empty Homes Database to increase functionality and reporting facilities	Apr 2010	EHO
	Review database annually against the Council Tax Register (April) and Electoral Role (December) to identify new long term empty homes	Apr / Dec 2009 Apr / Dec 2010 Apr 2011	EHO
	Review “long term empty home” definition to ensure that it continues to meet current priorities and conditions	Apr 2010 Apr 2011	Steering Group
Identifying Solutions	Attend Empty Homes networking opportunities to share experiences and good practice with other officers	As required /Ongoing	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM
	Hold annual event with partners to review the success of the Empty Homes Strategy	Jan 2010 Jan 2011	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM
	Take advantage of any opportunities to raise awareness of the Empty Homes Project through presentations to Elected Members, Town and Community Councils and other interested groups	As required /Ongoing	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM
	Take advantage of any opportunities to raise awareness of the Empty Homes Project through the local press and media	As required /Ongoing	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM
	Publish the approved Empty Homes Strategy on both DCC and NWAHA’s websites	May 2009	EHO
Engaging with Owners	Include equalities questions on Empty Homes Survey to allow equal opportunities monitoring	Sep 2009	EHO
	Review Empty Homes Scoring Matrix annually to ensure that it continues to meet our priorities	Apr 2010 Apr 2011	Steering Group

Strategy Area	Action	Target Date(s)	Responsible Officer(s)
Range of Options	Produce a range of advisory leaflets for owners and members of the general public: - Introduction to the Empty Homes Project - Seller's Pack - Landlord's Pack - Repairs & Renovations Pack - Management & Leasing Schemes - The Empty Homes Grant	Sep 2009	EHO
	Create an interested purchasers database	Apr 2010	EHO
	Explore opportunities for discounted membership with National Landlord's Association	Apr 2010	EHO
	Expand building surveying knowledge EHO and support from DCC Housing Renewal & NWA Development Teams	Sep 2009	NWA BDD DCC HARM
	Develop managing / leasing model with RSLs and links with DCC Lettings Policy & Nomination Agreement	Jun 2009	EHO DCC HSM
	Develop Empty Homes Grant application process	Jun 2009	EHO DCC HARM
	Design template "business plan" detailing the amount of grant available and potential rental income	Jun 2009	
	Expand knowledge of enforcement powers and skills of EHO, DCC Legal and Enforcement Officers through training and visits to other Local Authorities	Apr 2010	EHO DCC HARM DCC PEHO
	Develop Enforcement Procedure with DCC Legal and Enforcement Officers	Apr 2010	EHO DCC HARM DCC PEHO

Strategy Area	Action	Target Date(s)	Responsible Officer(s)
Funding	Secure Strategic Regeneration Area funding	Sep 2009	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM DCC PEHO DCC HSM
	Identify and submit schemes for Social Housing Grant in accordance with WAG timescales as well as ad-hoc in year bids	As required /Ongoing	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HSM
	Ensure that DCC funding for Empty Homes Grants is fully committed to maximise future allocations	Mar 2010 Mar 2011	EHO DCC HARM
	Investigate additional internal and external funding sources	Apr 2010	EHO
Maximising the benefits	Promote empty homes as a resource for specialist housing schemes and consider potential use of top 20	As required /Ongoing	EHO DCC HSM
	Contribute towards the Strategic Regeneration Area programme	As required /Ongoing	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM DCC PEHO DCC HSM
	Work with the Rhyl City Strategy Programme to develop opportunities for construction skills training	Sep 2010	EHO NWAHA BDD DCC HARM DCC HSM
	Work with North Wales Fire Service to develop a protocol for delivering free Fire Safety Checks on every empty home we directly bring back into use	Jun 2009	EHO DCC PEHO

Responsible Officer Abbreviations:

EHO	Empty Homes Officer
NWHA BDD	NWHA Business Development Director
DCC HARM	DCC Housing & Area Renewal Manager
DCC PEHO	DCC Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing Enforcement)
DCC HSM	DCC Housing Strategy Manager

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor S Frobisher, Lead Member for Communities

DATE: 28th April 2009

SUBJECT: 'Your Voice' – The Authority's Unified Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy

1 DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 Approval of 'Your Voice', the Authority's revised Customer Feedback Policy.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 In 2008, a review of the Council's policies and procedures for dealing with customer feedback was undertaken by the Corporate Complaints Officer. The review examined how the Authority responds to customer feedback, specifically looking at complaints.

2.2 The Authority currently has three separate complaints policies covering:

- social services;
- schools; and
- corporate (all other complaints).

The policies are significantly disparate e.g. timescales, number of stages, ethos and terminology. This has led to an inconsistent and disjointed approach to complaints handling resulting in inequity for complainants and low numbers of complaints received.

2.3 Following support from the Corporate Executive Team (CET), and in consultation with the relevant services, the three policies have been amalgamated, resulting in a single comprehensive document. Statutory duties, guidance and good practice have been incorporated. The public document is attached as Appendix 1. Supplementary guidance for staff is available, copies are available from the Corporate Complaints Officer on 01824 706169 or clare.o'gorman@denbighshire.gov.uk.

2.4 The single policy and accompanying staff guidance documents clearly set out how customer feedback should be dealt with. Significant amendments include:

- 3 stage process for complaints with explicit timescales;
- emphasis on resolution and redress;
- emphasis on learning and improving as a result of complaints; and
- creation of guidance and support for staff involved in complaints.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Section 3 Local Government Act 1999 – Best Value duty to secure continuous improvement.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications:

There are no cost implications arising from the introduction of the policy.

4.2 Staffing / Accommodation Implications:

It is ¹anticipated that following the policy launch and continued promotion, the volume of customer feedback received will increase which will have a direct impact on officer workload. The information obtained will be used to improve service delivery and to drive change where necessary. Service improvement will lead to greater efficiency and the number of repeat complaints will be reduced.

4.3 IT Implications:

The Customer Relationship Management system has been enhanced to incorporate customer feedback. This will be used to record and manage all complaints.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s

Failure to effectively identify poor or inadequate service delivery will continue. The opportunity to identify areas of weakness and improve will be limited. Reputation will be compromised.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s

The volume of customer feedback will result in additional pressures to service areas in terms of managing and responding to customer feedback.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

- 6.1 There are no immediate significant financial implications resulting from this policy.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 7.1 The development of the policy was completed in partnership with both Social Services and Lifelong Learning. Formal consultation commenced both internally and externally on 5th January 2009 for a period of 6 weeks. A detailed action plan was produced and a summary of the approach was as follows:

¹ In April 2006, SSD launched a revised complaints policy. Complaints increased by 60% that year.

Internal Consultation

- An email notification was sent to all Councillors, Monthly Management Conference and Corporate Executive Team. A document link was included in order to access the draft documents. It was asked that this information be cascaded to all relevant staff.
- Discussed at the Corporate Executive Team on 19.01.09.
- Presentation to Monthly Management Conference on 05.02.09. Heads of Service were asked to provide a briefing to their management teams and cascade key messages through team meetings.
- Presentation to Middle Managers Conference 04.11.08 and 06.11.08.
- Notifications were posted on both the Official Noticeboard and the General Noticeboard databases.

External Consultation

- A publicity campaign was implemented throughout January and included press releases, web homepage advert.
- The policy was available online throughout the consultation period.
- Hard copies of the policy were sent to all libraries, one stop shops, leisure centres and cash offices with comment sheets.

7.2 The majority of feedback received was from staff and was successfully incorporated into the policy.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

The single policy is overarching, covering all Council services. Effective application of the policy will empower customers to raise concerns and will highlight problem areas. The information gleaned from complaints should inform future priorities.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

Information gained from complaints will be used to plan and improve service delivery. The potential to improve performance and service should not be underestimated. Customer concerns will be dealt with effectively and cohesively and in doing so, we will build better relationships. Our reputation and public image will be improved and we will be known as a listening and learning Council.

9 ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
Provide quarterly update, including statistics to Corporate Governance.	Catherine Williams	Ongoing
Implement training programme, initially targeting front line staff and complaint representatives for each service.	Catherine Williams	June 09
Launch 'Your Voice' scheme.	Catherine Williams	June 09
Actively promote the scheme.	Catherine Williams	Sept 09

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Cabinet to approve 'Your Voice'.

10.2 Cabinet recognise the value of customer feedback as an improvement tool, and publicly endorse the scheme.

'Your Voice'

Your opportunity to give feedback on
Council services and schools

At Denbighshire County Council, we aim to provide an excellent standard of service at all times. We are committed to providing high-quality services in the most effective and efficient way possible.

We really want to hear from you

Suggestions

If you have any suggestions on how we can improve things, please contact us. Your opinion is important and we welcome your ideas as it gives us an opportunity to take a fresh look at the services we provide. Your suggestions can help us to change things for a better future. We will respond to all suggestions and will tell you if we take action as a result.

Compliments

If you feel we have done something well, we would also like to hear from you. Compliments about the quality of services we have provided are important and help us in trying to make sure that the standard of service you have received can be provided to others. We use the feedback we receive to plan the improvement and delivery of our services. We will not usually respond to compliments unless you ask us to.

Complaints or comments

We work hard to deliver our services right first time, but we recognise that there may be times when things go wrong and you may not be happy with the service we provide. If this happens, or you feel that our services are generally not up to scratch, please let us know. We recognise the importance of complaints and welcome them as a valuable tool to help us improve. If you want to make a complaint, we will do all we can to investigate it as fairly and as quickly as possible.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, action or lack of action by us that affects either you or a group of people. Services provided by contractors on our behalf are also included. You are entitled to make a complaint when:

- you think the work we've done isn't up to standard;
- work you've asked us to do hasn't been carried out within the timescale stated and you haven't been given a reasonable explanation;
- we haven't followed our rules, policies or procedures;
- we have provided inaccurate or misleading information;
- there has been undue delay in taking action; or
- one of our employees is rude or unhelpful.

A complaint is not:

- reporting a fault (e.g. a street light not working);
- a first request for service (e.g. Council house repairs);
- a first request for information or explanation (e.g. who decides the Council Tax rates);
- disagreement with Council policy (although the implementation of such a policy may be subject to complaint); or

- a matter for which there is a right of appeal (e.g. refusal of planning permission, parking fines, decisions relating to housing benefit/council tax).

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone who is affected by our services can make a complaint, including:

- residents;
- local businesses;
- visitors to the County;
- community groups;
- suppliers of services; and
- any other individual, including children or young people, that use or are affected by our services.

Complaints can also be made by people acting on your behalf such as Councillors, MPs or advocates. If the complaint is made by a family member or friend, we need your permission to proceed in order to ensure confidentiality.

How to make a complaint

The following step-by-step guide explains how to make a complaint and how we will deal with it. We promise to:

- take all complaints seriously;
- treat all complaints fairly, objectively and confidentially;
- aim to respond to all complaints within the agreed timescale;
- acknowledge where we have made a mistake and apologise; and
- seek to improve the way we do things in future.

We know that making a complaint can sometimes be difficult. If you do make a complaint, you will not be treated negatively as a result. You do not have to give us your name if you do not want to as all anonymous complaints will be dealt with in line with this policy. However, we will not be able to contact you with our findings.

Step 1

If you would like to make a complaint, please contact us to explain your concerns and tell us what you want us to do. We will listen to you and try to sort out your complaint immediately. Most complaints can be resolved in this way but sometimes we need more time to investigate the matter. If this is the case, an officer from the department to which your complaint relates will:

- look at what has happened and try to put things right;
- talk to members of staff who have been involved; and
- explain what they have found and what action will be taken.

We aim to respond to step 1 complaints within 10 working days (if your complaint cannot be dealt with in that time, we will explain why there is a delay and tell you when we expect to be able to sort out the matter).

Step 2

If you feel that your complaint has not been sorted out following step 1, please let us know. A senior officer (or the headteacher, if your complaint is about a school matter) will:

- look at what has happened and try to put things right;
- talk to members of staff who have been involved; and
- write to you to explain what they have found and what action will be taken.

We aim to respond to step 2 complaints within 25 working days (if your complaint cannot be dealt with in that time, we will explain why there is a delay and tell you when we expect to be able to sort out the matter).

Step 3

If you feel that your complaint has not been sorted out following step 2, please let us know. The Chief Executive of the council (or a senior member of staff acting on their behalf) will review your complaint and the way we dealt with it. They will then write to you with their findings. This should be within 15 working days.

If your complaint relates to a school or social services matter, there are different ways of dealing with it at step 3.

School complaints

If you feel that your complaint has not been sorted out following step 2, you can request that the matter be considered at an appeal hearing. Here you are given the chance to explain why you do not agree with our response. The panel, which consists of 3 school governors, will then make a decision and write to you with their findings. This should be within 15 school days of the appeal hearing.

Social services complaints

If you feel that your complaint has not been sorted out following step 2, you can request that the matter be considered at an appeal hearing. Here you are given the chance to explain why you do not agree with our response. The panel, which consists of 3 people who don't work for the Council, will then make a decision and contact us. We will then write to you with our response. This should be within 15 working days of the appeal hearing.

Step 3 is the last step of our complaints procedure. We try hard to resolve all complaints under our own complaints procedure. However, if you feel that we have been unable to resolve your complaint, you could contact the following:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The primary role of the Ombudsman is to investigate complaints by members of the public about the way they have been treated by a public body. Complaints will be investigated independently and impartially, and when upheld, the Ombudsman will say what the public body should do to make amends to the complainant. At any stage you may contact the Ombudsman, however they generally prefer the Council to have had the opportunity to deal with a complaint first.

Details for the Ombudsman are as follows:

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ.

Tel: 0845 601 0987 (calls to this number are charged at local call rate)

Fax: 01656 641199

E-mail: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Website: www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

The Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints relating to school matters. However, if your complaint is about a school matter and you have exhausted all the steps referred to above and remain dissatisfied, you could contact the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning at:

Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

Tel: 0300 0603300

Website: www.wales.gov.uk

Who do I contact?

Please contact us using the language and method of your choice:

- in person, at any of our offices e.g. One Stop Shop, library, leisure centre;
- by telephone on 08124 706101;
- by text message on 07800 140088;
- by writing to the Corporate Complaints Officer, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN;
- online at www.denbighshire.gov.uk/complaints;
- by e-mail on complaints@denbighshire.gov.uk;
- filling in a complaint form, available in all our offices and on our website; or
- by speaking to your local councillor.

Complaints about a school matter should be made directly to the school concerned.

Will my complaint be confidential?

The information you provide will be kept safe and confidential and will be used in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act regulates the way we can use personal information. We may need to discuss your complaint with members of Council staff but your complaint will not be discussed with or information disclosed to a third party without your written permission.

Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

It can be difficult to look into things that happened a long time ago. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we will not consider a complaint about something that occurred more than 6 months previously.

Are all complaints about the council dealt with in this way?

Complaints regarding certain matters will not be dealt with in line with this policy because sometimes there are more suitable methods, for example:

- any complaint that raises concerns about the wellbeing of a child or adult will be referred immediately to the relevant department for further investigation;

- complaints alleging criminal activity will be referred to the police, where appropriate;
- complaints against Councillors will be referred to the council's County Clerk; and
- complaints against an entire school governing body, will be referred to the Local Education Authority (LEA).

Will someone help me to make my complaint?

If you would like help to make your complaint, please let us know. Our staff are fully trained to help you. If you would prefer help from someone who doesn't work for the council, you could contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau or the following:

Commissioner for Older People in Wales

The Commissioner is a champion for older people and aims to ensure that the interests of older people in Wales, who are aged 60 and over, are protected and promoted. The Commissioner is a useful source of information, advocacy and support for older people in Wales.

Details for the Commissioner are as follows:

Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Butetown, Cardiff CF10 5FL.

Tel: 029 2078 6579
Fax: 02920 786580
E-mail: ask@olderpeoplewales.com
Website: www.olderpeoplewales.com

Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Commissioner's job is to help the children and young people of Wales. The Commissioner can offer help, support, advice and guidance to any child or young person who may need it.

Details for the Commissioner are as follows:

Penrhos Manor, Oak Drive, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, LL29 7YW.

Tel: 01492 523333
Fax: 01492 523336
E-mail: post@childcomwales.org.uk
Website: www.childcom.org.uk

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

The CSSIW supports and regulates services in Wales including social services. You may contact the CSSIW for advice and guidance.

Details for the CSSIW are as follows:

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

Tel: 01443 848450
Fax: 029 2082 3417
E-mail: cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.cssiw.org.uk

The Welsh Language Board

The WLB offer advice and guidance on issues relating to the delivery of services through the Welsh Language.

Details for the WLB are as follows:

Welsh Language Board, Yr Hen Argraffdy, St Helen's Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 2YD.

Tel: 01286684700

Website: www.byig-wlb.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

If your complaint relates to race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief or human rights, you may seek advice from the Commission.

Details for the EHRC are as follows:

EHRC, 3rd floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff, CF10 5BT.

Tel: 0845 604 8810

Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Fax: 02920 447712

Website: wales@equalityhumanrights.com

Unacceptable actions by complainants

The vast majority of people who complain are responsible in how they behave and act. However, there may be occasions when their actions are considered inappropriate. We understand that complaints can lead to frustration but aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

Who can I contact for further advice and information?

If you do not understand any of the information in this policy, or would like to know more, please contact the Corporate Complaints Officer at County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN.

For a version of this policy in Braille, in large print or on tape, **call free on 0800 243980.**

If you would like any of our information in a language other than Welsh or English, please let us know.

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR E W WILLIAMS LEAD MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

DATE: 28th APRIL 2009

SUBJECT: APPLICATIONS TO REGISTER AND KNOWN AS THE PARK OFF FFORDD ELAN, RHYL AS A VILLAGE GREEN

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To authorise a procedure to determine two applications, received by the Council, to register land known as The Park, off Ffordd Elan, Rhyl as a Village Green.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1. The Council is in receipt of two applications to register land known as The Park, off Ffordd Elan, Rhyl. The applications have been submitted to the Council in its capacity as Commons Registration Authority. Both applications have been made on behalf of the Park View Residents Association. The applications are dated 5th June 2007 (“the first application”) and 12th October 2007 (“the second application”) respectively. As stated above the applicant is the same in both cases and they have requested that both applications run simultaneously. The extent of the application site is as shown delineated on the attached Plan.
- 2.2. Although the applications require the same outcome they are made under different legislative provisions. The first application is made pursuant to Section 13 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 and the second application is made pursuant to Section 15 of the Commons Act 2006. Despite the fact that the applications are made under different legislative provisions the substantive test for both is the same, namely that a significant number of inhabitants of a locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of not less than 20 years.
- 2.3. The application site is partly owned by the Council and partly by a local developer T Anwyl and Son Limited. The land which is the subject of the application has been utilised as open space and the land owned by the Council is designated as public open space.
- 2.4. The Council has a dual role in respect of these applications as both the Commons Registration Authority and as a landowner affected by the applications. This is not an unusual scenario in relation to applications for Village Greens but it gives rise to a potential conflict of interest in that the Council has a legal interest as landowner in the outcome of the applications.
- 2.5. The procedure for dealing with these applications under the “20 year rule” is dealt with by regulations. Again different regulations apply to each application but the procedure to be followed is essentially the same. The procedural requirements

(referred to in the paragraph below) have to date been co-ordinated so that although each application remains separate, they are run on parallel tracks with procedural steps taking place at the same time for both applications.

- 2.6. Once applications have been duly made the Council must publicise them and allow time for objections. The only specific procedural requirements are that any statement in objection must be in writing and signed by or on behalf of the person making it and that a copy must be given to the applicant who must be given a reasonable opportunity to deal with the matters raised.
- 2.7. The Council has complied with notification and publicity requirements and is in receipt of two objections from Anwyls and the Council. The Council therefore faces a potential conflict of interest which could give rise to a potential conflict of interest as outlined above.
- 2.8. The Council, as Commons Registration Authority, must proceed to determine the applications for registration and has to consider all the facts of the case and decide on the balance of probabilities whether the application is well founded in law. Determination of a Village Green is an executive function and a matter that falls to Cabinet.
- 2.9. The method of determination of this final stage is left to the Commons Registration Authority itself. It must be borne in mind that the Council is acting purely as registration authority when determining the applications and matters of planning or policy are irrelevant. The only issue that the Council has to decide is whether as a matter of law the application site has become a Village Green within the terms of Section 13 of the Commons Registration Act 1965 or Section 15 of the Commons Act 1965.
- 2.10. There is no express provision for an oral hearing nor for the compulsion of witnesses or the provision of evidence on oath. Many registration authorities have however adopted the practice of instructing a Barrister to act as an Inspector and hold a "non statutory hearing" which is essentially an informal inquiry where oral evidence is heard and after which the Barrister writes a report to the authority with a recommendation of how the application should be determined. Whilst there is no statutory basis for such a hearing it is the view of the courts that some form of oral procedure is essential if a fair view is to be reached where conflicting recollections need to be reconciled.
- 2.11. The inquiry is in effect a quasi judicial process. The inquiry must be conducted in accordance with the rules of natural justice and there must be appropriate procedures within that hearing to enable all parties to be heard and for the Inspector to be able to weigh and make clear finding of fact and allow the law to be applied to the facts found proven. It is particularly appropriate where the Council is both registration authority and an objector for, so that there is an independent element of adjudication.
- 2.12. It is recommended that the Council hold a non statutory hearing as detailed above given that the Council is both Commons Registration Authority and a landowner affected by the applications. The Council must act impartially and be seen to do

so. The option of an informal hearing offers both an opportunity for oral evidence to be heard and for all the evidence, both written and oral to be assessed by an impartial Inspector who can make a recommendation back to the Council in its capacity as Commons Registration Authority. As above an Inquiry would deal with the applications separately but on parallel tracks as the procedure has run to date.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Section 13 Commons Registration Act 1965 and Section 15 Commons Act 2006

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications:

There is clearly a cost implication here in that if this matter proceeds to an Inquiry there will be a cost associated with the instruction of a Barrister to act as an Inspector on behalf of the Council.

4.2 Staffing / Accommodation Implications:

The inquiry will have to be arranged by staff and a venue will need to be identified for the Inquiry, such venue to be located in the vicinity of the application site.

4.3 IT Implications:

IT equipment and support may be required at the inquiry venue to facilitate the smooth running of the Inquiry

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s

That the application will not be dealt with fairly and a consequent risk of judicial review of any determination of the applications by the Council.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s

None

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

6.1 It appears that the cost of the proposal could be in the region of £10,000. As Open Spaces registration is a matter falling under the Planning and Public Protection service it is assumed that these costs will be contained within the overall budget for the Environment Directorate.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Statutory consultations referred to above.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

None as this is a statutory function.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

That the applications will be determined in a fair manner.

9 ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
Appointment of a Barrister to hold a non statutory inquiry	County Clerk in conjunction with client department Planning and Public Protection	6 months time

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

That this report be received and the County Clerk be authorised to deal with the applications on behalf of the Council, as Commons Registration Authority, and appoint a Barrister

- a) To act as an Inspector to hold an informal non statutory inquiry where oral evidence will be heard;
- b) To submit a report to the Council with a recommendation as to how the applications should be determined.



Ffordd Elan, Rhyl



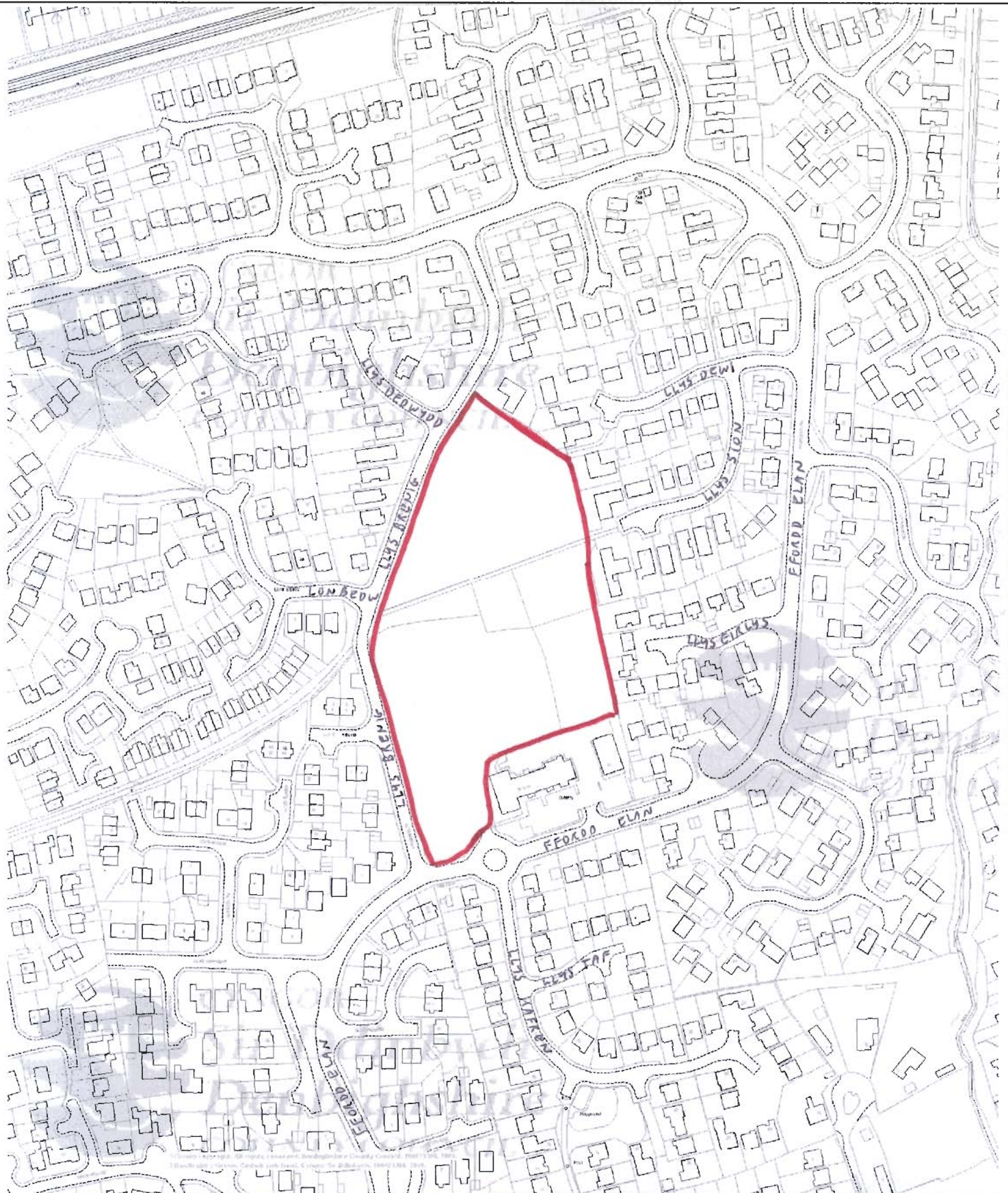
CYNGOR
Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Date 15/4/2009

Scale 1/2669

Centre = 302736 E 381610 N

APPLICATION SITE
Land known as The Park



© Mae'r orthofotograffi hon wedi ei chynhyrchu gan COWI A/S o ffotograffiaeth ddigidol a gymerwyd ganddynt yn 2006. Wedi'u trwyddedu gan Adran Amgylchedd, Cynllunio a Chefn Gwlad Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru.
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Atgynhyrchir y map hwn o ddsunydd yr Ordnance Survey gyda chaniatâd yr Ordnance Survey ar ran Rheolwr Llyfrfa Ei Mawrhydi.
© Hawlfraint y Goron. Mae atgynhyrchu heb ganiatâd yn torri hawlfraint y Goron a gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Sir Ddinbych. 100023408. 2009.

REPORT TO: CABINET

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR R W HUGHES LEAD MEMBER FOR PERSONNEL AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

DATE: 28 APRIL 2009

SUBJECT: MONITORING THE ACTIONS AGREED BY CABINET

1 DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 To consider the progress the Authority is making against the actions which have been agreed by Cabinet since the 12 September 2006 (Appendix I refers).

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 It had been agreed by the Corporate Executive Team that each Cabinet report should include an Action Plan to ensure that decisions made by the Executive were effectively progressed.

2.2 In order that progress against the agreed actions could be monitored by Cabinet it was further agreed that a 6 monthly report would be produced by the Strategic Policy Unit. The actions are detailed in Appendix 1:-

- ❖ the date of the Cabinet meeting
- ❖ the responsible Directorate / officer
- ❖ the report title
- ❖ the actions from Section 9, the "Action Plan"
- ❖ whether or not the action has been completed
- ❖ reasons why the action has not been completed

2.3 The Revenue Budget, Housing Revenue Account Budget, Routine Reporting on Personnel and Capital Budget monthly reports are not included in the Appendix as these actions are monitored on a monthly basis.

2.4 The following reports have been or will be removed from the Action Plan list as they contain ongoing actions and are being monitored by relevant officers or are routinely being reported to Cabinet:

Monitoring the Authority's Key Performance Indicators
Monitoring the Actions Agreed by Cabinet
Modernising Education Action Plan Monitoring
European Union Convergence Programme Action Plan for Denbighshire Improvement Plan
Review of 16-19 Education Provision in Rhyl
Corporate Executive Team Performance Report
Focused Agenda Board Updates
Update on Action Plan in Response to Hyfrydle Inspection

- 2.5 The following reports have been removed from the list as the actions have been completed:

A Programme for Change – Denbighshire’s Focused Agenda
Formal Partnership for the Integration of Community Equipment Services (CESI)
Local Safeguarding Children Board
Final Report and Recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Group
Draft Race Equality Scheme and Equalities Update
Gating Orders
North Wales Regional Waste Plan 1st Review
Delegation of Powers to the CEO under the Animal Welfare Act 2006
Delegation of Powers to the Chief Executive and Authorisations for Planning & Public Protection Services
Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Performance Appraisal System for the Leader and Cabinet
Customer Service Strategy
Denbighshire Safeguarding Children Board – Serious Case Review
Denbighshire Children and Young People’s Single Plan
Representation on Outside Bodies
Joint Head of Highways & Infrastructure DCC & Conwy CBC
Annual Treasury Report 2007-2008
Denbighshire Carers’ Strategy
Denbighshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Exemption to Tendering: Local Bus Service Improvements
Joint Working Arrangements – Conwy & Denbighshire Community Safety Partnerships

- 2.6 Members will note that out of 73 actions, 71% have been completed whilst 29% are incomplete / ongoing. A number of larger projects, for example the Convergence Programme or Biodiversity Duty, will be ongoing for a number of years and will continue to be monitored.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Section III of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 **COST:** The cost implications associated with progressing the actions will have been identified in each individual Cabinet report.
- 4.2 **STAFFING / ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS:** The staffing/accommodation implications of progressing each action should have been considered before the recommendation was made
- 4.3 **IT IMPLICATIONS:** The IT implications of progressing each action should have been considered before the recommendation was made

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s

The actions referred to in this report have been agreed by Cabinet and there may be risks associated with not completing agreed actions which could be significant.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s

There are no risks associated with agreeing the recommendation.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

6.1 There are no financial implications specifically resulting from this report. The implications of the individual action plans will have been included in the relevant reports.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

7.1 The Cabinet Officer has contacted the responsible officer for each report for an update on each Action Plan. The report is regularly updated.

8 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

The impact of the actions on corporate priorities should have been identified in each individual Cabinet report.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

8.2.1 Actions agreed at Cabinet will have implications on all policy areas including the Vision and other corporate policies.

9 ACTION PLAN

Action	Lead Member/Officer	Deadline
Regular report to Cabinet on progress against agreed Action Plan	Lead Member Personnel and Business Management J Williams	Every 6 months : next report in October 2009

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Cabinet notes the progress the Authority is making against the actions which have been agreed by Cabinet since the 12 September 2006 and requests further information and/or action where required (Appendix I refers).

CABINET ACTION PLANS ~ 28.04.2009

CABINET DATE	DIRECTORATE / OFFICER	REPORT TITLE	ACTION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	DATE COMMENCED / REASON OUTSTANDING
22.04.2008	Health, Social Care and Wellbeing N Ayling / Helena Thomas	Conwy & Denbighshire Adult Mental Health & Social Care Partnership	Develop Integrated Quality System Develop robust transitional arrangements Develop pooled budgets Development of Partnership website Establish a formal corporate identity	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	Discussions ongoing To be developed Done / ongoing
03.06.2008	Environment: Sustainable Development G Boase	Establishment of Task & Finish Group to prepare the Deposit Local Development Plan for Public Consultation by spring 2009	3 June 2008 - Approve the Recommendation in this Report 3 June - Select the LDP Deposit Task & Finish Group Membership September 30 th 2008 (suggested date) - Report the details of the Pre-Deposit Consultation to Cabinet September – December 2008 - 5 LDP Meetings to Determine Content of the Deposit LDP January 27 th 2009 - Present Deposit Draft LDP to Cabinet Spring 2009 - Public Consultation of Deposit LDP	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓	Special Council April 2009 Summer 2009
15.07.2008	Environment: Sustainable Development S Parker	Denbighshire's Northern Recycling Park	Finalise plans for new facility (north of county) – S Parker / A Roberts - 08 / 2008 Obtain necessary planning permission and EA consents – S Parker / A Roberts - 09 / 2008 Construction of new facility (north of county) – S Parker / A Roberts - up to 05/09 Start using the new facility (north of county) – S Parker / A Roberts – 05/2009 Closure of old facilities (north of county) – S Parker / A Roberts – 06/2009	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	Construction by end 2009 By January 2010 By January 2010
30.09.2008	Environment: Sustainable Development S Parker	Dee Valley Recycling Facilities	Confirm initial operational details – J Espley Jan 2009 Arrange for necessary publicity including CRM liaison – J Espley Feb 2009 Monitor levels of activity and adjust service levels accordingly – J Espley April 2009	✓ ✓ ✓		New service commencing April 2009 Monitoring will follow
21.10.2008	Education J Walley / J Molloy	Modernising Education Policy Framework	A news release will go out explaining the policies and asking for feedback. There will also be a section within County Voice and Headlines. - Head of	✓		

CABINET DATE	DIRECTORATE / OFFICER	REPORT TITLE	ACTION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	DATE COMMENCED / REASON OUTSTANDING
			<p>Communications (immediately following Cabinet decision)</p> <p>Members' sessions on 20th and 27th October - Head of Planning and Performance (Lifelong Learning)</p> <p>Governors sessions 3rd, 4th, 6th, 11th, 12th, 13th of November - Head of Planning and Performance (Lifelong Learning)</p> <p>Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Task and Finish Group 28th October, 4th November, 11th November - Head of Planning and Performance (Lifelong Learning)</p> <p>School cluster meetings on 11th, 12th, 13th, 18th, 19th and 20th November - Head of Planning and Performance (Lifelong Learning)</p>	✓		
21.10.2008	Education J Walley / J Molloy	Community Learning Centres	<p>Local Management Groups meetings - Termly / Julian Molloy</p> <p>First meeting of Steering Group - 25 October 2008 then termly / Julian Molloy</p> <p>Seconded Adult Education Coordinator in post - November 2008 to 31 March 2009 / Julian Molloy</p> <p>Self Evaluation and Quality Development Plan developed - 1 December / Julian Molloy</p> <p>Business Plan for 2009-10 - 10 December 2008 / Julian Molloy</p> <p>Adult Education Coordinator appointed - 1 April 2009 / Julian Molloy</p>	✓		
21.10.2008	Chief Executive	North Wales Prison	<p>Submit response to Ministry of Justice - Chief Executive – before 31 October 2008</p> <p>Send copy of response to AMs, MPs, etc - Chief Executive – before 31 October 2008</p>	✓		
21.10.2008	Health Social Care & Wellbeing Jenny Elliot	Supporting People Operational Plan	Work will commence in November 2008 to develop the specifications required for recommissioning and remodelling the services identified within the planned financial year 2009/10.	✓		
18.11.2008	Lifelong Learning M Mehmet	Hyfrydle Action Plan	<p>Quarterly progress reports are presented to CET against the Hyfrydle Action Plan – Head of Strategic Policy</p> <p>Quarterly progress reports signed off by CET are</p>	✓		

CABINET DATE	DIRECTORATE / OFFICER	REPORT TITLE	ACTION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	DATE COMMENCED / REASON OUTSTANDING
			presented to Cabinet against the Hyfrydle Action Plan – Corporate Executive Team Hyfrydle Action Plan to be housed within Ffynnon (corporate performance management system) and reported via the system – Head of Strategic Policy		✓	Ffynnon software cannot monitor actions on projects effectively. Actions will be integrated into workplans
18.11.2008	Environment: Planning G Boase / L Griffiths	Planning Policy Priorities	LDP to be prepared for approval by Full Council - GH Boase March 2009	✓		Held 27.04.2009
18.11.2008	Environment S Parker	Approval of the Project Initiation Document for the North Wales Waste Treatment Project	All Councils to approve the PID Five North Wales Councils Executives – S Parker 12 / 2008 Contribute to the development and preparation of the Contract documents - DCC waste team in consultation with DCC Legal Dept. S Parker 9 / 2009 Approval to enter into contract - Chief Executive 3/2010 Start delivering waste to new facilit(ies) – DCC waste team S Parker - 3 / 2011	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	On target On target
16.12.2008	Resources A Evans	Update from the Focused Agenda Board	Draft structure for Support Services for consultation and consultation paper – I Prys Jones, mid December Draft structure for Support Services presented to Cabinet and out for consultation – I Prys Jones, January 2009 Consultation on Support Services Structure completed and structure agreed by Cabinet for implementation – I Prys Jones, 24.03.2009 Complete Area Profiles – Head of Strategic Policy, February 2009 Produce key points from community engagement work by area – Head of Strategic Policy, January 2009 Produce draft area priorities based on area profiles and key points from community engagement – Head of Strategic Policy, March 2009	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	Original proposals withdrawn. In light of the Corporate Governance Action Plan a revised proposal which will involve a broader review of the role of the Corporate Centres is currently being prepared Draft profiles produced Identify key issues by November 2009
16.12.2009	Resources J Williams	Corporate Executive Team Quarterly Performance Report	CET to progress actions and provide monthly updates to Cabinet - Acting Chief Executive, Monthly CET to work with Cabinet Members to progress actions - Corporate Executive Team, Ongoing	✓ ✓		

CABINET DATE	DIRECTORATE / OFFICER	REPORT TITLE	ACTION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	DATE COMMENCED / REASON OUTSTANDING
				✓	✓	
16.12.2009	Environment G Boase	DCC / CCBC Planning & Public Protection Collaboration	Both Heads of Service to meet to progress Project in accordance with recommendations by both Cabinets - G Boase (DCC) & P Rafferty (CCBC)/Late January 2009 Both Heads of Service to present Project and SLA to Shadow Management Board - G Boase (DCC) & P Rafferty (CCBC)/Mid Feb 2009 Joint DCC/CCBC report for both Cabinets with recommendation to implement Project and SLA - G Boase (DCC) & P Rafferty (CCBC)/March 2009	✓	✓	New date May 2009 New date September 2009
16.12.2009	Environment H Rees	Biodiversity Duty	Actions within the Appendices to the report		✓	All actions on target and are ongoing
16.12.2009	Social Services & Housing P Quirk	Affordable Housing	Establish Housing Working Party – Housing Strategy Manager –31.03.09 Further report on Essex Review – Head of Housing Services –31.03.09	✓ ✓		
27.01.2009	Lifelong Learning M Mehmet / J Walley	Overview Statement for the Estyn Inspection	Submission of documentation to Estyn - J. Walley, Head of Planning and Performance – 4/2/2009 To confirm arrangements for interviews / focus groups as part of the Inspection process – J Walley, Head of Planning and Performance - 9/3/2009	✓ ✓		
27.01.2009	Lifelong Learning M Mehmet / J Walley	Modernising Education Policy Framework	Report on Modernising Education policy framework to Cabinet on the 27 th January – J Walley 22 nd January ad hoc Transformation Strategy Group meets – J Gambles 3 rd February Learning Partnership Stakeholders Planning Group meets – J Gambles 11 th February Learning Partnership Stakeholders Planning Group meets – J Gambles 17 th February Cabinet approves the Strategic Outline Plan – J Gambles 28 th February Strategic Outline Plan submitted to WAG by Stakeholders - J Gambles	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		Submitted 28.03.2009
27.01.2009	Environment E Jones	E-Coli Public Inquiry Update	Bring a report to Cabinet following the publication of the Public Inquiry Report – E Jones May 2009 Make contact with LifeLong Learning Directorate (LLLD) regarding an SLA with DCC Pest Control		✓ ✓	All on target

CABINET DATE	DIRECTORATE / OFFICER	REPORT TITLE	ACTION	COMPLETE	INCOMPLETE	DATE COMMENCED / REASON OUTSTANDING
			Team. Bring a report to Lead Member on this issue. – E Jones / B Roberts June 2009 Make contact with DCC School Meals Service in relation to food procurement. School Meals Service to bring a report to Cabinet on this issue – E Jones, June 2009		✓	
27.01.2009	Environment P Murphy	Consultation Document on Destination Marketing and Management in Wales	DCC to respond to WAG Review consultation - Paul Murphy / 30 January 2009	✓		
27.01.2009	Environment M Hitchings	Parking Charges 2009-2010	Advertising changes to the order - Parking Services Manager/ February 2009 Operational changes to pay and display machines - Parking Services Manager/ March 2009	✓	✓	
17.02.2009	Social Services & Housing A Hughes Jones	Changes to Social Care Charges	Implementation of Telecare Charges to apply to all new cases and the new increased charge to apply to people paying for Careline Services – Paul Quirk/Anne Hughes-Jones – from April 2009 Charges for Supporting People services for all new cases - Paul Quirk/Anne Hughes-Jones – from April 2009 Charging for Mental Health Service Users - Anne Hughes-Jones/Julie Mountford – April 2009	✓	✓	
24.03.2009	Lifelong Learning J Gambles	Transformation of Post 16 Education & Training in Denbighshire	The 14-19 Coordinator will be responsible for adherence to the following programme of key dates and actions by the Learning Partnership and Partnership Development Group; the Corporate Director for Education will be responsible for monitoring progress.		✓	Programme on target and awaiting response from WAG
24.03.2009	Resources I Butler	Risk and Opportunity Management Strategy	Work Plans supporting the Corporate Governance Action Plan (Recommendation 6) January – October 2009		✓	On target
24.03.2009	Lifelong Learning J Groves	Local Authority Partnership Agreement	Actions within the Appendices to the report		✓	Programme on target and implementation commenced

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: Councillor P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health, Social Care & Wellbeing

DATE: 28th April 2009

SUBJECT: Housing Revenue Account Budget & Capital Plan Update Report 2008 / 2009

1 DECISIONS SOUGHT

Members note the provisional final outturn of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) and Housing Capital Plan for 2008/09.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

The need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategies for the current financial year.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Housing Act 1985 Part II.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications - Housing Revenue Budget 2008/09

- The latest forecast for the HRA shows that an in-year revenue surplus of £226k should be generated by the end of the financial year, which is £206k less than forecast in the original budget set in February 2008.
- There has been little movement between February and March, with an overall increase in expenditure of £41k. The main change is an increase in the actual cost of support services charged to the HRA. The basis of all HRA support costs will be reviewed in 2009/10.
- There was one Right to Buy sale in 2008/09, therefore the housing stock remains at 3,470.

4.2 Cost Implications - Housing Stock Business Plan (HSBP)

- The Plan has been updated and remains viable. The 2009/10 Plan was approved by Cabinet in February and will be fully reviewed later during 2009 as programmed. Cabinet will be kept informed of progress.

4.3 Cost Implications Housing Capital Plan

- The major refurbishment contract is continuing with 829 properties now completed (764 last month). This means that in total, 1,081 properties have had major improvements completed. This is in addition to the windows and heating contracts completed during 2008.
- The council is still on target to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012.
- Along with the HSBP, the capital plan has been fully reviewed as part of the 2009/10 budget setting exercise.

4.4 Cost Implications of Unresolved National Decisions

- Rent Increases. Last month's report made reference to a possible change to the guideline rent (set nationally) that would have reduced rent increases in Denbighshire for 2009/10. There have been no such changes in Wales and the rent increases agreed in February will stand.
- Leased Subsidy 2009/10. It was previously reported that, despite previous assurances to the contrary, the Assembly Government had indicated that HRA subsidy for private sector leases for homeless people may not be available for 2009/10. The latest position is that discussions are continuing between WAG and the Treasury and Councils in Wales have been asked to defer decisions on rent increases for leased properties until negotiations are concluded. A commitment has been given to compensate councils for any lost revenue on a month-by-month basis. Therefore leased property rents have not been increased.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation

There would be a reduction in financial control and ability to influence the current HRA budget and the longer term future of the Housing Stock Business Plan.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation

No risk in agreeing the recommendation however there are risks involved with the delivery of the Housing Stock Business Plan (sales, capital costs, etc.) that must be continually reviewed.

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The forecast HRA outturn for 2008/09 will ensure that balances are in-line with Housing Stock Business Plan expectations. The five-year review of the HSBP due in 2009/10 will provide an opportunity to reassess key planning assumptions and should confirm the long-term viability of the Plan.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Cabinet agreed the HRA capital and revenue budget in February 2008.

8 IMPLICATIONS – COUNCIL PRIORITIES & VISION

The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council. The HSBP will help achieve the ideal living vision, through access to good quality, affordable housing, which is more energy efficient and designed to meet their needs.

9 ACTION PLAN

Action	Responsibility	Date
Ongoing monitoring of the HSBP.	Head of Housing Services & Senior Management Accountant.	Monthly updates to Cabinet.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) for the current financial year.

Appendix 1

Housing Revenue Account ~ 2008/09 Budget

<u>2007/08</u> Actual Outturn £	<u>Period 12 - March 2009</u>	Original Budget £	<u>2008/9</u> Forecast Out-turn £	Variance to Budget £
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
1,609,150	Supervision & Management - General	1,563,283	1,767,932	-204,649
251,603	Supervision & Management - Special	268,573	254,945	13,628
145,498	Welfare Services	142,552	148,464	-5,912
306,194	Homelessness - Leased Properties	402,000	380,162	21,838
0	Rents	0	0	0
2,576,310	Repairs and Maintenance	2,640,199	2,610,422	29,777
4,888,755	Total Housing Management	5,016,607	5,161,925	-145,318
0	Rent Rebates	0	0	0
1,448,188	Item 8 Capital Charges	1,881,000	2,010,299	-129,299
0	CERA	3,500,000	3,000,000	500,000
0	Rent Rebate Subsidy Limitation	140,000	125,000	15,000
2,826,904	Subsidy	2,413,000	2,894,299	-481,299
12,513	Provision for Bad Debts	25,000	25,000	0
9,176,360	Total Expenditure	12,975,607	13,216,523	-240,916
<u>INCOME</u>				
9,570,607	Rents (net of voids)	9,924,222	9,947,272	23,050
189,918	Leased Rents	236,808	235,160	-1,648
143,453	Garages	150,952	138,509	-12,443
199,587	Interest on Balances & Other Income	95,000	121,430	26,430
10,103,565	Total Income	10,406,982	10,442,370	35,388
Surplus / Deficit (-) for the Year				
927,205	General Balances	931,375	225,847	-705,528
0	Earmarked Balances	-3,500,000	-3,000,000	500,000
2,779,531	Balance as at start of year ~ General	3,706,736	3,706,736	0
3,706,736	Balance as at end of year ~ General	1,138,111	932,583	-205,528

Appendix 2

HRA Capital Plan Update 2008/09				
<u>Month 12</u>				
Actual		Approved	Actual at	Forecast
2007/08	Description	Schemes	End	Outturn
£		£	£	£
363,377	Environmental Improvement Works	440,000	284,899	344,899
56,654	2005/06 Major Improvements – All Groups	0	52,307	52,307
5,660,688	2006/07 Major Improvements – All Groups	6,735,000	7,232,563	7,307,983
2,552,468	Windows Replacement	100,000	228,111	229,000
831,900	Central Heating Contract	100,000	394,759	400,000
550,040	DFG - Council Properties *	400,000	499,963	520,000
10,015,127	Total	7,890,000	8,692,601	8,854,189
2007/08	HRA Capital Plan Financed By:	Original		Forecast
£		£		£
2,400,000	Major Repairs Allowance Grant	2,400,000		2,400,000
483,000	Useable Capital Receipts	297,000		38,000
7,132,127	Prudential Borrowing	1,693,000		3,416,189
0	CERA	3,500,000		3,000,000
10,015,127	Total	7,890,000		8,854,189

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT BY: Councillor J. Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance

DATE: 28 April 2009

SUBJECT: Projected final outturn on Revenue Budget and Summary Capital Plan 2008/09

1. DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 To note the projected final outturn position for 2008/9 as detailed in the attached Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To also note the summary capital plan performance for the 2008/09 financial year as detailed in the attached Appendices 2 and 3.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 To advise Members of the latest estimated position on the budget performance for the last financial year, together with an update of the Council's cash investments on the Money Market. In view of the very poor Assembly settlements that will be received over the next few financial years there is a pressing need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategy for each financial year and avoid reducing already inadequate reserves.

3. POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 Local Authorities are required under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of their finances.

4. COST IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report details Service's projected final position for the last financial year. Appendix 1 details a forecast overall underspend of £555k, excluding the schools' delegated budgets. This figure is a small improvement on the projected position reported for last month. There remains a projected net pressure in the Lifelong Learning budget while the other services are estimated to come in on or below budget. Most of the service budget underspend will be eligible to be carried forward and used next financial year by services.

i) Lifelong Learning is forecasting a reduced overspend position of £589k due to a slightly improved forecast deficit on the school meals service.

- a) the costs associated with the operation and closure of the Hyfrydle Childrens Home on the Plas Brondyffryn school site are £374k,
- b) the cost associated with the interim management arrangements, including the interim director, chief officer and other additional costs, partly offset by various operating savings are now reduced to £135k.

- c) the losses incurred by the School Meals service above the £150k provided for within the budget are likely to reach £80k, however future options for delivery are being considered and will be presented to members shortly. If accepted these should reduce the current overspend level in the future.

ii) Social Services & Housing directorate is forecasting an underspend of £507k, an increase of £35k over last month due to a combination of the following:

- a) securing NHS funding for some learning disability care packages,
- b) lower than expected clawback on supporting people projects in Childrens Services,
- c) charging policy income exceeding original forecasts,
- d) a few older people with preserved rights no longer receiving care,
- e) vacancy control continuing to deliver savings
- f) It was agreed by Council in 2007 as part of the strategy to dampen the future impact of funding changes for Supporting People services that in year savings resulting from revisions to care packages and improved service delivery efficiency would be transferred into a provision. Part of the agreed budget strategy for 2009/10 also assumes that an element of savings from this service area in 2009/10 will be needed to fund any service pressure above the level of additional funding agreed for Social Services. The final position for 2008/9 will be reported as part of the final accounts with a recommendation on the use of the underspend involved, currently estimated at £500K.

iii) Environment directorate is forecasting an underspend of £287k. This is a reduction of £40k from last month and reflects the continuing impact of the current recession on the level of fees and charges currently.

- a) The overall projected underspend is as a result of the continued savings arising from the delays in filling vacant staffing posts, together with the unspent element of funding for the collaborative waste project, partly offset by reduced fees & charges, a projected overspend of £36k at the Pavilion Theatre resulting from reduced ticket sales and increased energy costs and the impact of the animal welfare case. In addition there has been a conscious decision to look to cut back on spending wherever possible across the Directorate.

4.2 A report on the final outturn for 2008/9 will be presented to the June meeting of Cabinet and will include recommendations on the sums to be transferred to reserves, provisions and earmarked balances. Cabinet will be requested to approve specific recommendations for full Council to agree.

4.3 The Council's Annual Statement of Accounts will be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee for approval at the end of June.

4.4 Appendix 2 shows a **capital plan summary** and Appendix 3 shows capital expenditure split by Directorate priority.

4.5 Capital expenditure at the end of March is £35.2m against a plan of £37.9 m.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendations

Risk of service overspends not being contained within the overall Council budget with the resulting reduction to Reserves & Balances and pressure continuing into future years.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendations

Potential for impact upon service levels and quality with possibility of negative impact upon the Council's public image.

6. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

- 6.1 Directorates have exercised tight control over their revenue expenditure to ensure they were able to remain within their budgets. The first call on any agreed underspends carried forward into the new financial year together with underspends in the current year, will of course be any pressures in the current year.
- 6.2 The closure of the residential unit Hyfrydle, on the Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn site will cap the Council's liabilities, action is currently being considered to ensure the facilities are brought into alternate use in the medium term.
- 6.3 The Council is now working closely with both Rhyl High School and Blessed Edward Jones to improve their financial situation. There is still a significant amount of work to be done however positive steps have been taken at both schools. Members will be kept informed of progress.
- 6.4 A continuing area for concern is the worsening financial position of the school meals service where the agreed level of temporary additional subsidy, £150k, was inadequate for 2008/9 and may also prove to be so in the current financial year. A proposal to address this should be presented to members shortly.
- 6.5 Officers are involved in detailed negotiations with the Health Service to ensure that the Council receives a fair share of the additional W.A.G. Continuing Health Care funding for the current year that were finally announced in January. The position for the new financial year remains unclear as the Assembly have not given any clear indications of funding levels.

6.6 MONEY MARKET INVESTMENTS UPDATE

The Council is continuing to take steps to protect itself in the current economic situation:

- Further opportunities for debt repayment are being monitored closely and will be pursued when the conditions are favourable.
- The Council is investing short term cash with the HM Treasury deposit account on a regular basis in order to ensure the security of its investment funds.

The Council still has investments with foreign-owned banks, but as these mature in September 2009, they will be redirected into UK or HM Treasury investments. These actions will reduce the risk to the Council.

On 5 March, the Bank of England announced a further 0.5% cut in base rates from 1% to 0.5%. Forecasts suggest rates could drop by a further 0.25% during 2009/10. This has had a significant impact on the investment return the Council will be able to achieve on its remaining investments. A 1.0% reduction represents about a £400k loss of interest in a full year at the former level of cash deposits, however as borrowing rates are currently at 4.25% the decision has been made to borrow internally, i.e. run down cash levels. By doing this the Council saves the borrowing costs which currently are over 3% above investment rates.

Realistically, the Council is facing a significant reduction in investment income of at least £1m for 09/10 compared with the current year. While officers are doing everything possible to mitigate this, it is not now possible for the previous level of underspend in this area to be expected for the next financial year. The interest to be received on the VAT refund reported previously will help reduce the impact in 2009/10.

7. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 7.1 Lead Cabinet members need to consult with Heads of Service during the financial year to agree necessary remedial actions to contain pressures as they occur.

8. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS

The Vision

- 8.1 Proper management of the Council's revenue budget enables services to work towards delivering the Council's Vision.

Other Policy Areas Including Corporate

- 8.2 Proper management of the Council's revenue budget underpins activity in all of the Council's policy areas.

9. ACTION PLAN

- 9.1 All departments undertake regular budget monitoring to identify savings and efficiencies and contain budget pressures.
- 9.2 Officers within Lifelong Learning and Finance directorates are working to reduce the level of pressures and identify other offsetting savings to bring overall spend more in line with the directorate budget in the new financial year.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 To note the projected outturn figures for 2008/09 as detailed in the attached Appendix 1.
- 10.2 To also note the summary capital plan performance figures for 2008/09 financial year as detailed in the attached Appendices 2 and 3.

APPENDIX 1

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009**

Directorate	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Previous report £000s
Lifelong Learning (excluding schools delegated)	20,711	-6,955	13,756	21,300	-6,955	14,345	589	0	589	610
Environment	51,305	-21,258	30,047	50,539	-20,779	29,760	-766	479	-287	-327
Social Services & Housing	55,733	-17,014	38,719	58,178	-19,966	38,212	2,445	-2,952	-507	-472
County Clerk	1,975	-403	1,572	1,975	-403	1,572	0	0	0	0
Resources	10,863	-3,121	7,742	10,863	-3,121	7,742	0	0	0	0
Corporate, Miscellaneous & Benefits	31,052	-26,046	5,006	31,102	-26,046	5,056	50	0	50	50
Total All Services	171,639	-74,797	96,842	173,957	-77,270	96,687	2,318	-2,473	-155	-139
Capital Financing Charges savings & additional Investment Income net of contributions to specific provisions			10,649			10,249			-400	-400
Precepts & Levies			4,347			4,347			0	0
Contribution to balances/reserves			570			570			0	0
			112,408			111,853			-555	-539

Note:

The Management Accounting rules of the Council require debtor account entries to be reversed in respect of amounts outstanding for more than 30 days after the due date. In the event that debts cannot be collected, services will be required to meet the cost of the debt write-off. This may impact on the actual outturn achieved by services at the year end.

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
LIFELONG LEARNING
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Previous report
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Individual School Budgets	58,063	-5,443	52,620	61,939	-8,479	53,460	3,876	-3,036	840	817
Partnership & Inclusion	9,889	-5,421	4,468	10,263	-5,421	4,842	374	0	374	374
School Development	6,978	-1,292	5,686	6,978	-1,292	5,686	0	0	0	0
Policy & Performance	1,408	-85	1,323	1,623	-85	1,538	215	0	215	236
Libraries	2,436	-157	2,279	2,436	-157	2,279	0	0	0	0
Total excluding schools	20,711	-6,955	13,756	21,300	-6,955	14,345	589	0	589	610

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE**

	Current Month £000s	Previous Month £000s
<p><u>INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS BUDGET</u></p> <p>Following updates during March, projections would indicate that school balances of £1,953k as at 31.03.08 will reduce to £1,113k during 2008/2009. This is an increase in expenditure of £23k since the last report in February. Changes have been minimal during March as a lot of work done by the LMS Team has been based on the 2009/10 budgets. Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn's estimated deficit has changed again, as the money originally recognised in a separate Plas Brondyffryn SEN pot, used to offset the overspend, has reduced. Their total deficit is now approximately £55k. Ysgol Llywelyn have also moved into a deficit position, and are now looking to carry forward an overspend of approx. £22k. The estimated balance figure for St Brigid's has been amended to zero as the school budget is topped up from other internal funds within the school. However, if this funding was not available then currently the cumulative deficit for the Primary school would be £19k and for the Secondary £21k.</p>	840	817
<p><u>PARTNERSHIPS & INCLUSION</u></p> <p>Costs associated with the closure of Hyfrydle Children's Home.</p>	374	374
<p><u>POLICY & PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Costs associated with the Interim Management arrangements - Offset by increased savings within the Directorate</p> <p>School Meals Subsidy</p>	135 80	135 101
TOTAL excluding schools	589	610

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE**

Progress with delivery of savings assumptions built into 2008/9 Budget

1. Savings targets agreed, (see report to Council 12 February for details)

	£000
a) Efficiency savings	167
b) Other savings	79
c) Vacancy control	92

2. Progress with delivery of savings.

All savings are on target to be delivered.

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Previous report £000s
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (see note 1)	9,429	-5,143	4,286	9,507	-5,135	4,372	78	8	86	130
TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE (see note 2 & 3)	13,845	-4,448	9,397	13,820	-4,367	9,453	-25	81	56	-126
PLANNING & PUBLIC PROTECTION (see notes 2 & 3)	4,275	-1,867	2,408	4,243	-1,497	2,746	-32	370	338	345
DIRECTOR & SUPPORT (see note 5)	1,362	-237	1,125	936	-237	699	-426	0	-426	-395
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (see note 6)	16,884	-6,966	9,918	16,523	-6,971	9,552	-361	-5	-366	-295
TOURISM, CULTURE & COUNTRYSIDE	5,510	-2,597	2,913	5,510	-2,572	2,938	0	25	25	14
Total Environment	51,305	-21,258	30,047	50,539	-20,779	29,760	-766	479	-287	-327

Potential Pressures

- 1 Pressures on the Agricultural Estates, Allotments, Industrial Estates and Health and Safety budgets within the Building Group.
- 2 The income generated from the Car Parking, Building Control, Land Charges and Development Control functions continue to fall alarmingly. Based upon current year end projections the budget pressure is £302K on Development Control, £137K on Building Control, £57K on Car Parks and £38K on Land Charges.
- 3 Latest projections indicate that there will be an underspend on the School Transport budget. A revenue contribution has been made from the Public Transport budget to the TAIITH capital project in 08/09.
- 4 The animal welfare case in Llandegla is estimated to create a £42K pressure on the Trading Standards budget in 08/09. The total cost of the case over 2 financial years is projected to cost circa £100K.
- 5 All savings on staffing from delays in filling vacant posts have been removed from services and accumulated in a central budget controlled by the Director. These savings are being used to offset pressures within the Directorate. The balance will be eligible to be carried forward into 09/10 to ease any future budget pressures.
- 6 An additional £300K budget in 08/09 was given to Environmental Services to finance DCC's share of the procurement costs of a residual waste disposal facility. Latest events indicate that the procurement process will slip and none of this budget will now be spent in the current financial year. Clearly any underspend in 08/09 will need be utilised towards offsetting the significant income pressures as detailed in 2 above. The resultant additional waste procurement costs to be incurred in 09/10 will need to be funded from the Sustainable Waste Management Reserve.
- 7 Pressures on the Rhyl Pavilion Theatre budget (£36K), an authorised overspend on Prestatyn Scala (£20k) partially offset by other savings within the Tourism, Culture & Countryside Department.

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
ENVIRONMENT - EFFICIENCY SAVINGS
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009**

Progress with delivery of savings assumptions built into 2008/9 Budget

1. Savings targets agreed, (see report to Council 12 February for details)

	£000
a) Efficiency savings	359
b) Other savings	92
c) Vacancy control	178

2. Progress with delivery of savings.

All savings are on target to be delivered apart from the following:

a) Efficiency savings.

- i) Street Lighting - stop night time inspections (£7k). Subsequently agreed not desirable from H & S viewpoint. Will be replaced by other efficiencies within Street Lighting budget.
- ii) Rhyl Pavilion Theatre - reduced funding and changes in programming policy (£45k). The Theatre manager has achieved most of the required efficiency savings. Work is on-going to ensure that in 08/09 the balance will be found from alternative savings from within the overall theatre budget.

b) Other savings

- i) Public Conveniences - closure of old Golf Rd toilets (£5k) - unlikely to achieve this so replaced by an alternative saving within PC budget.
- ii) Reduced Beach Lifeguard service (£25k) - only partly achieved. Will need to be accommodated within existing budget.
- iii) Historic Houses of Denbighshire £5k - will need to be replaced by an alternative saving.

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009**

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Previous report
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Children Services	9,061	-529	8,532	10,161	-1,540	8,621	1,100	-1,011	89	67
Underspend b/f					-150	-150	0	-150	-150	-150
Adult Services	36,278	-8,680	27,598	37,134	-9,763	27,371	856	-1,083	-227	-147
Underspend b/f					-615	-615	0	-615	-615	-615
Business Support & Development	2,773	-504	2,269	3,337	-737	2,600	564	-233	331	307
Cymorth Grant	1,673	-1,611	62	1,673	-1,611	62	0	0	0	0
Supporting People Grant	4,363	-4,350	13	4,363	-4,350	13	0	0	0	0
Sub Total Social Services	54,148	-15,674	38,474	56,668	-18,766	37,902	2,520	-3,092	-572	-538
Non HRA Housing	1,585	-1,340	245	1,510	-1,200	310	-75	140	65	66
Underspend Brought Forward	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Directorate Total	55,733	-17,014	38,719	58,178	-19,966	38,212	2,445	-2,952	-507	-472

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

<u>Comments</u>	Current Month £000s	Previous Month £000s
<u>SOCIAL SERVICES</u>		
CHILDREN'S SERVICES		
The main reason for the increase in the over spend is due to additional expenditure within the specialist placement budget which is expected to over spend by £498k. The overspend on the specialist placement budget is partially offset by the in-house fostering service (under spend £216k).	89	67
Under spend Brought Forward 2007/08	-150	-150
ADULT SERVICES		
Learning Disabilities		
The growth in actual demand has exceeded projections in recent years. The main pressure area continues to be residential placements (£240k). Work is ongoing to maximise joint funding from the NHS and the successful transfer of care packages for those with health needs to the Local Health Board.	196	196
Mental Illness		
The main budget pressures remain in Residential, Nursing and Home care.	129	121
Older People		
Provider - The Provider under spend has decreased by £18k this month (£252k under) this is mainly due to final premises costs at Llys Nant being higher than expected. The underspend however reflects the net savings associated with the closure of Llys Nant. Purchasing - The final position is expected to be £341k under spent which is an improvement of £17k from last month. This improvement is due to reduction in the number of people with Preserved Rights and vacancy control measures in the Rapid Response & Re-ablement budget.	-593	-594
PDSI		
Community Care spend is still the main budget pressure. The improved PDSI outturn position is largely due to the securing of an extra £26k Grant income from WAG regarding Residential Rehab.expenditure in the Drug and Alcohol budget.	309	336
Performance Management & Commissioning		
A combined under spend of £264k is predicted, an increase of £26k from last month, due to various factors including additional Receivership fees income of £80k. The remainder is due to vacancy control on staffing budgets and additional grant income.	-264	-238
Other Adult Services		
Previous outturn forecasts have assumed that the income from WAG re the Fairer Charging Grant continues at the same level as 2007/08, but this could now be £42k higher based on the the claims made to date. The remaining charging policy income is based on ability to pay and is volatile, but with 11 months bills raised to date, it is expected that this income together with the grant will exceed the planned budgeted allocation by around £180k.	-143	-98
Joint Working & Older People Strategy		
This consists solely of grant funding and the grant is now forecast to be fully spent.	0	0
Cefndy Healthcare		
Cefndy is under increasing pressure from raw material suppliers with the costs expected to equate to around 55% of sales for 2008/09. Sales in 2008/2009 show an increase of 3.42% from the corresponding figure in 2007/08. Hopefully the trend will continue in 2009/2010 allowing for an improved final year position.	139	130
Under spend Brought Forward 2007/08	-615	-615
TOTAL ADULT SERVICES	-842	-762
Business Support & Development		
The predicted over spend of £331k is an increase over the previous month of £24k. The main increase is due to additional PARIS expenditure and costs associated with additional expenditure around the vacation of the Warren Drive offices that were originally thought to be met by Property Services.	331	307
	331	307
Cymorth Grant		
All expenditure relating to the Cymorth grant has to be spent in year.	0	0
	0	0
Supporting People		
It is assumed that all the recurrent SP under spend will be taken to reserves to dampen the impact of proposed grant formula changes and/or a transfer to a regional body. Either proposal will disadvantage the council financially but the latter could have a significant impact. The balance of the reserve is currently £1.9m and a further contribution of £0.75m (including provision made previously for grant clawback) is estimated this year. The SP strategy is being revised but it is proposed no further contributions to the reserve are made next year and that any in-year surpluses are used to dampen pressures throughout the Directorate.	0	0
HOUSING		
The latest outturn once again shows a reduction in the over spend. The initial forecast was an over spend of £150k and steps have been taken throughout the year to reduce this - previously reported. The Homeless budget remains a pressure.	65	66
TOTAL HOUSING	65	66
TOTAL SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING	-507	-472

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING**

Progress with delivery of savings assumptions built into 2008/9 Budget

1. Savings targets agreed, (see report to Council 12 February for details)

	£000
a) Efficiency savings	567
b) Other savings	108
c) Reduced travel costs	25
d) Vacancy control	125 (see separate sheet)

2. Progress with delivery of savings.

All savings are on target to be delivered apart from the following:

a) Efficiency savings.	£000	Alternative savings identified
i) Restructure of day care provision	37	Restructure of day care provision not achievable Alternative savings to be identified, work ongoing
ii) Telecare savings,	68	Telecare savings problematic in achieving £68k Will achieve £35k - £50k for the year Shortfall to be identified, work ongoing
iii) Reduction in costs of placements for children	78	Reduction in costs of placements for children not achievable Alternative savings to be found in reduction of agency staff Work ongoing

MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09
RESOURCES, COUNTY CLERK, CORPORATE & MISCELLANEOUS
SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance	
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Previous report	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
County Clerks	1,864	-403	1,461	1,814	-403	1,411	-50	0	-50	-50	2
Translation	111	0	111	161	0	161	50	0	50	50	3
Resources Directorate											
Finance	5,195	-2,125	3,070	5,195	-2,125	3,070	0	0	0	0	0
Policy Unit	391	0	391	391	0	391	0	0	0	0	0
Audit	460	-103	357	460	-103	357	0	0	0	0	0
I.T	2,304	-439	1,865	2,304	-439	1,865	0	0	0	0	0
Personnel	1,610	-284	1,326	1,610	-284	1,326	0	0	0	0	0
Project Management	75	0	75	75	0	75	0	0	0	0	0
Customer Care	828	-170	658	828	-170	658	0	0	0	0	0
						0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10,863	-3,121	7,742	10,863	-3,121	7,742	0	0	0	0	
Corporate and Miscellaneous	6,158	-1,115	5,043	6,208	-1,115	5,093	50	0	50	50	1
Benefits	24,894	-24,931	-37	24,894	-24,931	-37	0	0	0	0	
Total	43,890	-29,570	14,320	43,940	-29,570	14,370	50	0	50	50	
Capital Fin Charges	10,649		10,649	10,249	0	10,249	-400	0	-400	-400	4
			0			0	0	0	0	0	
Contribution to balances/reserves	570		570	570		570	0	0	0	0	

1 Corporate Costs - Pension costs from LGR and later efficiency exercises running ahead of budget. +£50k

2 Planned savings in salary costs due to delays in staff recruitment & maternity leave cover

3 Underlying pressure - increased demand for this service

4 Latest estimate of borrowing costs net of investment income.

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE, COUNTY CLERK & CORPORATE SAVINGS SUMMARY POSITION AS AT END MARCH 2009

Progress with delivery of savings assumptions built into 2008/9 Budget

1. Savings targets agreed, (see report to Council 12 February for details)

£000

a) Efficiency savings	180
b) Other savings	34
c) Vacancy control	241

2. Progress with delivery of savings.

All savings are on target to be delivered

Denbighshire County Council - Capital Plan 2007/08 - 2010/11
Position as at February 2009

APPENDIX 3

		2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Funding:					
1	General Funding:				
	Unhypothesized Supported Borrowing	7,609	7,254	5,884	5,884
	General Capital Grant	124	3,743	2,017	1,961
	General Capital Receipts		523		
	Earmarked Capital Receipts	1,611	877	0	0
		9,344	12,397	7,901	7,845
2	Prudential Borrowing	5,802	5,347	269	269
3	Reserves and Contributions	1,584	991	0	0
4	Specific Grants	21,163	4,932	488	0
	Total Finance	37,893	23,667	8,658	8,114
	Total Estimated Payments	-37,893	-22,983	-6,813	-6,269
	Contingency	0	-684	-1,000	-1,000
	Unallocated Reserve	0	0	0	0
	Surplus/ -Insufficient Resources	0	0	845	845

Capital Expenditure By Directorate

	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Spend to March	Estimated programme	Estimated programme	Estimated programme	Estimated programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environment	26,494	28,238	15,478	4,889	4,345
Lifelong Learning	7,350	8,217	5,797	1,480	1,480
Resources	597	597	1,289	269	269
Social Services and Housing	729	841	419	175	175
Total	35,170	37,893	22,983	6,813	6,269

Capital Expenditure by Council Priority

	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Spend to March	Estimated programme	Estimated programme	Estimated programme	Estimated programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Modernising Education	6,263	6,975	4,155	1,000	1,000
Roads and Flood Defence	6,626	6,831	6,306	800	800
Regeneration	4,720	5,202	1,827	165	165
Responding to Demographic Change					
Total	17,609	19,008	12,288	1,965	1,965

As part of the 08/09 revenue budget, the Council agreed to fund the borrowing costs of additional Prudential Borrowing. The table below shows how the funds were allocated and forecast expenditure

Additional Prudential Borrowing

	2008/09	2008/09
	Spend to March	Estimated programme
	£000	£000
Highways	2,000	2,000
Total	2,000	2,000

REPORT TO CABINET

CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR R W HUGHES, LEAD MEMBER FOR PERSONNEL AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

DATE: 28TH APRIL 2009

SUBJECT: ROUTINE REPORTING ON PERSONNEL

1 DECISION SOUGHT

For Members to note the enclosed report on Personnel Statistics

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 **Sickness Absence** – There has been an increase in sickness levels this month, with the average number of days lost per employee at 1.39 which remains slightly higher than for the same period last year and is well above the target of 0.92 days lost per employee. This month Resources and County Clerks & Chief Executives recorded lower levels of sickness than the required target, with Environment and Social Services recording higher levels and Lifelong Learning (excl Schools & schools only) recording levels significantly above target, although Environment levels still remain slightly lower than they recorded for the same period last year.

The target for sickness absence for 2008/09 was an average of 11 days lost per person for the period of April 2008 – March 2009. The final outcome figure is above target at an average of 12.45 days lost per employee compared to 11.59 last year. Details of actions to address this were given by the Personnel Officer – Sickness Absence at the March Cabinet.

Monthly (March 09)	Days Lost Per Employee	Percentage Absence
DCC	1.39	6.30%
CE	0.58	2.63%
RES	0.86	3.92%
ENV	1.28	5.84%
SS	1.34	6.09%
LLL	1.54	7.01%
LLL excl Teachers	1.65	7.50%
Teachers Only	1.42	6.44%

Cumulative (April 08 - March 09)	Days Lost Per Employee	Percentage Absence
DCC	12.45	5.13%
CE	7.56	2.96%
RES	9.77	3.83%
ENV	12.61	4.94%
SS	16.60	6.51%
LLL	11.50	4.97%
LLL excl Teachers	13.34	5.23%
Teachers Only	9.36	4.59%

Sickness graphs are contained within appendix a. It should also be noted that the Overview graph shows an increase in sickness absence over the last 3 years, this could partly be due to more accurate recording of sickness absence now than ever before.

2.2 Personnel Statistics - In March 2009 the number of actual staff employed has decreased to 4586 this equates to 3878 full time equivalents (FTE). In March there were 18 new starters to DCC, mainly in Environment. There were 24 leavers spread across all Directorates, 5 of which left for positions outside of DCC, with 6 declining to specify why they had left, 3 Tupe Transfers and 4 Redundancies. Other reasons included retirement and end of fixed term contracts.

	Headcount	FTE
April 2008	4467	3768
May 2008	4456	3763
June 2008	4476	3785
July 2008	4490	3807
August 2008	4391	3721
September 2008	4604	3905
October 2008	4604	3905
November 2008	4608	3914
December 2008	4564	3860
January 2009	4594	3880
February 2009	4591	3878
March 2009	4586	3878

It should be noted that the number of staff and the number of starters and leavers will never correlate this is because starters and leavers equate to number of employments rather than actual people. It should also be noted that the data is only accurate on the day the report is run as new data is added to the system on a daily basis.

Headcount is controlled by separate vacancy control processes in each directorate where by each vacancy has to be approved by the relevant corporate director. There is no central co-ordination or knowledge of decisions made through each vacancy control process. Likewise there is no central knowledge of which posts are Grant Funded this is controlled individually by Heads of Service.

The Managed Agency Project was implemented on 23 February 09. As at 31 March 09 86 agency workers were employed within DCC. Net savings of £16,056 (9%) were achieved in the first five weeks of operation.

Should Cabinet require more detailed reporting on headcount then a process will need to be introduced in order to provide that information. This would need to be agreed by all directors so that headcount information is recorded in such a way that it can then be reported centrally.

- 2.3 **Performance Appraisals** - The reporting year for performance appraisals is April to March with the majority of appraisals undertaken between January and March to fit in with the business planning cycle. Completion rates for April 08 to March 09 are at 88.62% which is a dramatic increase given that the figure reported to cabinet in November 2008 was 65.5% of appraisals had been undertaken on 31 October 2008 and this was an 18month window not a 12month window as reported today. Details are in appendix b. Also contained within appendix b is the completion rate for a 15 month window Jan 08 to March 09 which shows a 90.55% completion rate.

The Performance Appraisal review is complete. MMC are identifying possible groups of staff that will not use this appraisal system for example School Escorts. Guidance and details of descriptors for all scoring levels are being written in April 09 with final ratification at May's MMC. The amended process will then be re-launched in May 09.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1. Section III of the Local Government Act 1972

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 **Cost Implications:** There are no significant cost implications associated with the preparation of this information.
- 4.2 **Staffing / Accommodation Implications:** There are no direct staffing implications however sickness levels do impact on the ability to provide services.
- 4.3 **IT Implications:** There are no IT implications associated with the preparation of this information.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 **Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s** N/A
- 5.2 **Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s** N/A

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

- 6.1 Payroll costs are one of the largest costs faced by the Council and therefore any further actions to monitor and control expenditure are beneficial.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 7.1. The headcount information has been prepared by the Central Personnel team directly from the HR system.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

Attendance and performance of employees is fundamental to achieving our Corporate priorities.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

Being able to deliver the vision depends on having the right number of employees in the right job with the right skills.

9 ACTION PLAN – Performance Appraisal Review

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
Review of overall Performance Appraisal methodology	L Atkin	31.03.2009

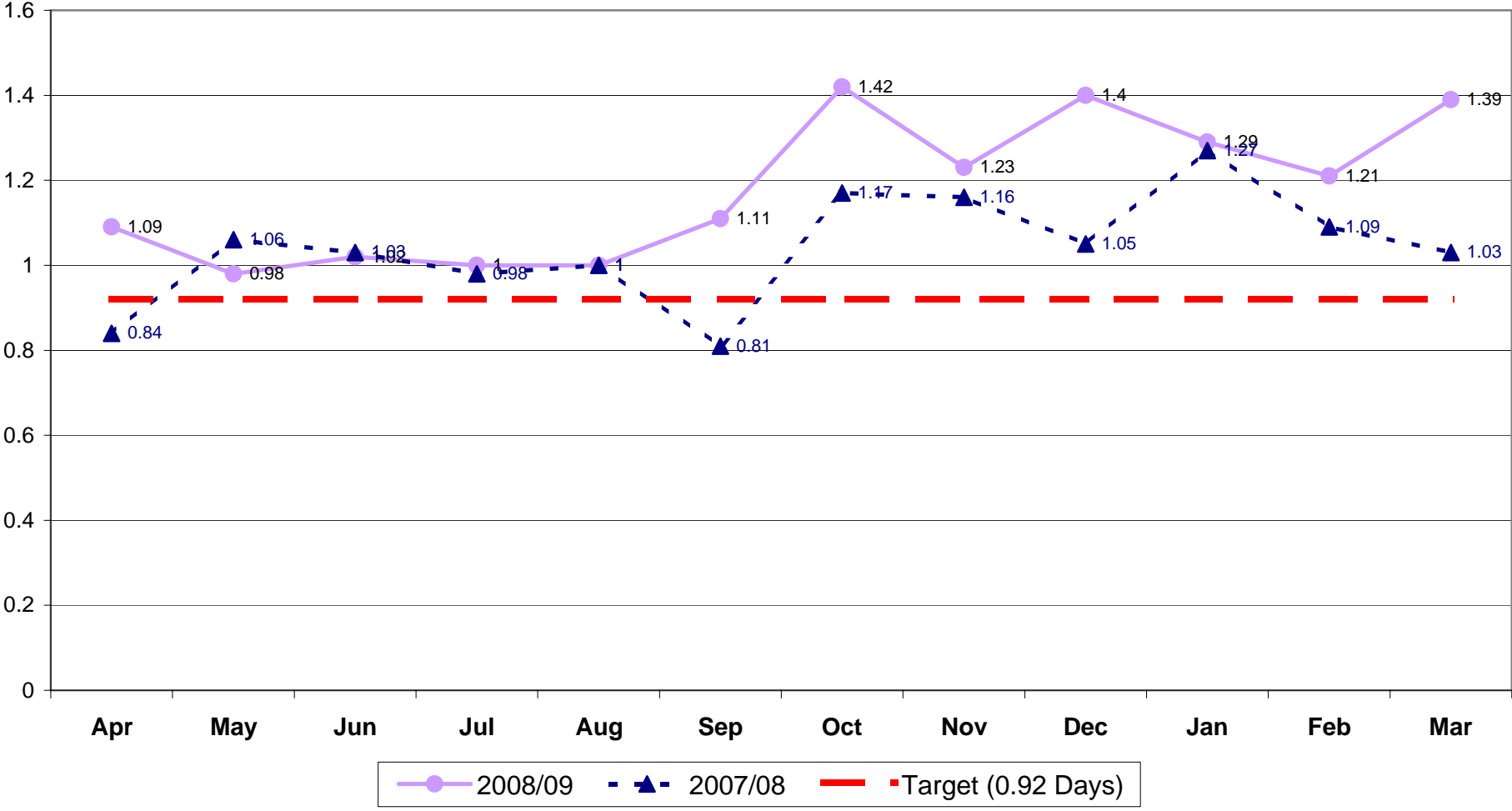
Update on the Action Plan

- Current process has been simplified
- MMC to identify groups of staff where the current process for performance appraisal will not apply by 17th April 09
- Guidelines & descriptors to be written by end April 09
- New process to be ratified at MMC 2nd May 09
- Corporate Governance Workplan will then be complete

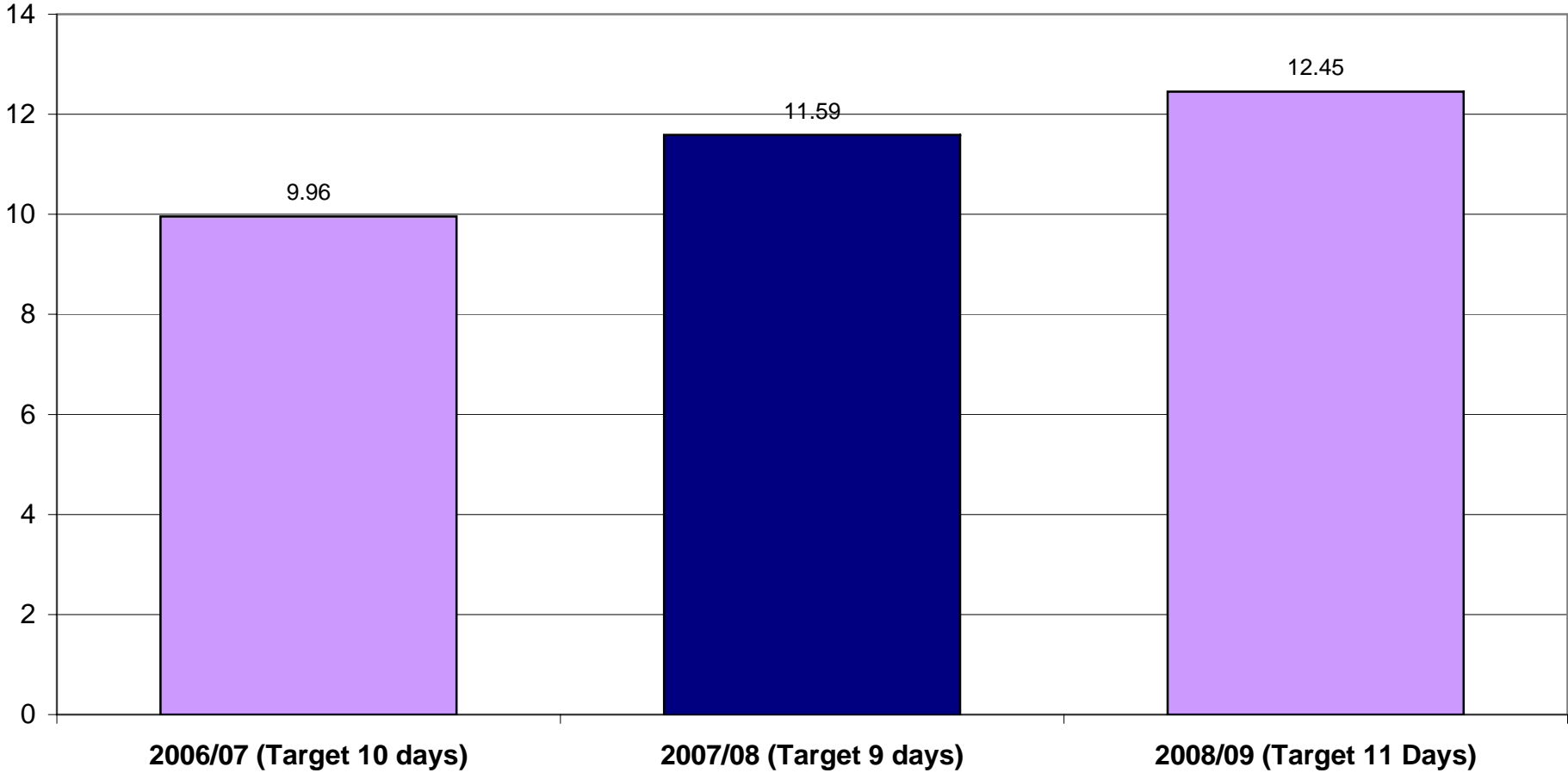
10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1. Members note the information considered in this report and identify issues which future reports should focus upon.

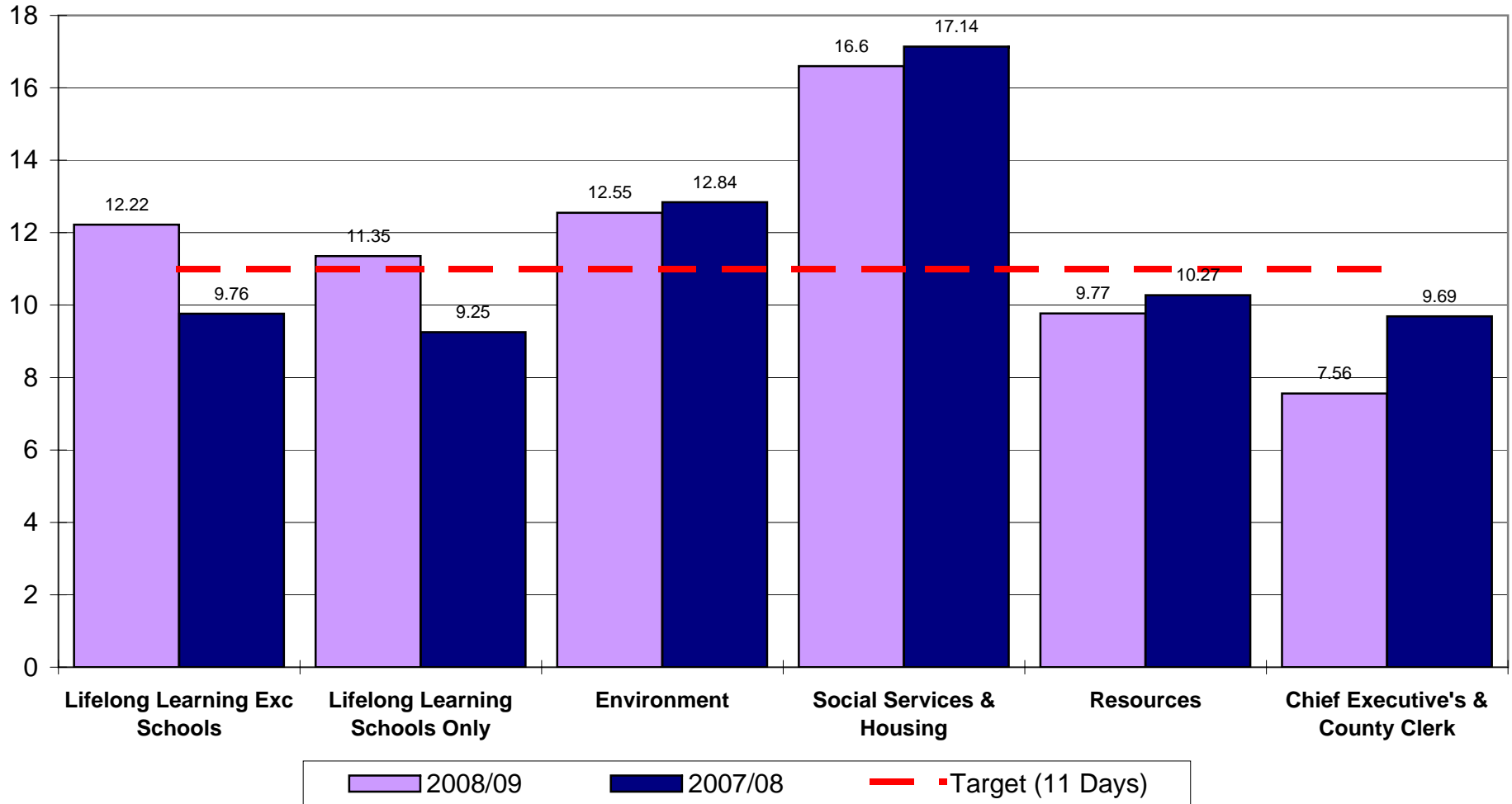
Denbighshire County Council Average Number of Days Lost per Employee March 2009



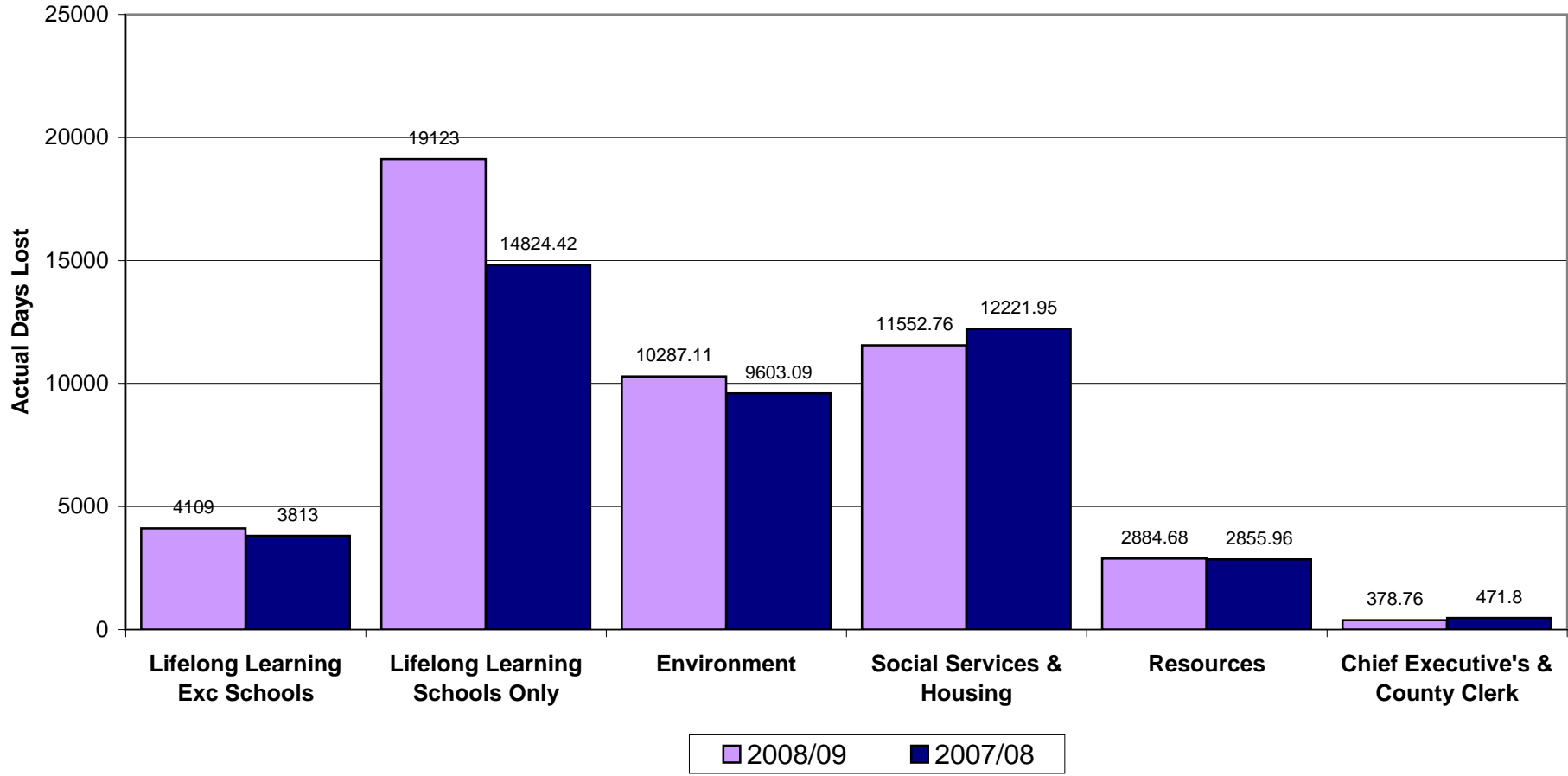
**Denbighshire County Council
Average Number of Days Lost per Employee
April 2008 - March 2009**



Denbighshire County Council Average Number of Days Lost per Directorate Cumulative April 2008 - March 2009



DenbighshireCounty Council Actual Number of Days Lost per Directorate April 2008 - March 2009



Percentage of Completed Performance Appraisals - Period 01/04/2008 - 31/03/2009

Chief Exc's & County Clerks

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Chief Exec's	3	3	3	100.00%	100.00%
County Clerk's Legal	23	19	19	100.00%	
County Clerk's Admin	29	26	26	100.00%	
Totals	55	48	48	100.00%	

Resources

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Central Personnel	35	33	33	100.00%	88.41%
Customer Care	33	27	25	92.59%	
Finance	174	153	123	80.39%	
ICT	48	42	42	100.00%	
Internal Audit	11	11	11	100.00%	
Strategic Policy Unit	13	10	10	100.00%	
Totals	314	276	244	88.41%	

Environment

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Development Services	78	71	69	97.18%	90.87%
Finance & Performance	129	66	66	100.00%	
Environmental Services	568	507	463	91.32%	
Planning & Public Protection	112	100	100	100.00%	
Transport & Infrastructure	72	62	42	67.74%	
Tourism, Culture & Countryside	88	70	56	80.00%	
Totals	1047	876	796	90.87%	

Social Services & Housing

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Adult Services	527	434	335	77.19%	83.51%
Children's Services	107	94	87	92.55%	
Children & YP Partnerships	7	3	2	66.67%	
Business Support	46	34	34	100.00%	
Housing Services	88	84	84	100.00%	
Totals	775	649	542	83.51%	

Life Long Learning

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Library & Information services	83	74	59	79.73%	91.21%
Partnership & Inclusion	222	184	178	96.74%	
Planning & Performance	23	18	15	83.33%	
School Improvement	70	54	49	90.74%	
Totals	398	330	301	91.21%	

Totals

Total Employees	Total No. of Appraisals	Overall % of Completed Appraisals
2179	1931	88.62%

Percentage of Completed Performance Appraisals - Period 01/01/2008 - 31/03/2009

Chief Exc's & County Clerks

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Chief Exec's	3	3	3	100.00%	100.00%
County Clerk's Legal	23	19	19	100.00%	
County Clerk's Admin	29	26	26	100.00%	
Totals	55	48	48	100.00%	

Resources

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Central Personnel	35	33	33	100.00%	88.77%
Customer Care	33	27	25	92.59%	
Finance	174	153	124	81.05%	
ICT	48	42	42	100.00%	
Internal Audit	11	11	11	100.00%	
Strategic Policy Unit	13	10	10	100.00%	
Totals	314	276	245	88.77%	

Environment

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Development Services	78	71	69	97.18%	93.15%
Finance & Performance	129	66	66	100.00%	
Environmental Services	568	507	469	92.50%	
Planning & Public Protection	112	100	100	100.00%	
Transport & Infrastructure	72	62	55	88.71%	
Tourism, Culture & Countryside	88	70	57	81.43%	
Totals	1047	876	816	93.15%	

Social Services & Housing

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Adult Services	527	434	343	79.03%	85.05%
Children's Services	107	94	89	94.68%	
Children & YP Partnerships	7	3	2	66.67%	
Business Support	46	34	34	100.00%	
Housing Services	88	84	84	100.00%	
Totals	775	649	552	85.05%	

Life Long Learning

Department	Number of Employees	Number of Employees Eligible	No. of Appraisals	% complete	Overall % for Directorate
Library & Information services	83	74	64	86.49%	94.55%
Partnership & Inclusion	222	184	182	98.91%	
Planning & Performance	23	18	15	83.33%	
School Improvement	70	54	51	94.44%	
Totals	398	330	312	94.55%	

Totals

Total Employees	Total No. of Appraisals	Overall % of Completed Appraisals
2179	1973	90.55%

Report run on 07.04.09

AGENDA ITEM NO: 11**CABINET: FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

26 MAY 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Quarterly Performance Report	Councillor P J Marfleet J Williams
Modernising Education Action Plan Monitoring	Councillor H H Evans J Curran
Corporate Communications Strategy	Councillor H H Evans G Watson
Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Officers
Coastal SRA	Councillor D A J Thomas G Evans
Carbon Reduction Portfolio	Councillor P J Marfleet H Burkhalter
Denbighshire's School Meals Service – Part II	Councillors H H Evans / P A Dobb / E W Williams A Good / S Parker
23 JUNE 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Final Revenue Accounts 2008-2009	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Tourism Strategy for North Wales	Councillor D A J Thomas P Murphy
Joint Denbighshire and Conwy Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) – Annual Update	Councillor M M Jones N Francis
Council's Response to the Pennington Report – Public Inquiry into Sept 2005 Outbreak of E.coli 0157 in S Wales	Councillor S Frobisher, Councillor H H Evans, Councillor J Thompson Hill I Prys Jones / G Boase / E Jones
Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Officers
Safeguarding / Corporate Accountabilities Framework	Councillor M M Jones N Francis / Heidi Evans
Appointment of EDRMS Supplier – Part II	Councillor P J Marfleet T Fleming

14 JULY 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Officers
Approval of Outline Business Case - for the procurement of Food Waste Treatment Capacity	Councillor E W Williams S Parker
DCC / CCBC Planning & PP Collaboration (detailed agreement)	Councillors S Frobisher / E W Williams G Boase
Denbighshire's Revised Welsh Language Scheme	Councillor H H Evans D W Davies
NO CABINET MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN AUGUST 2009	
8 SEPTEMBER 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Equality Plan 2009-2011	Councillor R W Hughes K Beattie
Additional HMO Licensing	Councillor S Frobisher G Boase / Mannon Thomas
Pest Control Service for Schools	Councillor H H Evans and Councillor S Frobisher G Boase
Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Officers
29 SEPTEMBER 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Annual Treasury Management Report	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk

27 OCTOBER 2009	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2009-2010	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor J Thompson Hill R Parry
CET Performance Report	A Evans
Routine Reporting on Personnel	Councillor R W Hughes L Atkin / G Humphreys
Housing Revenue Account Budget	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Supporting People Operational Plan for 2010/11	Councillor P A Dobb Jenny Elliott
Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Officers

REPORT TO CABINET

CHAIR OF RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: COUNCILLOR G C EVANS

DATE: 28TH APRIL 2009

**SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:
ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT UNDER THE ANIMAL
WELFARE ACT 2006**

1 DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 That Cabinet support a recommendation made by the Resources Scrutiny Committee that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) increases the funding allocated to local authorities for the purpose of enforcement action under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.
- 1.2 That representations are made to the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Rural Affairs highlighting the imbalance that exists in the current funding allocation criteria.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 The introduction of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 gives local authorities the power to seize both farm and domestic animals where they have reason to believe the animals are being mistreated.
- 2.2 Whilst the WAG has provided some funding for the protection of 'companion animals' i.e. pets, this funding is allocated based on population, and the assumption that more people in urban areas are likely to keep pets than residents in rural areas.
- 2.3 Similar to many other rural authorities Denbighshire has a large farming community as well as a substantial number of people who rear and breed horses. The present funding from the WAG for animal health and welfare enforcement only partially takes into account this type of animal husbandry, it does not take into account the fact that horses require space and are more likely to be found in rural authorities.
- 2.4 Whilst the Animal Welfare Act 2006 does not impose a statutory duty on local authorities to enforce the requirements of the Act, the wording is such that local authorities have little choice but to adopt it and enforce its provisions. Members will be aware that the Council has recently been involved with a high profile case relating to the neglect and unnecessary suffering caused to horses and dogs.
- 2.5 Following receipt of a report on Animal Health and Welfare Enforcement at its meeting in February 2009 the Resources Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Council should establish a contingency fund for possession, investigation and appeals under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The Committee also recommended

that the Acting Chief Executive should write to the WAG requesting it to increase the funding allocated to local authorities for enforcement of the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. A letter was subsequently sent to the WAG, on 9 February, highlighting the points raised above.

- 2.6 In her response, dated 27 February, the Minister for Rural Affairs states that resources are more constrained than ever and, as the Assembly has set its budget for 2009-10 there is no scope for allocating any additional resources to this area at present. Whilst acknowledging the pressures encountered by local authorities in tackling animal welfare issues, the Minister emphasises that when the Animal Welfare Act 2006 was passed the expectation was that no additional resources would be spent on this particular area. The Minister also states that the WAG has set-aside funds for a period of three years under the Companion Animal Welfare Enhancement Scheme (CAWES). This money is intended for educational purposes - to raise information levels about animal welfare and to assist animal welfare groups to work with authorities in this field.
- 2.7 In view of the Minister's response Cabinet is requested to make further representations to the Minister underlining the financial pressures encountered by rural local authorities in enforcing the provisions of the Act, a situation which could be further exacerbated if the current economic climate persists, and seeking the WAG to redress the existing anomaly in the current funding allocation criteria which seems to favour urban authorities.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

Local Government Act 2000 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cost Implications:

No significant resource implications arise directly from the approval of the recommendation. However, if representations made to the WAG were successful and additional funding was made available from central government for enforcement action taken under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this would alleviate budgetary pressures within the Planning and Public Protection Service.

4.2 Staffing / Accommodation Implications:

No direct staffing or accommodation implications arise from this report.

4.3 IT Implications:

No direct IT implications arise from this report.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 Risks associated with not agreeing the recommendation/s

- that the Council is seen as continuing to incur high expenditure on enforcement action taken under the Act without drawing the WAG's attention to the financial burden that taking such action places on the Authority;
- continuing high expenditure on enforcement action could lead to resources being diverted from other service areas in order to meet the costs;
- as the enforcement of the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 is not a statutory duty, if a decision was taken not to enforce its requirements due to financial constraints the Council could be the subject of negative media coverage due to instances of neglected and maltreated animals within its boundaries.

5.2 Risks associated with agreeing the recommendation/s

None

6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

The Assembly consults with the Distribution Sub-Group (WAG and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) representatives) on the best distribution mechanism when funding for new responsibilities comes into the annual settlement. If however the total sum is small i.e. under £1m, no such consultation takes place. This particular additional funding was not consulted on. The Authority should highlight the inappropriateness of the formula used and seek to have it reviewed for future years through the established process i.e. DSG.

7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

The Acting Chief Executive; Chief Financial Officer; Corporate Director: Environment; Head of Planning and Public Protection and the Lead Member for Communities have been consulted on this recommendation and all responses received have been supportive.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Assessment of Impact on Corporate Priorities:

Animal welfare and any required enforcement action contribute to the regeneration agenda for the whole county.

8.2 Assessment of impact on the Vision, Community Strategy, Equalities and Sustainability:

Healthy and vibrant communities and rural areas contribute to the Council's vision of being 'Dynamic, Delightful and Different' and are vital to the County's long-term economic and environmental sustainability. The mistreatment of animals is

considered to be anti-social behaviour and may impact on community safety and the Community Strategy.

9 ACTION PLAN

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / DATE BY WHEN ACTION TO BE COMPLETED	ACTION TO BE REVIEWED & MONITORED BY / DATE TO BE MONITORED
Recommendation to Cabinet	Scrutiny Support Officer	28 April 2009
Representation to be made to the WAG's Minister for Rural Affairs	Lead Member for Communities	26 May 2009

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 10.1 supports the Resources Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that the WAG increases the funding it allocates local authorities for the purpose of enforcement action under the Animal Welfare Act 2006; and
- 10.2 makes representations to the WAG's Minister for Rural Affairs in relation to the above and highlighting the current imbalance that exists in the funding allocation criteria, and seeks the WAG to review the formula for future years through the established process of the Distribution Sub-Group.