



To: Members of the Communities  
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 8 June 2012

Direct Dial: 01824 712554

e-mail: [dcc\\_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dcc_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **9.30 am** on **THURSDAY, 14 JUNE 2012** in **CONFERENCE ROOM 1A, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN.**

Yours sincerely

G. Williams  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 1 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS PART OF THE MEETING**

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

#### **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

To appoint a Vice Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

#### **3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

**4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**5 MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)**

To receive the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2012 (copy enclosed)

**6 ESTYN ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION INSPECTION (Pages 9 - 12)**

To consider a report by the School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary (copy enclosed) which details the findings of the Estyn Inspection of the Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Community Education Partnership and seeks the Committee's observations on the Inspectors' recommendations.

**9.45 a.m.**

**7 BUS SERVICES AND REDUCTIONS (Pages 13 - 32)**

To consider a report by the Section Manager: Passenger Transport (copy enclosed) which provides information and seeks observations on changes to the way bus services are funded which will have a marked impact on fares and levels of service provided.

**10.15 a.m.**

**BREAK**

**8 EFFECTIVENESS OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION - DOG FOULING (Pages 33 - 40)**

To consider a report by the Senior Community Safety Enforcement Officer (copy enclosed) which provides details of historical, current and future methods of prevention and detection of dog fouling, and seeks the Committee's views on matters relating to enforcement action with regards to dog fouling

**11.00 a.m.**

**9 SINGLE ACCESS ROUTE TO HOUSING (SARTH) (Pages 41 - 82)**

To consider a joint report by the Project Officer and Housing Strategy Officer (copy enclosed). which provides an update on the progress made with the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) collaborative project and seeks the Committee's views on the Common Allocations Framework prior to proceeding to public consultation

**11.30 a.m.**

**10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 83 - 106)

To consider a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (copy enclosed) seeking a review of the committee's forward work programme and updating members on relevant issues.

**12.00 p.m.**

**11 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

To receive any updates from Committee representatives on various Council Boards and Groups

**PART II**

No items

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Councillors**

James Davies

Peter Evans

Carys Guy-Davies

Huw Hilditch-Roberts

Rhys Hughes

Win Mullen-James

Bob Murray

Joe Welch

Cefyn Williams

Cheryl Williams

Huw Williams

**Voting Co-opted Members for Education (Agenda Item No. 6 only)**

Ms C. Burgess

Mrs. G. Greenland

Ms. D. Houghton

Dr. D. Marjoram

Mr. J. Saxon

**COPIES TO:**

All Councillors for information

Press and Libraries

Town and Community Councils

This page is intentionally left blank

## COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 12 April 2012 at 9.30 am.

### PRESENT

Councillors David Smith (Chair), James Davies, Diana Hannam, Rhys Hughes and Cefyn Williams

**Observers:** Councillors William Cowie, Gwilym Evans and Gwyneth Kensler

### ALSO PRESENT

Principal Regeneration and Investment Strategy Officer (RW), Section Manager: Network Management (TT), Community Engagement Manager (DD), Business Transformation Project Coordinator (AB), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

### POINT OF NOTICE

The Chair congratulated Councillor Cefyn Williams on being one of the four county councillors standing unopposed in the forthcoming county council elections.

#### 1 APOLOGIES

Councillors Brian Blakeley, June Cahill, Richard Jones, Peter Owen, Selwyn Thomas and the Corporate Director Learning and Communities

#### 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interest had been raised.

#### 3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair declared that he intended to include for discussion the following matter which required urgent attention – **B5105 Mwrog Street, Ruthin.**

Councillor Rhys Hughes referred to recent negative publicity regarding traffic safety concerns relating to a section of Mwrog Street, Ruthin which campaigners had indicated was too narrow and hazardous for pedestrians. The Section Manager: Network Management reported upon a recent meeting held with residents to discuss their concerns and he advised that various options were being explored. The Chair commented that county councillors had not been involved in that meeting because of the purdah period and it was agreed to consider the matter further following the forthcoming county council elections.

***RESOLVED** that the position be noted and the issues raised regarding Mwrog Street, Ruthin be considered by the committee following the county council elections to be held in May 2012.*

#### 4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 1 March 2012 were submitted.

### **Matters Arising –**

Page 5 – Item No. 7 Changes to the Supporting People Strategy for 2012/14 and Supporting People Operational Plan for 2012/13 – In response to a question from the Chair the Scrutiny Coordinator advised that Cabinet had agreed the changes to the Strategy and Operational Plan at its meeting on 20 March 2012. Changes to the Regional and National Supporting People Programme would be considered by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee following the elections in May 2012.

Page 9 – Item No. 10 Scrutiny Work Programme – The Scrutiny Coordinator advised that the joint Task and Finish Group meeting established to consider proposals for the North Wales Safer Communities Board had been cancelled because proposals would not be developed until early summer. It was likely that a scrutiny committee would consider the proposals prior to their submission to Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2012 be received and approved as a correct record.

## **5 ETAPE CYMRU**

The Principal Regeneration and Investment Strategy Officer (PR&ISO) and Section Manager: Network Management (SM:NM) submitted a report (previously circulated) informing members of progress with the arrangements for the Etape Cymru 2012 cycling event since the committee's last meeting on 1 March 2012. The committee had previously resolved to endorse the road closure to allow the event to take place subject to a number of conditions.

Actions undertaken since the last meeting included –

- regular communication between the Council and Participate Sport (event organiser) and Wrexham County Borough Council
- production of an updated communication plan (circulated at the meeting) with an agreed route and timings for the temporary closure of the Horseshoe Pass (to ensure it remained open over lunchtime). Specific timings needed to be agreed for some surrounding roads and the route map would be finalised within the next two weeks
- consultation had been undertaken with town/community councils and county councillors along the route and a press release issued (Appendix 2 to the report)
- consultation and engagement had been undertaken with Council departments and relevant Lead Members
- the Safety Advisory Group had met to oversee traffic, transport and pedestrian management procedures (Appendix 3 & 4 to the report) and plans had been produced to address consultation, communication and traffic management issues identified in the debrief following last year's event

- initial meetings with key businesses had been held to discuss opportunities for them to engage and benefit from the event with future planned visits to businesses along the identified route once the route map and timings had been finalised, and
- a media launch of the event in Llangollen.

Unfortunately it had not been possible for Participate Sport to attend today's meeting but the officers expressed their confidence that the event organisers were addressing the issues identified as requiring attention and gave an undertaking to ensure that agreements reached over the event would be met. The PR&ISO also highlighted the publicity value of such events and economic benefits generated for Denbighshire as a visitor destination.

Members were reassured by Participate Sport's reputation and previous experience of organising cycle/sporting events and in hearing how they were effectively handling the arrangements to prevent a repeat of the problems encountered at last year's inaugural event. Councillor Rhys Hughes referred to his personal experience of dealing with representatives from Participate Sport, particularly at a meeting of Llantysilio Community Council when changes to the proposed route had been agreed which would ensure fewer people were affected over the event period. He also confirmed that the organisers had met with businesses to reassure them over the event. The SM:MN confirmed that businesses had been assured that the Horseshoe Pass would be open to traffic by 11.00 a.m. although some tidying up of the route may still be required after that time. Reference was also made to a cycling event at the Clwydian Range and the potential for other routes as a consequence of Etape Cymru. In response to a question from Councillor Gwilym Evans, the SM:MN confirmed that the council was not providing financial support for the event but a significant amount of officer time had been spent in helping to organise the event which would be absorbed by the service.

The Chair reminded members that a report detailing the impact of the 2012 event would be submitted to the committee for consideration in October 2012.

***RESOLVED*** that the progress report on the arrangements for the Etape Cymru 2012 cycling event be received and noted.

## **6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Community Engagement Manager (CEM) submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' support for the approach in developing a structured methodology for the Council's consultation and engagement activities. The approach sought to ensure that community engagement was streamlined and carried out to a consistently high standard throughout the county.

In light of the committee's previous comments on the draft strategy a section on consultation and engagement with elected members had been included (Appendix 1 to the report referred). The CEM updated members on progress made with the 'Let's Keep Talking' Community Engagement Strategy and elaborated upon particular engagement activities including –

- On-line Consultation Management System – potential introduction of a dedicated ‘consultation page’ linked to the website providing software for creating surveys, analysing data and generating reports, and the advantages of adopting such a system
- New approaches to engaging with young people – proposals to deploy young students to act on the council’s behalf to engage and consult with fellow young people using social networks and social media in social situations or at locations where they naturally congregate
- Local Service Board (LSB) Communication Plan – a draft plan would be presented at the next LSB meeting setting out overall communication objectives: supporting the LSB in communicating with others; key messages and a communication work plan.

The Strategy was being produced in an easy read format and would be subject to further consultation before being adopted as a guide for services and members. The committee welcomed the inclusion of a section within the strategy to deal specifically with elected members. In discussing the report with the CEM members raised the following key issues –

- councillors were not always kept informed of issues affecting their wards and there was an inconsistency of approach
- when alerting members of particular issues within their specific wards consideration should also be given to the impact on the wider community and contact should also be made with other elected members if the issue could impact on other ward areas. Paragraph 9.2 of the ‘Community Engagement Strategy’ should be amended accordingly to ensure that this happened
- assurances were sought that officers were being made aware of the protocol for engaging with councillors; that they could easily identify relevant ward members, and that clear, accurate boundary maps were readily available
- officers may be involved with town/community councils in particular activities and it should be recognised that county councillors may not be aware of such issues and needed to be kept informed
- the need to ensure that up to date information for town/community councils was available on the council’s website with e-mail links where appropriate
- it was suggested that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chair’s Group consider which committee was best placed to scrutinise the Local Service Board.

The CEM agreed to include references within the strategy to reflect members’ comments and further improve communication with councillors and ensure officers were made aware of the requirements within the protocol. He advised of the intention to visit departments to raise awareness of the strategy and the Charter between the Town/Community Councils and the County Council and officers responsibilities in that regard. In terms of accessing information the CEM agreed to investigate the accuracy of the ward maps and to ensure there was a clear process to easily identify ward members for particular areas. He would also check that the information provided by town/community councils had been recorded on Denbighshire’s website. In response to a question from Councillor Rhys Hughes, the CEM advised that there were no plans to amalgamate Area Member Groups which would require a change to the council’s constitution.



**RESOLVED** that, subject to members' comments as detailed above, the committee supports the approach outlined in the report in developing a structured methodology for the Council's consultation and engagement activities to ensure the Authority adopts a professional, co-ordinated and cost effective approach.

At this juncture (10.25 a.m.) the committee adjourned for a refreshment break.

## **7 GETTING CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Business Transformation Project Co-ordinator (BTPC) submitted a report (previously circulated) updating members on progress with work undertaken by the Getting Closer to the Community Programme Board since the last report considered by the committee on 27 October 2011. The 'Getting Closer to the Community' Action Plan (Appendix 1) had been attached to the report.

Following a rationalisation process the latest Action Plan featured 29 actions across the following three priority areas –

- (1) Representation and Engagement – How to engage with communities
- (2) Service Delivery – Develop the right culture and attitudes
- (3) Community Development – Community, Enrichment & Empowerment

The actions had been amended to reflect the comments and concerns raised by members at their meeting on 27 October and the BTPC and Community Engagement Manager (CEM) updated members on those issues and further discussed matters with members relating to the following –

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – much work had been undertaken since October and a more robust system of recording complaints and feedback to complaints had been introduced. Members were pleased that feedback had been improved and Councillor James Davies suggested it would be useful to provide a contact name in e-mail responses to councillors. Councillor Gwilym Evans asked that councillors receive a list of complaints dealt with in their particular ward areas on a monthly basis which could be provided electronically. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring that all councillors utilised the CRM system to register issues and complaints and did not approach individual officers to resolve matters. With regard to Priority 2, Action 2 (page 45 of the Action Plan) the BTPC agreed to change the measure for improving the Council's responses to complaints to better reflect the outcome to be achieved.

Regeneration – robust actions had been introduced to ensure delivery of the strategy for better engagement with the business community and most of the last Programme Board meeting had been dedicated to that issue. An options appraisal in each area (Coastal, Central and Dee Valley) would be carried out to ensure a robust strategy to deal with the business community and formalise engagement with them.

Community Funding – a paper would be submitted to CET about how funding could be better allocated to communities for project delivery. As that work was in the

early stages the matter would likely be brought back to this committee for further consideration. Members reiterated their concerns regarding the current lack of structure or guidelines to address funding allocation together with the onerous application process which disadvantaged applicants for smaller projects. The BTPC responded that the paper to CET would seek to address the allocation of community funding to ensure a fair and equitable process of identifying projects and develop a criteria to be met before funding would be released. She added that the application process would also be made clearer.

Councillor Diana Hannam highlighted the perception that the Council allocated more funding to projects in Rhyl to the detriment of other parts of the county which she felt had been due in part to European grants allocated to Rhyl's most deprived wards. In order to dispel that misconception she asked that an analysis of expenditure within the County be undertaken to provide a true reflection of the Council's spend and identify any disadvantaged areas. The Chair agreed that a breakdown of figures would be useful.

During consideration of the Action Plan the officers responded to members' questions, particularly regarding the residents survey, Community Development Fund and Community Forums. The CEM explained that alternatives to the Community Forums needed to be considered due to lack of attendance and indicated that more focus may be placed on specific service areas engaging with communities and clients and work would likely be undertaken with Local Service Board colleagues in that regard. It was agreed that any proposals to replace the Community Forums be submitted to the committee for consideration.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Cefyn Williams asked whether it would be possible for local ward members to be present at Citizenship Ceremonies for applicants living in Denbighshire. The request had been made to him by Councillor Gwyneth Kensler who had indicated that some Denbigh residents had taken part in a Citizenship Ceremony and had been disappointed to note that the local member had not been present. The Chairman, Councillor William Cowie advised that the Lord Lieutenant and he (as Chairman of the County Council) were the only officials in attendance and therefore he would welcome the presence of a local member. Members also supported the proposal and it was agreed that the matter be raised with the Member Support and Development Manager as the responsible officer.

**RESOLVED** that –

- (a) *subject to members' comments as detailed above, the Getting Closer to the Community Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be supported;*
- (b) *a report on the draft proposals for alternative arrangements to replace Community Forums be submitted to the committee in September or October 2012, and*
- (c) *the Community Engagement Manager approach the Member Support and Development Manager with a view to providing an opportunity for local members to attend future Citizenship Ceremonies for applicants living in Denbighshire.*

## 8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the committee's future work programme and providing an update on relevant issues. A draft forward work programme (Appendix 1); Cabinet's forward work programme (Appendix 2), and Progress on Committee Resolutions (Appendix 3) had been attached to the report.

Members were also asked to consider whether topics previously identified were still relevant for future scrutiny and to consider future scrutiny of the work streams arising from the Rhyl Going Forward Programme. During consideration of the committee's work programme members scoped the purpose and expected outcomes of a number of report items they wished to scrutinise in the future and agreed to –

- receive reports on the effectiveness of enforcement action with regard to dog fouling and Public Transport within the County (including TAIH and rural transport) at an early stage following the forthcoming county council elections
- refer the item on Challenging Behaviour and its impact on Council services to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
- receive future reports on the Quality and Provision of Community and Education Facilities; Community Sustainability; Flood Risk Areas within Denbighshire; Review of Heritage and Arts Assets, and Disposal of Council Buildings, Property and Land
- defer consideration of the relevance of particular items for future scrutiny until after May's county council elections relating to Access to the Countryside; Waste Management Provision for Business and Schools; Transfer of Services to Town Councils; the effectiveness of CCTV, and Wind Farms
- delete the report scheduled for September 2012 on Ysgol Dinas Bran as the transport issue had been virtually resolved
- scrutinise the three major projects/work streams arising from the Rhyl Going Forward Programme and dedicate their meeting on 13 September 2012 to that purpose. Members asked that the meeting be held in Russell House, Rhyl and that outside organisations involved with the Programme be invited to attend. It was also requested that the meeting be drawn to the attention of local residents so they may also observe proceedings. Following that meeting members felt it would be useful for the committee to undertake a tour of the key sites around Rhyl.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the above amendments and requests, the forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

## 9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No reports from committee representatives had been received.

Prior to the close of the meeting the Chair took the opportunity to thank members for their service on the committee and conveyed his best wishes for the future. Councillor Rhys Hughes indicated that he had enjoyed his time on the committee and thanked the Chair for his contribution.

**The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.**

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2012</b>
<b>Lead Member/Officer:</b>	<b>Lead Member for Education/ Head of School Improvement and Inclusion</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Estyn Adult Community Education Inspection</b>

---

**1. What is the report about?**

To review the February 2012 Estyn inspection of the Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Community Education Partnership

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 To consider the findings of the Estyn Inspection of the Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Community Education Partnership

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 To review the conclusions of the Estyn inspection and comment on the associated recommendations.

**4. Report details.**

- 4.1 The adult community education partnership for Conwy and Denbighshire called Cyswllt Dysgu, was subject to an Estyn Inspection during the first week of February 2012. The major partners include Conwy and Denbighshire LAs, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, Coleg Harlech/WEA(N) and Deeside College (Coleg Llysfasi).
- 4.2 During the inspection through the analysis of the self-evaluation, performance data, lesson observations and meetings with stakeholders Estyn aimed to answer three key questions:  
Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?  
Key Question 2: How good is provision?  
Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?  
All three Key Questions were judged by Estyn to be Good. Inspectors also provided an overall judgement on the partnerships current performance which was considered to be Good and the prospects for improvement were considered to be Excellent. At this time this is the best grade profile in Wales for adult community education.

- 4.3 The partnership's current performance is good because:
- learners achieve good standards in the classroom. Their success rates compare well to national comparators;
  - the quality of teaching and assessment is good or better in nearly all cases;
  - providers work well together to plan the curriculum and align provision to national and local priorities; and
  - the quality of leadership and management is good. There is a good level of strategic planning and good arrangements in place for quality assurance and planning for improvement.
- 4.4 The partnership's prospects for improvement are excellent because:
- there is an improving trend in success rates for learners;
  - the high level of trust between partners and commitment to a shared vision have led to good improvement in the standards achieved by learners and in the quality of teaching and assessment since the last inspections;
  - the excellent quality of partnership work secures a high standard of provision planning and quality of resources available to learners; and
  - the good quality assurance systems and the quality of planning for improvement have improved standards for learners.
- 4.5 The Estyn inspection report highlighted that learners from different backgrounds and levels of ability achieve good standards in their work. Many learners with basic skills needs successfully improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners of all ages perform equally well. Older learners make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Learners from deprived backgrounds achieve good standards in their work.
- 4.6 Not enough Welsh speaking learners use their Welsh language skills well enough as a medium for learning or for assessing their progress.
- 4.7 Most learners improve their confidence by taking part in learning. A few learners consider that learning has transformed their lives. As a result they are better able to manage their lives and support their children.
- 4.9 Teaching is good or better in most of the sessions observed by the inspection team. In these sessions, tutors plan well, give learners good levels of literacy support and help learners to make good progress.

## **5. Leadership and partnerships**

- 5.1 The partnership's leaders provide good leadership. They communicate their vision and strategic aims effectively to partner organisations and members through the Cyswllt Dysgu strategic plan. The clarity of the plan makes sure all partner organisations understand what they need to achieve. Partners have a long and successful track record of

working together to achieve their goals.

- 5.2 Leaders collaborate well with a broad range of other key groups, such as the Local Service Board for Conwy and Denbighshire, and with local regeneration groups such as the Rhyl City strategy. The partnership has taken a firm decision to use adult learning to improve the employment skills of local learners.
- 5.3 The partnership has good arrangements for self-assessment, with clear objectives and timescales. As a result the partnership is able to pull together and evaluate the work carried out by all partners. The self-assessment process is effective in including the views of learners, staff and all partners and organisations involved in adult community learning.
- 5.4 Estyn considers that partnership working is excellent, it has worked very well together over a number of years and has developed high levels of trust. The excellent collaborative working of the partnership improves the standards achieved by learners and the quality of teaching and assessment.

## **6. Estyn's Recommendations**

6.1 In order to improve the partnership needs to:

- R1 increase the number of classes and learning activities in which learners achieve excellent standards in their work;
- R2 increase the amount of excellent teaching and assessment;
- R3 promote a common approach to safeguarding to raise the standard of all partnership members' policies and procedures; and
- R4 promote and improve the use of Welsh as a medium of communication for learning.

## **7. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

7.1 It supports key aspects of the Big Plan, service business plans as well as contributing to Modernising Education as a corporate priority.

## **8. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

8.1 No specific costs have been identified for the inspection or post inspection action plan. All activity is supported by the Welsh Government ACL grant and college funding.

## **9. What consultations have been carried out?**

9.1 Consultation has been carried out with the partners that support adult

community education within the authority and supporting organisations.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 The reputational and political risks to the authority are minimal as the outcomes from the inspection are good and excellent. The risk has been minimised by a significant investment of resource into ACL by all the partners particularly the FE colleges.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

No legal requirements but local authority inspections are mandatory.

**Contact Officer:**

School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary

Tel: 01824 708026



**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14th June 2012

**Lead Member/Officer:** Joint Head of Highways & Infrastructure

**Report Author:** Section Manager: Passenger Transport

**Title:** Bus Services and Reductions

---

## **1. What is the report about?**

To advise members of how bus services are organised, changes to the way in which the Welsh Government (WG) funds bus & related services, the consequences for the County Council, proposed mitigation and to start a consultation process.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information and seek observations on changes to the way bus services are funded which will have a marked impact on fares and levels of service provided.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That:

- 3.1 the report be noted;
- 3.2 officers consult with the wider community as regards potential bus service cuts; and
- 3.3 following the consultation, the Joint Head of Highways & Infrastructure produces a further report, for Cabinet, summarising the results of the consultation and proposing specific measures, in line with the timescale demanded by the Welsh Government and the budget available.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Bus services in Denbighshire are the best they have ever been, certainly since the very lean years of the very early 1970s. This follows increasing numbers travelling free of charge under the Cerdyn Cymru arrangements for people over 60 (and those with certain disabilities). It reflects additional County Council & WG funding that has helped fund newer, accessible vehicles and provided improvements in frequency.
- 4.2 Bus services in Wales (as elsewhere other than in London & Northern Ireland) fall into three categories:

- Commercial services. These are funded largely by passengers paying fares or by free travel reimbursement in lieu of fares (for those over 60 or with certain disabilities). Most daytime services in the north of Denbighshire are commercial, together with the X94 and service 5 (both serving Corwen & Llangollen) in the south. The County Council has no direct control over this type of service.
  - Contract services. These are socially necessary services that are subsidised by the County Council where an operator is not prepared to run commercially. Much of the network to the south of the county is under contract.
  - Other services. These tend to be hybrid services that operate commercially under some form of agreement, with additional funding from the County Council. An example is the X50 bus service from Denbigh & Ruthin to Wrexham.
- 4.3 The status of each bus service in Denbighshire is summarised in Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The bus network has evolved incrementally over a number of years, particularly since the deregulation of bus services in 1986. This follows commercial operators' changes and the County Council's reactions to them and, in some cases, funding opportunities that have presented themselves.
- 4.5 The level of service provided in any given area depends upon a number of factors such as its population size & demographic make-up; and the proximity to shopping, work, education & leisure facilities. The level of service will differ at varying times of day and days of the week. Urban areas can, of course, support higher levels of bus service, particularly during the daytime, and are usually able to sustain a commercial level of service. The proportion of commercial mileage in Denbighshire is approximately 85 per cent.
- 4.6 Denbighshire has been fortunate to enjoy a relatively stable and growing local bus market. Commercial operators, especially in the north, have been able to maintain and even grow services in recent years. Most inter-urban corridors elsewhere have seen improvements, either commercially or following the receipt of internal or external funding.
- 4.7 Where commercial operators have proposed changes that potentially impact negatively on passengers, following an assessment, County Council officers have generally been able to fill gaps in provision. Key determinants include considering whether the service is used for work or education purposes; rurality (where there is often no alternative to the bus); time of day; day of the week; and the likely cost of the provision.

- 4.8 WG is changing the way it helps support bus services in the future. Bus operators receive revenue from several sources, all of which are or will be affected by recent WG announcements. These were initially made in either January or February 2012, too late for consideration under the Council's budget pressures. For the County Council, this includes a reduction in Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG) from £396,000 to £288,000, over a full year.
- 4.9 Subsequently, WG has offered a minimum of three months' transitional funding, possibly extending to six or even nine. Its extension is dependent upon a national, strategic ministerial review of funding that may see radical change. At the time of writing, the Minister has set up a review group and Denbighshire is represented via Taith, the regional transport consortium. It is too early to predict the outcome but it might include consortia rather than operators receiving Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). This may afford the consortia and therefore each county council more control over commercial bus services. The Minister is very clear in that he wishes in future to deal more with the four consortia than individual county councils.
- 4.10 Notwithstanding these potential future funding changes, the County Council needs to plan for an imminent reduction in WG bus funding. It needs to be in a position to react swiftly.
- 4.11 Appendix 2 gives details of the way in which bus services are funded and the impact of the WG's changes. Appendix 3 suggests where future changes might be made. This will need to accommodate service pressures for changes to bus services and the modest overspend in 2011/12. The savings required are approximately £145,000 over a full year on combined 2011/12 budget of £911,000. Most of the proposed changes will prove unpalatable and, for the reasons stated in Appendix 3, it is recommended that the Council consults. Stakeholders may put forward alternatives they feel are more palatable.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Cuts in passenger transport services have a negative impact on corporate priorities especially for

(a) older and younger people (who are most reliant on public transport) and

(b) in terms of the environment (higher fares & fewer services will discourage bus use and increase car journeys).

Additionally, they impact on the Wales National Transport Priorities of sustainability, supporting economic growth and social inclusion. It impacts additionally on disabled people.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1 Up to £146,000 in a full year plus up to a possible further £60,000. In addition, officers may not know the level of reaction as regards commercial operations (because of BSOG and FCT reductions) for some time. Should further commercial services be withdrawn, it is conceivable that they will be carrying more passengers than current supported services, by virtue of their being commercial for a long period.
- 6.2 The affects are shown in the Appendix 2.
- 6.3 If commercial services are withdrawn, the Council may need to consider the priority of providing these against existing supported services.
- 6.4 The impact of the cuts will affect the environment (see 5 (b) above).

**7. What consultations have been carried out?**

- 7.1 This is an initial paper that considers the need for future consultation.

**8. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The reductions to WG funding will create a cost pressure in the service. In the current climate, there is an expectation that services attempt to contain pressures within existing resources. The full impact of this in financial and service delivery terms should also be highlighted during the forthcoming service challenge process and in the budget round in the autumn.

**9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

Political — cuts proposed during an election period

Financial — in not bringing in the cuts immediately.

Reputational — in being unable to meet contract operators' requests for additional funding to mitigate BSOG reductions and in shouldering negative PR.

Environmental — potential for increased car journeys.

Corporate — reductions during a time when there are corporate strategies to assist an ageing demographic (on average, at least 40 pc of bus users are 60 or over) or younger people (another important segment of bus users).

**Contact Officer:**

Section Manager: Passenger Transport

Tel:01824 706847

### Appendix 1—Denbighshire Bus Services (service status)

Service	From/to	Peak	Off-peak weekdays	Evenings	Sundays
1, 1A 2	Ruthin – Mold	Contract	Contract		
X1	Ruthin – Mold - Chester		Contract		
5	Corwen – Llangollen – Wrexham	Commercial	Commercial	Contract	Commercial
5A	Chirk – Llangollen – Wrexham				Commercial
X5	Corwen - Ruthin - Denbigh	Contract	Contract		
6	Denbigh Town/Llanefydd		Contract		
11	Rhyl – Prestatyn – Chester			Contract	
12	Rhyl – Llandudno	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial
13	Prestatyn – Glan Clwyd – Llandudno	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial
14	Denbigh – Mold	Contract	Contract		
18/19	Rhyl – Prestatyn – Holywell	Contract	Contract		
35/36	Rhyl – Prestatyn – Dyserth – Rhyl	Commercial	Commercial	Contract	Contract
38	Prestatyn Town		Commercial		
45/46	Rhyl – Kinnel Bay – Towyn – Bodelwyddan – Glan Clwyd	Contract	Contract		
47	Rhyl Town		Contract		
X50	Denbigh – Ruthin – Wrexham	Contract	Agreement	Contract	Contract
51	Denbigh – Rhyl	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial	Commercial
X52	Denbigh – Rhyl	Commercial	Commercial	Contract	Contract
54	Rhyl – St Asaph Business Park	Contract			
62	Denbigh - Nantglyn - Llansannan		Contract		
64	Llangollen - Chirk - Ceiriog Valley		Contract		
70	Villages south of Ruthin to Ruthin		Contract		

73	Ruthin Town		Contract		
76	Denbigh - Llandyrnog - Ruthin - Graigfechan		Contract		
77	Ruthin - Llanelidan		Contract		
83/84	Rhyl Town	Agreement	Agreement	Agreement	
91	Melin y Wig - Corwen - Llangollen		Contract		
X94	Barmouth - Corwen - Llangollen - Wrexham	Agreement	Agreement	Contract	Contract
95	Melin y Wig - Corwen - Bryneglwys - Wrexham		Contract		

## **Appendix 2—Changes to funding, implications and consultation**

The changes affect the following areas:

### **Direct subsidy from local authorities**

1. The County Council financially supports a raft of mainly rural and inter-urban bus services that would otherwise not operate without subsidy. Funding comes from in-house budgets and from the WG's Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG). Nationally in 2012/13, WG is reducing LTSG from £11m to £8m. All authorities will receive 27 per cent less. For Denbighshire, this amounts to £108,000 over a full year (from £396,000 to £288,000). With the transitional arrangements, this will result in a cut of between £54,000 and £81,000 in the first year.
2. The position regarding the Highways & Infrastructure budget is that the £515,000 budget is continuing unchanged.

### **Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG)**

3. This is effectively a fuel duty rebate. Operators of both commercial and contract services are entitled to claim back about 47p per litre of the fuel duty they pay. From 1st September 2012 rather than April as initially planned, WG is reducing this by 25 per cent to 35p. This brings it into line with a similar change in England. The difference is that English operators have benefited from 18 months' notice, so could better plan for such a shift.
4. Even though the decrease was deferred, operators had no time to reverse planned increases in bus fares. These were already perceived as high but operators have little alternative. GHA put up fares by some 20 per cent. Arriva has increased adult fares and altered the child concession from half to a third off. It has withdrawn return fares. Such increases will result in fewer people travelling by bus. This will impact on the viability of some commercial services and may result in further withdrawals requiring Council consideration. Locally, to date, Arriva has reduced the daytime frequency of its Denbigh to Rhyl service back to every 20 minutes. Neither GHA nor Arriva can rule out further changes. The position in Denbighshire is perhaps less uncertain than areas to its west, owing to the overall high performance of Arriva's Rhyl garage.
5. It is estimated that, for the commercial services in the area, the impact of WG's changes will be around £180,000 p.a. (over a full year), some of which will be recouped in higher fares. There will inevitably be a lag in notification of commercial changes or withdrawals, as operators continue to assess the implications of the BSOG reduction.
6. In terms of contracted, subsidised services to which the Council contributes, one operator has so far requested an increase to help mitigate the loss of BSOG and other inflationary pressures. If they were

all to ask the Council for the entire shortfall, this could be in the region of £60,000 over a full year.

7. As stated in paragraph 4.9 of the main report, future BSOG is under consideration by the minister.

### **Free concessionary travel (FCT) reimbursement**

8. This is not a subsidy as such. It is an indirect payment to operators to reimburse them for carrying older and certain disabled people free of charge.
9. Operators are paid for each free journey undertaken. WG applies a modifying factor for each journey. This reduces the claim because it assumes that more people will travel because the scheme is free than had they paid a fare. This was 73.59 per cent. WG initially reduced the modifying factor to 70 per cent but, from April 2012, has subsequently reverted back to the previous figure. Depending upon budgets, WG may decide to alter the modifying factor in the future while still expecting operators to carry the same number of passengers but, for now, this area is of less concern. Were this to change, this will inevitably result in “ordinary” fare paying passengers shouldering an additional fares burden.

### **The Community Transport Concessionary Fares Initiative (CTCFI)**

10. This affects Denbighshire Dial-a-Ride (DAR), an organisation that provides door-to-door services for people in north Denbighshire who cannot use bus services. Over the last four years, DAR has benefited from being one of the CTCFI so-called pilots that enabled DAR’s members to travel free on the same basis as they would had they been able to use a bus. The pilots were designed to demonstrate whether CTCFI could or should be applied elsewhere. The scheme has been threatened annually. In 2012/13, WG will no longer be supporting the pilots although, again, there is an element of transitional funding, for three months. This means DAR will be without funding of some £86,000 p.a. (over a full year).
11. Unlike the other grants or reimbursements above, DAR was given more reasonable notice of this withdrawal but it nevertheless places this charitable organisation in some jeopardy. Officers have been working with DAR to try to make them more robust encouraging DAR to quote for contract-type work, with some limited success. In addition, the BSOG reduction will affect DAR. The consequence for DAR is either a reduced service or increase Council subsidy (the Council currently contributes some £27,000 per annum, including for Night Rider, an evening transport scheme for older people in the north of the county).



## On bus revenue (cash fares)

12. Operators have already put up fares, as a result of some of the above.

## Cumulative Effect

13. The cumulative effect of these changes will have a significant impact on and further weaken the provision of local bus services. In addition, insurance, labour and fuel costs continue to increase, with diesel fuel expected to be a significant issue in 2012, with operators expecting a minimum 11 per cent rise.

14. The full year financial impact of WG's decisions on operators may be summarised as follows, all shown on a full year basis:

Grant/reimbursement	Affecting	Impact	Estimate/Actual
LTSG in Denbighshire	Bus operators, DAR	£108,000	Actual
BSOG	Commercial operators & DAR	£180,000	Estimates
	Contract operators	£60,000	
FCT	Bus operators	£0	Estimate
CTCFI	DAR	<u>£86,000</u>	Actual
<b>WORST CASE TOTAL</b>		<b><u>£434,000</u></b>	

15. Other than as mentioned above, the full impact on commercial services is still not yet fully known, as this will lag. The impact on supported services means an immediate reduction in budget. In 2011/12, the overall transport subsidy comprised:

Highways & Infrastructure	£515,400
LTSG	<u>£396,000</u>
Total	£911,400

LTSG additionally helps fund bus services and community transport plus an element of LTSG towards staffing, publicity and bus infrastructure. Assuming a standstill Council budget, the change for 2012/13 is as follows:

Highways & Infrastructure	£515,000
LTSG	<u>£288,000</u>
Total	£803,000

The 27 per cent funding cut in LTSG equates to an overall reduction of 12 per cent, over a full year. The transitional funding in 2012/13 reduces the impact in the first year.

16. Note that approximately £168,000 of the current budget is effectively protected because services carry workers and/or students, or form part

of a wider agreement with an operator over the purchase of new buses (e.g. £20,000 per annum over five years for the Rhyl Town Services).

17. It is therefore necessary to reduce the local transport expenditure in line with the revised budget. This is by a minimum of £108,000. It may also be necessary to reduce this by up to a further £60,000 should contractors require additional funding because of a drop in BSOG.
18. At the close of 2011/12, there was a modest overspend on bus service support of £12,000 that will need to be reduced.
19. Previous budgetary pressures have tended to be accommodated within the budget. In addition, there are two new unmet pressures, the first of which is significant:
20. Notification of the main pressure came too late for the budget setting process, following the relocation of eye clinic services in May from the former H M Stanley to Abergele Hospital. The site at H M Stanley was perfectly placed for frequent bus services between Ruthin, Denbigh, St Asaph, Rhuddlan and Rhyl. The new location, with up to 10 buses a day to Abergele only, is far less convenient for public transport. In spite of the dire budgetary position, there remain calls for a service, the most basic of which is by demand responsive community transport that may still prove to be inflexible but will cost £20,000 as compared to an off-peak bus service of £55-£61,000. To provide for this additional link there would need to be a commensurate reduction in bus services.
21. There is a call from residents of Tremeirchion who enjoy a six-days-a-week bus service to Rhyl for there to be a limited service to Denbigh. This, in theory, can be provided by withdrawing the Rhyl service on one or two days, though this will increase operator costs marginally, as the bus needs to be in Rhyl for subsequent work. This will increase costs marginally by £6,000, for which a subsequent reduction is required.

### Potential Cuts

22. The cumulative position regarding budgets over a full (in 2013/14 and subsequent years) is as follows:

Council budget	£515,000	
LTSG	<u>£396,000</u>	£911,000
Expected expenditure	£923,000	
<u>Less</u> Reduction in WG funding	£108,000	
<u>Less</u> Pressures – inflation	£24,000	
<u>Less</u> Pressures – additional services	<u>£26,000</u>	<u>£765,000</u>
Shortfall (full year)		<u>£146,000</u>

That for 2012/13, with transitional funding, is likely to be:

Council budget	£515,000	
LTSG	<u>£396,000</u>	£911,000
Expected expenditure	£923,000	
<u>Less</u> Reduction in WG funding	£54,000	
<u>Less</u> Pressures – inflation	£12,000	
<u>Less</u> Pressures – additional services	<u>£13,000</u>	<u>£844,000</u>
Shortfall (part year)		<u>£67,000</u>

As yet, it is unclear as to the amount of time expected for transitional funding. The figures above assume six months.

23. To accommodate pressures and inflation, the Council therefore needs to plan for a minimum reduction in the funding of £182,000 over a full year, this being the sum spent in 2011/12 less that available in 2013/14. Additionally, it would be prudent to consider a contingency of a further £60,000 over a full year, should this be required paragraph 17.
24. All bus and other passenger transport services supported by the Council are ranked according to their cost to the Council per passenger, in Appendix 3. Those seen most suitable for cuts or held in reserve are shown.
25. The methodology used in an attempt to identify cuts is as follows:
- Whether the cut can be made easily, with minimal impact
  - The cost to the council per passenger carried
  - Whether there is a cheaper alternative approach
  - Whether the services are rural, inter-urban or urban in nature
  - Whether they carry students and or workers
  - Whether they are part of an agreement other than a contract to which the Council remains bound
  - Whether community transport services should be protected at least at current budgetary levels
  - The overall revenue cost of a service
26. Timing is important. In order to make a change, an operator is obliged to give a minimum of 56 days' notice to the Traffic Commissioner. The Council should give an additional 28 days' notice to the contractor. The longer the Council leaves its decisions, the deeper the cuts in the current financial year. Should WG fund a transitional arrangement for the first six months till the end of June, the Council will need to make £67,000 in direct cuts (including pressures). Delaying until, say, January, and the first year effective cut would be £100,000 equivalent.
27. Timing will also be affected by any desire to consult. The Council has a good and improving record regarding bus service consultation. The

Campaign for Better Transport has been successful at judicial review in halting Cambridgeshire County Council's desire to reduce bus services because the Council failed to consult (at all). In Denbighshire's case, as elsewhere in Wales, time is still very much of the essence and it simply may prove impractical to consult fully. Consultation will take at least an additional 28 days plus time to assess any results and report, as necessary, to members.

28. In addition to local members and town & community councils, consultation might wisely include the Rural Transport Forum (RTF), plus one or more drop-in bus surgeries.

29. From a decision to consult, the timescales could therefore be:

	Days
Consultation	28
Assessment/members	28
Notice to contractors	28
Notice to Traffic Commissioner	<u>56</u>
TOTAL	140

Based on this timetable and a start towards the end of June 2012, unless the changes were agreed as more urgent, the earliest possible timetable change would be November 2012.

30. Subject to formal agreement with the Corporate Director Learning & Communities, it may be possible to use an underspend in the home to school transport budget, delegated to the Head of Highways & Infrastructure, to offset the impact of a late decision, in year one only, for the period between the end of a six months' WG transitional arrangement and the actual implementation. This would cost £18,000.

## Appendix 3

Green – proposed no change

Amber – contingency: £60,000 over full year

Red – proposed detrimental changes: £145,000 over full year

Service	From/To	Subsidy per passenger	Commentary	Proposals Tranche 1	Saving Tranche 1	Proposals Tranche 2	Saving Tranche 2
1, 2	Ruthin – Mold	£2.44	Performing well in terms of cost/passenger. Carries students and workers to both Ruthin and Mold	Return to 2008 service pattern (withdrawing one bus worth of work off peak)	£18,000		
X1	Ruthin – Mold – Chester	£2.07	New service from 2009 replacing previous Ruthin-Chester service withdrawn following changes by Flintshire and Cheshire West & Chester Councils	No action			
P1	Cadole – Ruthin	£0.00	Operates schooldays only and carries mainly students	No action			
5	Llangollen - Wrexham	N/A	Contribution to WCBC for evening services. Understood to perform well. Supports the Llangollen visitor economy	No action			
X5	Corwen – Ruthin/Denbigh (0730 ex-Corwen)	£4.73	The 0730 journey from Corwen to Denbigh is paid for individually and, for an inter-urban service, performs well. There are some 17 passengers per journey including workers and students for Denbigh College, Denbigh High and St Brigid's	No action			

X5	Corwen – Ruthin/Denbigh	£6.35 (Corwen section)	A fairly weak service but the only one north of Corwen for Maes Afallen, Clawdd Poncen, Gwyddelwern, Pandy'r Capel, Bryn SM, Pwllglas and parts of Llanfair DC.. Stronger over short section Corwen to Clawdd Poncen	Corwen-Ruthin section: Continue to operate broadly hourly because to reduce to every two hours would result in bus/driver standing down for one hour in every two. Withdrawal of the 1640 Mondays to Fridays journey from Ruthin and return	£16,000		
				Denbigh-Ruthin section: This operates combined half-hourly with X50. Reduce to hourly on Saturdays. No cost/passenger figures available. Withdraw Saturday journeys to operate hourly only (less demand for this service on Saturdays)	(As above)	Withdraw half-hourly off-peak services Ruthin and Denbigh but retain hourly service	£20,000
6	Denbigh Town Service/Llanefydd	£1.23	This service performs well. Contribution from CCBC for Llanefydd. No change to service. Some scope to increase fares from low base of 60p per single to 80p (this is still significantly less than Arriva)	Fares revision	£3,000		
10	Bodfari – Tremeirchion – Cwm – Dyserth – Rhyl	£2.55	Performs reasonably for a rural bus service. Was recently increased from three to six days a week because the bus has to travel to Rhyl for service 47 anyway.	Possibility of diverting one or two days to Denbigh but this would incur additional marginal additional cost as vehicle needs to be in Rhyl for 1045			
11	Nantglyn – Denbigh High – Ysgol Glan Clwyd	£0.00	Funded by Education (operates schooldays only). Carries students	No action			

11	Rhyl - Prestatyn – Holywell – Flint - Chester (evenings)	N/A	Supports FCC in the provision of this service. No information currently available but believed to perform well. Note the Sunday service is now operated by Arriva commercially	No action			
14	Denbigh – Mold	Awaiting data FCC	Carries students but believed to perform badly off-peak. Possible reduction to an off-peak bus every two hours (currently hourly)	Reduce level of service in consultation with FCC	£15,000		
19	Prestatyn Town	N/A	Diversion of service 19 from rural north west Flintshire via Prestatyn suburbs.	No action			
35	Rhyl – Prestatyn – Meliden – Dyserth – Rhyl circular (evenings)	£0.85	Performs well	No action			
35	Rhyl – Prestatyn – Meliden – Dyserth – Rhyl circular (Sundays)	£0.65	Performs well and contributes to Sunday economy	No action			
37	Dyserth – Prestatyn High School	£0.90	Performs well. Carries students	No action			
38	Prestatyn town service	N/A	Infill services in Prestatyn	Withdraw Saturday afternoon journeys	£5,000		
45/46	Rhyl – Kinmel Bay – Bodelwyddan – Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	£0.86	Performs well. Contribution from CCBC.	No action			
47	Rhyl town service	£2.55	Performs reasonably well	No action			
X50	0750 Ruthin – Wrexham	£3.68	Performs reasonably. Carries workers and students	Required September-December on college days as this acts as a duplicate for Denbighshire students attending Yale College. Possible withdrawal January to July on college days (Rhuddlan – Wrexham college bus to cover) .	£19,000		
X50	0700 Rhuddlan – Denbigh – Ruthin – Wrexham	£0.00	Funded via the home to school budget (operates college days only). Carries significant students	No action			
X50	0805 Denbigh – Ruthin	£1.62	Performs well. Carries workers and students	No action			

50	Uwch y Dre to Ysgol Caer Drewyn	£0.00	Carries students	Operator currently makes no charge though pupils do not qualify for free transport. Introduction of charge deferred owing to Edeirion schools reorganisation but possible measure could be reintroduced	£3,000		
X50	0655 Ruthin – Corwen – Cynwyd (Ifor Williams Factory)	£10.99	Performs poorly. However, service carries workers. Bus then operates on Llandrillo/Cynwyd to Ysgol Dinas Brân service that would be required for students regardless.	No action. The service acts as a positioning movement before and after protected school service and its withdrawal would still mean a bus travelling out of service between Ruthin and Cynwyd/Llandrillo			
X50	Denbigh – Ruthin – Wrexham (Sundays)	£3.18	Performs reasonably. Carries shift workers	No action (may require retendering to assure best value for money)			
X50/2	Rhyl – Denbigh – Ruthin – Wrexham	£1.51	Performs well. Carries shift workers to Highfield Park	No action (may require retendering to assure best value for money)			
X52	Rhyl – Denbigh (Sunday evenings)	£4.80	Performs reasonably considering this service takes over after 2000/2100 each evening (following Arriva commercialising up to this point). Carries shift workers to Highfield Park	No action (may require retendering to assure best value for money)		Reduce service by withdrawing one evening bus	£15,000
54	Rhyl – Rhuddlan – St Asaph Business Park	1.41 (one return trip) or £8.53 (second return trip)	One return journey is well priced and therefore offers good value. The second return journey is more expensive and hence the poor cost per passenger. Performs badly. Provides service exclusively for workers who would otherwise be isolated from St Asaph Business Park	No action (both carry workers who are otherwise isolated from St Asaph Business Park)			
61	Llanefydd – Denbigh High & Ysgol Glan Clwyd	£0.00	Schooldays only and carries primarily students	No action			



62	Llansannan/Bylchau/Groes and Nantglyn/Prion/Saron to Denbigh	£6.24	Performs poorly	Discussions already in place to replace bus service with a demand responsive taxi (may not operate on six days per week)	£8,000		
70/73/77	Betws GG, Clawdd, Clocaenog – Ruthin / Ruthin Town Service / Llanellidan - Ruthin	£7.43	These services have already been reduced following the withdrawal of external funding in August 2011. These now limited services are the only ones that serve the rural area south and west of Ruthin. Externally funded improvements in the Betws GG/Melin y Wig area are under discussion	No further action following August 2011 reductions and possible external funding enhancements. Withdraw later afternoon journeys	£5,000	Reduce service to certain days of the week only	£20,000
76	Denbigh – Llandyrnog – Llanbedr DC – Ruthin – Graigfechan	£1.70	Performs well	Possible withdrawal of little used 1818 Denbigh – Ruthin and or 1910 return	£6,000		
83	Rhyl Town Service (Sundays)	£1.91	Performs well and contributes to Sunday economy	No action			
91/95/98	Melin y Wig – Corwen – Llangollen  Melin y Wig – Corwen – Bryneglwys – Wrexham Llangollen – Pentredŵr – Rhewl – Llantysilio	£4.98	Performs poorly. Externally funded improvements in the Betws GG/Melin y Wig area are under discussion	No further action following possible external funding enhancements		Reduce service by two days a week	£8,000
X94	Contribution to Arriva to divert X94 Wrexham – Barmouth service via Cynwyd Llandrillo  Contribution to Gwynedd Council for evenings and Sundays	N/A	Contingent upon GC decision (evenings & Sundays)	Review with GC			
97	Llangollen – Pengwern (Saturdays)	£0.67		No action			

Demand responsive Taxi	Llanarmon yn Iâl, Graianrhyd, Eryrys area to meet Wrexham bus at Bwchgwyn	£25.00	Performs extremely poorly but only link from a dispersed rural area to Wrexham. High cost per passenger but only operates on demand and actual costs low	No action			
Demand responsive Taxi	Rhyl – St Asaph Business Park infill taxi service (on demand)	£10.60	Performs badly. Provides service exclusively for workers who would otherwise be isolated from St Asaph Business Park	No action			
Demand responsive Taxi	St Asaph Business Park – Rhyl (specifically for those who leave the police custody suite)	£12.96	Performs badly. Arguably not a Council responsibility (cannot be categorised as work/student, shopping, social or visiting friends & relatives)	Withdraw	£9,800		
Demand responsive Taxi	Denbigh – Llansannan/Nantglyn	£8.83	Provides an afternoon return during school holidays when school bus does not run	Withdraw and encompass in proposals for 62	£800		
Demand responsive Taxi	Denbigh town service	£13.79	Performs poorly. Provides shopping service for those parts of town where bus cannot access.	Encompass in proposals for 62. May not be possible to operate every day	£7,000		
Social car scheme	Sundry rural areas	£1.67	Performs well. Provides for essential journeys for those in the community who cannot use a bus or who have not got one. Operated by volunteers	No action			
Dial-a-Ride	Rhyl, Prestatyn, St Asaph, Rhuddlan and less often Denbigh	£0.94	Performs well but this reflects the Council's own budgets and not other funding sources. These external sources are due to be cut in 2012/13	No action other than try to make DAR more robust			
Nightrider	Rhyl, Prestatyn, St Asaph, Rhuddlan	£2.59	Performs well. Thursday & Friday evening demand responsive service for people over 50 who do not otherwise go out at night	No action			
Rhyl Bus Station inquiry office	Rhyl bus station	N/A	DCC pays rental and utilities. Arriva staffs the office but has now withdrawn staffing.	Notice on unit	£9,500		
Clwydian Ranger	Summer Sunday leisure bus service	N/A	Performs badly but is also funded by FCC and external partners. Costs are low. Dependent upon other funders	No action		Withdraw	£5,000

Publicity	Timetables and other publicity	N/A	Ensures as many passengers know of and can use the bus network. Supports both commercial and contract operators	No action			
Shelters	LTSG provides for bus infrastructure	N/A	This can top up DCC's own maintenance and capital budgets	Withdraw LTSG and use DCC own funding only	£20,000		

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14 June 2012</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer:</b>	<b>Head of Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Senior Community Safety Enforcement Officer</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>The Effectiveness of Enforcement Action with regard to dog fouling</b>

---

## **1. What is the report about?**

Members request a report on the effectiveness of enforcement action regarding dog fouling within the Council.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

The Report provides historical, current and future methods of prevention and detection of dog fouling in Denbighshire.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

Members consider the report and comment on any issues relating to the enforcement of dog fouling.

## **4. Report details**

### **4.1 Background**

Dog Fouling remains the single most complained about public nuisance in Denbighshire, which falls under "Environmental Crime". It has a detrimental effect upon the lives of the residents and visitors to the county. There is evidence to show that dog fouling is probably the most complained about nuisance in any Local Authority nationally.

The offence of Dog Fouling is dealt with under the provisions of the Dogs Act 1996 and the Environmental Protection and Clean Neighbourhood Act 2005. Offenders can be prosecuted summarily in a Magistrates Court and fined a maximum of £1,000

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued to offenders as an alternative to prosecution. The offer must be made after the offender has been informed that he or she will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

If the offer is accepted then the notice is an agreement that the offender will pay £75.00 within the period of 28 days (plus a further 7 days granted at the end of the 28 days.)

The notice is an agreement to discharge the fine and is not an admission of guilt, a recorded conviction and will not result in a court attendance. At this stage a presentation of the prosecution evidence is prepared.

The limitation of proceedings for such an offence is 6 months from the date of the commission of the offence.

Employees of the Authority and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) following a period of training and when they are in possession of the relevant authority.

Large numbers of Authority employees underwent training however the reality is that the only officers who issue Fixed Penalty Notices are Community Safety Enforcement Officers, Dog Wardens and to a much lesser extent the PCSOs.

Enforcement Officers have no power of detention whilst PCSO powers are limited.

The issue of a FPN can only be made if the standard of proof fulfils the required criteria of evidence that is considered sufficient for there being a reasonable prospect of a successful prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

The offer of the FPN is an alternative to avoid considerable cost to the Authority and Courts. The recipient can only be issued the notice if he or she is deemed suitable and accepts the offer.

Irrespective of the agreement being made the recipient still has the opportunity to change their minds and submit an attached notice requesting a court hearing.

It is a fact that there are an increasing number of members of the public who are becoming the owners of two dogs rather than one dog.

#### **4.2 Enforcement Activities between 2008 and current date**

Since 2008 a 'robust enforcement regime' was adopted by Denbighshire County Council's Public Protection Service

Historically smaller numbers of officers from the Dog Warden's department and Community Safety were engaged in the investigation of Dog Fouling complaints. Between 2008 and May 2010 resources were small and clearly a lesser level of importance was placed upon dealing with the offence.

Due to public demand a much greater emphasis in this respect commenced in May 2010 at the commencement of the Joint Community Safety Enforcement Pilot scheme.

The issue of Environmental Crime in its widest respect was considered however the offences of dog fouling and littering in that order emerged as the greatest problem to be tackled.

In excess of 10 Enforcement Officers have consistently been engaged in the activity that was deemed a priority.

A period of education by way of cautions and warnings occurred prior to prosecution of offences. A 'zero tolerance' regime is firmly in place.

The commencement of monthly Environmental Operations in Denbighshire (and Conwy) saw up to 12 Enforcement Officers, other authorised officers and PCSOs deployed specifically in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Denbigh and Llangollen issuing FPNs. A concentration was made in those areas perceived to be suffering the greatest problems (Rhyl).

Success was achieved in issuing notices for dog fouling however not nearly as successful as for littering offences. Chance detecting of dog fouling was haphazard and it became obvious that intelligence was the key to success.

Great emphasis was placed upon individual officers of the Community Safety Enforcement team to investigate every complaint of dog fouling ensuring contact with the complainant, requesting street cleaning and prosecuting offenders.

Dogs accompanying plain clothed patrolling officers are commonly used to assist them to blend in with the surroundings and typical areas where the offences occur.

Other preventative measures such as house to house enquiries in the areas of complaint, the erection of new signs and replacement of dog and litter bins. The free distribution of 'dog poo bags' also occurred.

The greatest success was achieved through the use of public space CCTV directing deployed officers to areas where offenders were seen to commit fouling and concentrating patrols in areas deemed 'fouling hot spots'. It also provided recorded images of offences that officers reviewed. Thereafter they set about tracing the offenders and issued FPNs.

Officers were routinely deployed in early morning and evening operations to maximise the chances of detecting offending dog walkers. The officers reacted in accordance with the information received from the complainants.

'Ad hoc' patrols rarely prove worthwhile and is considered a waste of resource.

All complainants who were interviewed and had witnessed the offending dog walkers were requested to make witness statements and provide oral evidence if required. However, the reality is that no person other than Enforcement Officers ever provided witness testimony. Members of the public who witness such offences are generally neighbours of the offenders and opt out of the willingness to present evidence for fear of reprisals or disruption to their lives. Tolerating the result of fouling was preferable to the possibility of open confrontation. These circumstances prevail and will not ever change.

Detecting persons who allowed their dogs to foul was considered relatively easy prior to the sustained effort that was made post May 2010.

As the months progressed into 2011 it became more difficult to detect such offences and it was recognised that other methods would need to be employed to maintain the sustained attack on the issue.

The continued operations and limited good media publicity sent a message out that fixed penalty notices were routinely being issued to offenders. The imposing of a substantial fine delivered the 'shocking' reality of the consequences of being an irresponsible dog owner.

### **4.3 Methods of prevention and detection**

The following methods have and continue to be employed by Community Safety Enforcement in Denbighshire and achieve varying degrees of success in preventing and detecting offences of dog fouling.

#### **4.3.1 Fixed Penalty Notices**

Notices are still being issued but to a lesser extent clearly because the public who disregard the law are fully aware that enforcement activity has occurred with some vigour since May 2010. Failing to clear dog foul has become more of a social stigma, that has in turn forced those who still refuse to comply to commit the offence after dark, out of CCTV coverage or in areas not overlooked by buildings or persons.

#### **4.3.2 Publicity**

Periodical interest from DCC's press office and self generated publicity has been employed however it has not been sustained. National media coverage concerning the potential health risks as a result of dog foul is occasionally mentioned and articles and comments in the local press to emphasise the issue have heightened awareness.

#### **4.3.3 Police / PCSOs participation**

Joint operations and constant communication with the Police has failed to encourage sustained interest in seeking out dog fouling offenders irrespective of the instruction from senior police officers and encouragement from DCC.



#### **4.3.4 CCTV**

The utilisation of CCTV continues. Weekly environmental crime reporting by CCTV requires constant attention. Evidenced offences of varying quality in clarity of images and evidence are presented. Only the incidents that reach the required standard of proof are pursued. CCTV is the best method of catching offenders.

#### **4.3.5 Communication with the public (education)**

In response to complaints where generally no evidence sufficient to pursue or an unwillingness to provide written testimony is available always results in the alternative methods available being employed. Letters encouraging the reporting of fouling incidents, intelligence on offenders and information to those suspected that they will be prosecuted if apprehended are delivered to the locality of the complaint. Environmental audits with individuals and groups providing encouragement to children in their schools has become a more effective method of education. The setting of competitions within the schools involving children and their families is the latest method and has become very popular. This is a worthwhile form of tackling the problem and in which more emphasis will be placed.

Attendance at residents meetings and social activities (sports facilities) is constant.

Providing dog bags to One Stop Shops, Libraries and individuals who are witnessed clearing their dog mess occurs.

#### **4.3.6 Public Realm**

Requests to have foul cleared from areas of complaint and audits establishing the requirements of bins and signs are a constant activity.

#### **4.3.7 Contractors**

The engaging of private contractors through employment agencies has featured greatly in Denbighshire between June 2011 and January 2012 (latterly utilised in Conwy).

The greater number of notices issued was in respect of littering. Fouling offences were less common and became even more difficult through patrols alone.

The two officers became known in areas of concern and potential offenders identified their presence even though they were not displaying any form of visible identification.

Good publicity has been enjoyed due to the media being provided with information from members of the public who have applauded the activity.

The self funding for continued use of contractors terminated due to the failure to issue sufficient notices to maintain momentum.

Since the termination of the Contractors the resumption of Community Safety Officers operations has begun again.

The use of head cameras for the purposes of identification and deterring difficult offenders has been successful and will be an essential tool for the future.

#### **4.3.8 Investigation of offences**

All reports that are made to DCC are investigated utilising all the above methods. Every complainant is spoken to regarding their concerns and updated as the result of investigations.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

During the period 2010 to 2011, 55 Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling were issued in Denbighshire.

During the period 2011 to 2012, 18 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued.

1 person was prosecuted for dog fouling.

The remaining Fixed Penalty Notice fines were all paid.

Clearly the success that was enjoyed during the first year of the Community Safety Enforcement pilot concentrating its efforts on reducing dog fouling has been responsible for a greater awareness by the public that committing such an offence can result in prosecution.

The disgrace of being caught offending without doubt has played a big part in changing the public attitude. A greater encouragement to report the incidents has been somewhat counter productive.

Complaint numbers have increased but the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued has fallen.

The evidence that attitude has changed is evidenced daily, dog owners can now be seen in any location in our county clearing their dogs mess. Litter and dog bins are overflowing.

An operation that occurred in April 2012 conducted by the Community Safety enforcement team identified 20 consecutive dog owners clearing their dogs mess and disposing of the bag correctly.

#### **4.5 Recommendations**

The issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices must continue irrespective of the fact that offending is ever more considered a social pariah consequently making it more difficult to detect. There will always be those who seek to ignore the law and there is evidence to suggest they are now becoming more covert and cunning in where and when they allow their dogs to foul.

However, the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices is not the complete answer to the problem.

Important emphasis should be placed on intelligence led activity to seek sufficient evidence to justify prosecution and therefore the offer of the alternative punishment of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

There must be a sustained utilisation of CCTV to obtain evidence of offending.

Review the level of training of officers to ensure that the investigative skills in respect of the offender identity and standards of proof are improved.

Review the conditions and requirements of contractors and enforcement officers when dealing in particular with the above paragraph concerning standards of proof and offenders identity.

There must be a greater emphasis on education in schools and the community. Responsibility has to be accepted by members of the community to support enforcement regimes.

Consideration should be given for the creation of dog walkers Charters and similar Charters with the Local Authority, Housing Associations, businesses and public groups. (These are being widely used and proving to be very successful)

Communication with the media must be improved to report on prosecutions, operations and initiatives.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The enforcement of environmental crime, in particular dog fouling, links to the 'Regenerating of our Communities' priority and 'Getting Closer to our Communities'.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

Not applicable

**7. What consultations have been carried out?**

None

**8. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

Unsure?

**9. Power to make the Decision**

No decision required – not relevant

Article 6.3.2(c) of the Council's Constitution permits scrutiny committees to consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants.

**Contact Officer:**

Head of Planning, Regeneration & Regulatory Services

Tel: 01824 706925

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> June 2012</b>
<b>Lead Member/Officer:</b>	<b>Lead Member for Customers and Communities/Head of Housing Services</b>
<b>Report Authors:</b>	<b>Project Officer and Housing Strategy Officer</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH)</b>

---

## **1. What is the report about?**

The report updates members on the development of a Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) across the North East Wales sub region, and seeks members' views on the draft Common Allocations Framework (CAF) before proceeding to public consultation.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1 To update members on the progress made with the SARTH collaborative project and provide an opportunity to influence the future direction it takes.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 For members to consider the information provided and make recommendations to inform the future direction of the project.

## **4. Report details**

SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) is a partnership project between all the major social landlords in north east Wales, covering the local authority areas of Conwy County Borough, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Borough.

The partners are Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Cartrefi Conwy, Clwyd Alyn Housing association, Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, North Wales Housing and Wales and West Housing.

The overall aim of SARTH is to provide a common access route to a range of affordable housing options which is transparent, legal, efficient and accessible to all sections of the community.

This report presents a draft common allocations framework (CAF). The draft has three points outstanding which need to be settled before

consultation. These are set out in the appendix to the attached briefing. The CAF would achieve the aim of streamlining the application and allocations service for customers in Denbighshire and other participating counties, meaning that people would apply once to be prioritised by all social landlords in the county in a consistent way.

### **Key elements of the Draft Common Allocations Framework (CAF)**

- Housing need will be assessed uniformly across the region, providing fairness and consistency to the customer, taking into account people's individual needs and expressed preferences. The definition of housing need is based on the legal concept of reasonable preference. The approach adopted makes use of the further legal powers to prioritise with applicants entitled to reasonable preference according to local connection and urgent need.
- Partners share one register and so an applicant need make only one application to access the whole system. Each partner with properties in an area chosen by an applicant will be aware of the application and able to give the applicant the appropriate priority in the allocation process.
- The draft allocations framework adopts a banding scheme to prioritise people in housing need, following the legal principles regarding reasonable preference, additional preference and local connection.
- When a vacancy becomes available, applicants who have expressed a preference for the area and whose household is suitable for the property type are shortlisted. Applicants are ranked on this shortlist by their band, with those in band one given highest priority and so on. Applicants within the same band are ranked according to date of application, with those who have been waiting longest given highest priority.
- Further details are provided on the CAF in Appendix A and the project generally in Appendix B.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1 The project links directly into the following corporate priorities:

- Responding to demographic change
- Regeneration.

Other benefits to the community include:

- Customer focus approach – improving service delivery with a single contact point and early realistic housing options advice

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1 The project has secured the following funding:

- £63,077 in Social Housing Management Grant from the Welsh Government
- £10,000 from Denbighshire Housing Services and £45,000 from other partners to date
- Denbighshire Housing Services is committed to contributing £10,000 per year for the next 3 financial years
- Partners are committed to contributing £135,000 over the next 3 financial years
- We are awaiting the outcome of a bid to Welsh Government for further funding.

## **7. What consultations have been carried out?**

7.1 A variety of consultative mechanisms are utilised including:

- Project steering group – all partners represented
- Project working group – all partners represented
- Regular reports to the committees of the Local Authorities and Housing Association Boards
- Welsh Government
- Welsh Local Government Association, Community Housing Cymru and Chartered Institute of Housing

## **8. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

8.1 The risks for each project are monitored and evaluated regularly as part of the project management approach.

## **9. Power to make the Decision**

9.1 Section 167 of the Homelessness Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 relates to allocations.

9.2 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution

**Contact Officer:**

Housing Strategy Officer  
Tel: 01824 712282



# Common Allocations Framework

### Context: A Single Access Route to Housing for north east Wales

All the major social landlords in north east Wales have come together to design a single access route to housing for people in the local authority areas of Conwy County Borough, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Borough. The partners in this collaboration are:

- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council
- Cartrefi Conwy
- Clwyd Alyn Housing association
- Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd
- North Wales Housing
- Wales and West Housing

All partners recognise that there is high demand for rented homes in the region and too few vacancies to meet demand. We must be realistic about this. It requires us to do two things:

Firstly, we will provide the best, most useful, consistent and accessible advice and information to everyone who comes to us looking for housing. We aim to help customers make the most informed choice about how to find a home to meet their needs. This advice must cover the whole range of affordable housing options, including social housing, private rented accommodation, home ownership and other alternatives.

Secondly, we will allocate our social housing stock in a transparent, fair, consistent and accessible way, which prioritises the people in our communities according to their housing needs and which meets our legal requirements.

Working together to these ends, we can share our strengths and good practice and place the customer at the heart of everything we do. We will simplify the access route to advice and to housing with one clear purpose: to help people find a home to meet their needs.

## Overview of The Common Allocations Framework

This Common Allocations Framework (CAF) has been developed by all partners in collaboration and sets out how partners will achieve the following aim:

- To allocate our social housing stock in a transparent, fair, consistent and accessible way, which prioritises the people in our communities according to their housing needs and which meets our legal requirements.

### Legal Context

This framework is fully compliant with the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 which provides the legislative framework for allocations policy. The following aspects of this Act play a large part in this framework:

- Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, requires that this framework ensures that housing is allocated so that reasonable preference is given to people who fall within certain categories (as defined in section 8 below). Section 167(2) also provides that additional preference may be given to people falling within these categories who have urgent housing needs.
- Section 167(2A) provides that within the group of applicants who must be given reasonable preference, priority may be given to applicants who have a local connection with the local authority area as defined in section 10 below.
- Section 167(2A) provides that within the group of applicants who must be given reasonable preference, priority may be reduced where there is evidence of any behaviour by an applicant (or a member of their household) which effects their suitability to be a tenant.

### Consistency combined with a local approach

The common allocation framework delivers a uniform assessment of housing need across the region, providing fairness and consistency to the customer, taking into account people's individual needs and expressed preferences.

The framework has been designed so that each partner is able to target the housing stock in each county at the people in their own communities who are most in housing need.

The common approach delivers both choice and ease of access to customers and an efficient means for partners to consistently meet housing need. Partners share one register and so an applicant need make only one application to access the whole system. Each partner with

properties in an area chosen by an applicant will be aware of the application and able to give the applicant the appropriate priority in the allocation process.

- The framework is founded on the principle that reasonable preference in the letting of housing accommodation will be given to those persons who fall within the statutory categories set out in section 8 below. The relative priority given to applicants within these categories is determined by the banding scheme, according to whether they have an urgent housing need, whether they have a local connection and the date order of their application.

## **Realistic Housing Options Advice**

An enhanced housing options advice service will be provided for everyone who contacts any of the partners looking for somewhere to live. Advice and information will be available free of charge about the right to make an application for an allocation of housing accommodation and any necessary assistance in making such an application will be available free of charge to persons who are likely to have difficulty in doing so without assistance.

When they first apply, all customers will be asked where they would like to live and what their needs and preferences are. They will be advised of the full range of options open to them in their chosen areas and can then decide where their best options lie, whether via social housing or another alternative, taking into account supply and demand.

An applicant shall also be entitled, upon request, to such general information as will enable them to assess:

- How their application is likely to be treated under this framework (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference).
- Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them and, if so, how long it is likely to be before such accommodation becomes available for allocation to them.

## **Fair and Equal Access**

The Councils and RSLs in this partnership are committed to providing equality of opportunity to all applicants who apply for housing and this framework will be subject to an equality impact assessment. All partners will comply with the statutory requirements relating to equal opportunities and all relevant codes of practice. The monitoring of allocations under the framework will take place to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equitably. All

applicants applying for social housing across the authorities will have their housing need assessed in a uniform way.

## Scope of the Framework

This framework applies to all allocations of social housing made by partner landlords in the local authority areas stated in the introduction. However, this framework does not cover exchanges arranged between existing council and RSL tenants.

## Part One: Introduction

### 1. Guiding Principles

The framework is based on the following guiding principles:

- To ensure that preference for social housing is given to those in housing need and that those in greatest need are given the highest priority.
- To give higher priority to applicants with a local connection to the area for which they are making an application than to those who have no such connection
- To ensure that the system is fair, confidential and accessible to all potential applicants.
- To make the best use of all the available housing stock
- To ensure consistency in the way in which applicants are treated by all the partner organisations
- To provide a responsive service that treats everyone as an individual
- To empower applicants and support them to make informed and realistic choices about where they want to live
- To provide appropriate, accurate and realistic advice relating to the availability of affordable housing at the point of application
- To maximise applicant satisfaction and improve the applicant service

### 2. Choice

Applicants can exercise choice in relation to social housing. They will be asked to indicate the types of property they wish to be considered for in terms of location, property type and floor level. The property type they are eligible for will be determined not only by their preference but also by their household, as described in section 13 below.

### 3. Applications from people with support needs

Partners are committed to ensuring that applicants with support needs are provided with the correct level of support to enable them to access housing and to maintain their tenancy. To this end partners will be working with the relevant statutory and voluntary partners in order to agree an appropriate model for ensuring that support needs are addressed.

#### 4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. Members operating the framework will take reasonable steps to verify information provided by applicants in support of their applications. This may include undertaking a home visit and making enquiries of third parties such as health professionals or previous landlords.
- 4.2. Information provided by applicants will be retained securely and confidentially by organisations belonging to the partnership.
- 4.3. Applicants may request a copy of information held by organisations in the partnership about their application. This may not include information provided by third parties.
- 4.4. Members of the partnership will share relevant information with other members of the partnership prior to an offer of housing.

#### 5. False Information

Applicants who give false or misleading information may have their application rejected or their tenancy terminated. In some cases this may also result in criminal prosecution.

### Part Two: Eligibility

#### 6. Eligibility for allocation of social housing

- 6.1. Unless an applicant falls within one of the specified ineligible groups referred to below, applications for social housing will be considered from any person or persons over the age of 16, including existing tenants.
- 6.2. In compliance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) the following categories of applicant are ineligible for the allocation of social housing:
  - Applicants subject to immigration control, unless they have been granted a status which renders them eligible, e.g. persons with refugee status, persons who have been granted Humanitarian Protection, persons who have been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain and persons who have been granted Exceptional Leave to Remain.
  - Applicants from abroad who are not subject to immigration control and who are not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (i.e. the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland).

Exceptions to this are outlined in Regulation 5 of the Allocation of Housing (Wales) Regulations 2003.

6.3. As provided by section 160A(7) of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended by the 2002 Homelessness Act), the following category of person will be deemed to be ineligible for the allocation of housing accommodation:

- Applicants, or members of their household, who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to render them unsuitable to be a tenant of a partner landlord. The only behaviour that can be regarded as unacceptable is behaviour by the person that would have entitled a local authority to an outright possession order, if the person had been a secure tenant of the local authority at the time.

In assessing whether an applicant is ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour, the partner landlord will consider:

1. Where there is evidence of unacceptable behaviour, was it serious enough for a possession order to have been granted (which includes consideration of the statutory discretionary grounds for possession and questions of reasonableness)?
2. Was the behaviour serious enough to render the applicant or household member unsuitable to be a tenant (which involves consideration as to whether an immediate possession order was made or might have been made as opposed to a suspended order)?
3. Does the behaviour continue to be unacceptable at the time of application?

Partner organisations will act reasonably and consider each application on its merits. We will take into account the applicant's personal circumstances (and those of the applicant's household), including his or her health and medical needs, dependents and any other factors relevant to the application. Previous unacceptable behaviour may not justify a decision to treat the applicant as ineligible where the applicant can show that the behaviour has improved.

- 6.4. Applicants deemed ineligible for housing will be provided with advice and guidance regarding their housing options from the Housing Options team when they contact the service.
- 6.5. Applicants deemed ineligible for housing will be notified of the decision and grounds of this in writing. They will also be informed of their right to request a review and their further right to appeal any decision upon review.
- 6.6. Where the assessing partner has reason to believe that the applicant may have difficulty in understanding the decision, arrangements will be made for the information to be explained in person. Furthermore, in cases where the partner has reason to believe that the applicant cannot be sent written

notification or has not received it, the partner will make available at their offices a written statement of the decision and the reasons for it, so that the applicant or someone who represents the applicant may collect it within a reasonable time.

## Part Three: The Allocations Scheme

This framework uses a banding scheme in order to prioritise applicants. The scheme is described in this section. It follows housing law regarding reasonable preference, additional preference and local connection. It also makes provision for reducing priority under certain circumstances. These concepts are explained in the following sections.

### 7. The shared housing register

- 7.1. As set out in the introduction, each customer contacting a partner organisation will be given housing options advice to enable them to consider their best options for finding accommodation. The advice will be tailored to individual circumstances, including whether the customer is in housing need. All customers may make an application for social housing.
- 7.2. The banding scheme is designed to give priority to applicants in housing need. The categories of housing need in the scheme are based on the reasonable preference categories set out in section 167 of the 1996 Housing Act, which are stated in section 9 below. Applicants who are given a banding will be recorded on the housing register, whose purpose is to manage applications from people in housing need.

### 8. Reasonable Preference

The banding scheme ensures that applicants are given reasonable preference as required by the legislation. This includes the following categories of applicants:

- 1) those who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act; this includes people who are intentionally homeless, and those who are not in priority need;
- 2) those who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3);
- 3) those occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- 4) those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to a disability; and

- 5) those who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.

## 9. Additional preference

The allocation framework gives additional preference to people who fall within the reasonable preference categories and who are deemed to have urgent housing needs.

## 10. Local Connection

- 10.1. For determining priorities in allocating housing accommodation to people who fall within the five reasonable preference categories, any local connection (within the meaning of section 199 of the 1996 Act, as amended by section 315 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) that an applicant has with a relevant local authority area will be taken into account.
- 10.2. In this framework, by the phrase “local connection” is meant a connection between a person and a local authority area, i.e. Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire or Wrexham.
- 10.3. An applicant may have a local connection to a local authority area if the applicant or a member of their household has a connection for any of the following reasons:
  - They have been resident in the local authority area for the previous 6 months.
  - They were resident in the local authority area for 3 out of the previous 5 years.
  - They either provide support for or receive support from someone who is resident in the local authority area.
  - They have been in permanent employment in the local authority area for the last six months.
  - They are serving in the Armed Forces and are either employed or resident in the local authority area.
  - They are serving in the Armed Forces or are former members of the Armed Forces who are not currently employed or resident in the local authority area but have previously been resident in the local authority area as a result of a former posting in the area while serving in the Armed Forces.
- 10.4. In the situation where a local authority partner has accepted a duty towards an applicant under homelessness legislation, the applicant will be deemed as having a local connection to the relevant local authority area for the purposes of this allocation framework.
- 10.5. An applicant may have a local connection to one local authority area within the north east Wales region but not to another. As a result, if an



applicant applies to more than one county, they may be placed in different bands with respect to different local authority areas.

- 10.6. Partners will retain the capacity to refine local connection criteria in particular circumstances via the use of local lettings policies, as per section 17 below.

## 11. The banding scheme

- 11.1. The banding scheme consists of four bands, from one to four in descending order of priority.
- 11.2.
- 11.3. The band which an applicant can be placed in depends on whether they fall within one or more of the 5 preference categories (as defined in section 8), whether they have an urgent housing need (as defined in section 9) and whether they have a local connection (as defined in section 10). When a property becomes available for letting, all applicants for whom the property is suitable (see section 13 below on the allocation of vacant properties) will be ranked in order of priority as follows. Applicants in band one will be given highest priority and then applicants in band two and so on. Within each band, applicants will be ranked by order of the date of their application for housing or the date of their application to transfer, with the applicant waiting the longest given highest priority.
- 11.4. The Bands are summarised as follows:
- Band one is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, have an urgent housing need and, with one exception, have a local connection. Applicants who are homeless due to violence or the threat of violence will be placed in band one regardless as to whether or not they have a local connection.
  - Band Two is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, do not have an urgent housing need and, with one exception, have a local connection. Applicants who are intentionally homeless and entitled to reasonable preference under category 1 or 2 as set out in section 8 will not be placed in band two even if they have a local connection.
  - Band Three is for applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories, have an urgent housing need but do not have a local connection.
  - Band Four is for:
    - a. applicants who fall within one or more of the reasonable preference categories but do not have an urgent housing need and do not have a local connection and;
    - b. applicants who are intentionally homeless and have a local connection, but do not fall within any preference category

except the homelessness categories 1 or 2 and do not have an urgent housing need.

## 12.Reduced priority

12.1. In line with housing law (1996 Housing Act, section 167 (2A), this framework allows that certain applicants who are entitled to reasonable preference may have their priority within the allocations scheme reduced because of any behaviour of the applicant (or a member of their household) which effects their suitability to be a tenant. This definition is distinct from that which entitles landlords to deem an applicant ineligible for social housing, as set out in section 6 above.

12.2. Categories of behaviour which may result in applicants being given reduced priority are as follows (in each case the behaviour may be on the part of any member of the household):

- Applicants who have engaged in anti-social behaviour and who have not maintained a satisfactory undertaking to address that behaviour.
- Applicants who have been convicted of using their home for immoral or illegal purposes.
- Current tenants who have been subject to action for breach of tenancy.
- Tenants wishing to transfer where their current property is in such poor condition that it cannot be re-let within a given timescale.
- Applicants who have rent arrears owing to a current or previous landlord and who have not made and maintained a satisfactory arrangement to repay the debt.
- Applicants who have provided false or misleading information or failed to disclose information relevant to their application. In these cases applicants will be asked to complete a new application. The date of this new application will be taken and they may be given reduced preference for the new application.
- Applicants who have refused two reasonable offers. In this case applicants will be removed from the register and if they re-apply may be given reduced preference.
- Applicants who are deemed to have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances. For example, this may apply where an applicant gives up settled accommodation in order to move into less settled or overcrowded accommodation.
- Applicants who have behaved in a way which effects their suitability to be a tenant (or whose household contains a member who has done this).

12.3. In deciding whether to reduce priority, the assessing organisation will act reasonably and consider each application on its merits. It must have regard to the applicant's personal circumstances (and those of the applicant's

household), including his or her health and medical needs, dependents and any other factors relevant to the application. Previous behaviour may not justify a decision to reduce preference where that behaviour can be shown by the applicant to have improved.

- 12.4. In circumstances where an applicant has their priority reduced they will be provided with appropriate advice and guidance and support.
- 12.5. Applicants who are given reduced priority will be notified of the grounds of this in writing and have the right to appeal.
- 12.6. Applicants who have been given reduced priority may present evidence to demonstrate a change in behaviour and if partners are satisfied that this is satisfactory, they may have the reduction in preference removed. In this situation, the date of application for the purposes of ranking of applicants in any shortlist will be the date when the reduction of preference was removed.
- 12.7. Rehousing of some applicants with an offending background may be subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Agreements (MAPPA). In such circumstances housing allocation arrangements will be based on the appropriate risk assessment criteria with the relevant agencies concerned.

### 13. Allocation of vacant properties

- 13.1. At the point of application, applicants are asked about their choice of area and property type. However, each property type is usually only let to particular types of household. The guidelines for this matching are given below.
- 13.2. Some types of property are designated for specific categories of applicant. The main examples of this are:
- Designated sheltered housing schemes have age restrictions which apply to tenants and members of their households.
  - Homes that have been purpose built, adapted or are considered accessible by people with mobility needs will be offered first to people whose physical needs are suited to the property.
  - Houses will normally only be let to families with children.
  - Some flats and maisonettes will have restrictions regarding pets

13.3.

Household make up	Number of bedrooms
Single person	1 bedroom or bedsit
Pregnant women (in couple or single)	1 or 2 bedroom
Couple	1 bedroom
Single parent or couple with one child	2 bedrooms
Two person household not in couple	2 bedroom
Single parent or couple with two children of same sex	2 or 3 bedrooms
Single parent or couple with two children of opposite sex (if both children are under 10 , they can be considered for 2 bed)	3 bedrooms

Single parent or couple with three children	3 bedrooms
Single parent or couple with four children	3 or 4 bedrooms
Single parent or couple with five children	4 bedrooms
Single parent or couple with more than five children	4 or more bedrooms

The table above is a general guide only and can vary in areas due to local demand, supply or any local letting policies.

## 14. Who Can Be Considered As Part of The Household

- 14.1. When assessing an application the partners will consider the circumstances of the household. A household is considered to be:
- Persons who are part of the household at the date of registration, or at the start of the tenancy in the case of existing tenants, and are still in occupation
  - Partners who are living together in a relationship
  - Children born since the registration date, or the start of the tenancy, or other dependent children joining the household where the applicant or tenant is the principal carer of the child. Evidence will need to be produced to confirm dependent relationship(s). Tenants must inform the organisation of any change to their household
  - An adult relative who has become a member of the household because they are in need of support and cannot live independently. (this also applies to transfer applications)
  - Housing applications from partners who are not living together due to lack of space in either of their accommodations will be considered as a household with both accommodations being taken into account when assessing the application

## 15. Offers and refusals

- 15.1. Applicants have a choice as to whether to accept an offer of a property. If a property is refused without good reason, housing options will contact the applicant to discuss their reasons. If as a result of two unreasonable refusals, it is considered that the applicant's requirements are unlikely to be met, the applicant will be removed from the register, subject to right to review. They will be notified of this decision and the grounds in writing and of their right to review. Any re-application may be given reduced priority.
- 15.2. Applicants owed a duty under homelessness legislation may be offered a property which falls outside their preferred options. Such offers will be made in line with the relevant statutory procedures. If such a reasonable offer is refused, then the applicant may have their priority within this framework reduced, in line with the section on reduced priority. In these

circumstances applicants are entitled to a review and if this found in their favour, they would be reinstated.

## 16. Removal from the register

- 16.1. Under certain circumstances, applicants may be removed from the register. These are as follows:
- 16.2. Applicants who have provided false or misleading information or failed to disclose information relevant to their application. In these cases applicants will be asked to complete a new application. The date of this application will be taken and they may be given reduced preference for this new application, as stated above
- 16.3. Applicants who have refused two reasonable offers. In this case they will be removed from the register and if they re-apply may be given reduced priority.
- 16.4. Applicants who fail to respond to correspondence including offer letters within the set response times. These applicants will be removed from the register through a formal notification and appeal process.

## 17. Local Lettings Policies

- 17.1. The framework recognises that partners may wish to include policies designed to tackle local housing issues through the use of local letting policies.
- 17.2. All local lettings policies will be based on a sound evidence base and will be developed after a robust assessment of this evidence base has been carried out.
- 17.3. Examples of local housing issues include:
  - concentrations of deprivation
  - under occupation
  - overcrowding
  - facilitating tenant employment through job related moves
  - ensuring the needs of rural communities are met
  - allowing transfers for existing social tenants even where they do not have reasonable preference.
  - Some properties, usually in defined locations, can only be let subject to additional occupation criteria as they are subject to a Planning Obligation under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
  - Regeneration areas
  - Large new developments
- 17.4. The development of local lettings policies will follow the protocol which accompanies this framework and may be modified from time to time. This protocol and local lettings policies will be reviewed and monitored via a mechanism set up by the partner organisations.

## 18. Review of Allocations framework

- 18.1. The operation of the framework will be monitored on an on-going basis. It will also be subject to an annual review. Where appropriate, recommendations for alterations will be submitted for approval. These would then have to be ratified by each partner before being adopted.

## 19. Reviews and appeals

- 19.1. Applicants have the right to be informed, upon request, of any decision about the facts of an applicant's case which have been, or are likely to be, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing to them.
- 19.2. Applicants have the right to ask for a review of decisions regarding their application. This includes decisions in relation to:
- Ineligibility for social housing
  - Housing need assessment
  - Cancellation of application following two refusals of offers
  - Reduction of priority according to section 12..

## Appendix: The Banding Scheme

The criteria for determining which band an applicant is placed in are set out below. All decisions taken will be consistent with this scheme.

### Band One

<p><b>Local Connection is required for applicants to qualify under each of the categories from 1 to 5</b></p>
<p><b>1. Urgent medical, welfare or disability related need</b></p> <p>Applicants whose household includes someone who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) has a medical condition which is life-threatening or likely to become so, and which is directly linked to their housing conditions and likely to improve with rehousing</li><li>(b) has been assessed by the relevant practitioner as having a need to move urgently to an accessible property.</li><li>(c) Has a serious physical or mental illness, disability or medical condition or behavioural disorder, which is causing serious dysfunction to themselves or the family unit e.g. terminal illness, permanent disability or progressive condition and they are completely unable to cope in their present accommodation.</li><li>(d) Is hospitalised and is unable to return to their home as it is totally unsuitable for their long term needs by way of design, location and/or is unsuitable for disabled adaptations.</li><li>(e) is disabled and unable to access essential facilities within the property e.g. bathing or WC, or access to the property itself is totally unsuitable. The property cannot be adapted to meet their needs.</li><li>(f) needs to move to provide support to a relative or person with serious illness, disability or medical condition and that person can only cope in their present accommodation with the applicant's support.</li><li>(g) is living in overcrowded accommodation which leaves the person vulnerable to serious infection, for example where they are suffering from late stage HIV.</li><li>(h) is due to leave local authority care and urgently requires their own accommodation.</li></ul> <p>Evidence will be required in these cases to support the validity of the claim</p>
<p><b>2. Loss of home as result of a disaster:</b></p> <p>Awarded to applicants with a reasonable prospect of an accommodation offer</p>

within a relatively short period that suddenly lose their existing home as a result of a disaster.

**3. Leaving armed forces or serious injury whilst serving in armed forces:**

- (a) Any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.
- (b) People needing accommodation because of leaving the armed forces and the loss of military accommodation. People who have left the armed forces under Discharge as of Right (DAOR) are excluded from this provision and will not be given band one status under this category.

**4. Urgent cases involving children leaving care or at risk of going into care**

- (a) Young person's leaving care, where there is an urgent need to find social housing
- (b) Urgent cases where potential foster parents/carers need accommodation in order to take a child.
- (c) Where there is a likelihood of a child having to be accommodated by the local authority if re-housing is not made.

**5. Exceptional case of urgent need whose priority is not determined elsewhere in this scheme**

**Local connection is not required for applicants to qualify under category 6**

**6. Homeless due to violence or threat of violence:**

Those owed a homelessness duty as a result of violence or threats of violence likely to be carried out and who as a result require urgent re-housing including:

- (a) Victims of domestic or other violence;
- (b) Victims of hate incidents (including crimes and non-crimes in policing terms and this will cover victims of hate violence, threats of violence and hate harassment of any kind;
- (c) Witnesses of crime, or victims of crime, who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remained in their



current homes.

## Band Two

**Local connection is required for applicants to qualify for band two under each category below.**

- 1. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, with the exception of applicants who have become homeless intentionally under the definition of intentionality contained in section 191 of the 1996 Act.**

This category includes homeless applicants both in priority need and not in priority need, provided they have not become homeless intentionally.

The definition of homelessness used is contained in sections 175-177 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. Under this definition a person who does not have accommodation which is legally and physically available to them to occupy and which is reasonable for them to occupy would be classed as homeless.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable. Applicants who refuse a reasonable offer made to them under homelessness legislation may have their priority reduced.

- 2. Applicants who are owed a duty by a local housing authority under section 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3) of the 1996 Act.**

**This category includes applicants who are:**

- unintentionally homeless and in priority need and who have been accepted as being owed a full duty under section 193(2);
- unintentionally homeless and not in priority need but for whom accommodation has been made available by the authority under section 192(3);
- threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days and owed a duty under section 195(2) of the 1996 act (i.e. have not intentionally become so threatened and are in priority need).

This category does not include applicants who have become homeless, or are threatened with homelessness, intentionally.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable. Applicants who refuse a reasonable offer made to them under homelessness legislation may have their preference reduced.

### **3. Applicants suffering from insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions**

**This category includes the following:**

- (a) Applicants living in insanitary conditions where the conditions pose an on-going and serious threat to health.
- (b) Applicants living in a property that is uninhabitable due to, for example, severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or having living conditions which are a statutory nuisance and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied in a time period that the council considers reasonable.
- (c) Applicants whose current property:
  - (a) lacks a bathroom with facilities or the facilities are located in an insanitary location e.g. within kitchen;
  - (b) lacks a kitchen and/or appropriate facilities;
  - (c) lacks an inside W/C;
  - (d) lacks a hot or cold water supply to the property due to defect with the property;
  - (e) lacks an electrical supply due to defect with property;
  - (f) lacks a gas supply due to defect with property where such a supply is required to operate existing or necessary services such as heating.
- (d) Applicants who share facilities with occupiers who are not part of the applicant's household on a permanent basis. This applies to the sharing of a kitchen, bathroom/shower or toilet.
- (e) A housing situation is deemed to be overcrowded if it lacks at least one bedroom. This must be on a permanent basis. The following are taken to be minimum bedroom requirements:
  - a. A married couple or couple living together need one bedroom.
  - b. A married couple or couple living together with a child under 12 months need one bedroom.
  - c. A single person over the age of 16 or a single parent needs one

bedroom. (applicable to a single parent with a child under 12 months).

- d. A child 8-16 can only share a bedroom with a child of the same sex.

**4. People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability)**

The following categories of applicant would qualify:

- a) Applicants whose household includes someone with a medical condition which is directly linked to unsuitable housing and where re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their health.
- b) Current accommodation presents access problems to a member of the household which have a detrimental impact on their welfare, which cannot be resolved in the current property and would be significantly alleviated if they were suitably re-housed. Such cases would be assessed by the relevant practitioner as requiring a move to an accessible property.
- c) Applicants whose household includes someone who has social care needs which are not being met and re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their care.

**5. People who need to move to a particular locality, where a failure to do so would cause hardship**

Cases include:

- a) It is unreasonable for the applicant to stay in their current property due to exceptional financial hardship.
- b) Applicants who need to downsize because they are unable to afford their current property due to welfare reform.
- c) The applicant or member of their household is at risk of being admitted to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made.
- d) The applicant needs to move due to relationship breakdown and there is a need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children associated.
- e) The applicant is a care leaver, vulnerable and has a high housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing. Applicants must be a former 'relevant child' as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

- f) The applicant or member of their household has permanent employment which cannot continue unless they live in a specific locality within the area and are otherwise adequately housed.
- g) The applicant is giving or receiving essential support, which can only be delivered if they live in a specific locality within the area.
- h) Vulnerable applicants who are ready to move on to independent living and who have been given priority.

**6. People who need to move to release a high demand property resulting in effective use of stock**

This will usually be in cases where the applicant is giving up adapted properties, houses or ground floor accommodation with two or more bedrooms. However, the exact specifications will vary according to circumstances.

**7. Current tenants of partnership landlords for whom management transfers have been agreed**

This is only for exceptional cases where there are circumstances not covered by the rest of this scheme. All such transfers must be recorded, referenced and approved by senior officers. These cases will be monitored and reviewed.

**Band Three**

**Local Connection is not required for applicants to qualify for band three**

**1. Urgent medical, welfare or disability related need**

Applicants whose household includes someone who:

- (a) has a medical condition which is life-threatening or likely to become so, and which is directly linked to their housing conditions and likely to improve with rehousing
- (b) has been assessed by the relevant practitioner as having a need to move urgently to an accessible property.
- (c) Has a serious physical or mental illness, disability or medical condition or behavioural disorder, which is causing serious dysfunction to themselves or the family unit e.g. terminal illness, permanent disability or progressive condition and they are completely unable to cope in their present accommodation.
- (d) Is hospitalised and is unable to return to their home as it is totally unsuitable for their long term needs by way of design, location and/or is unsuitable for

disabled adaptations.

- (e) is disabled and unable to access essential facilities within the property e.g. bathing or WC, or access to the property itself is totally unsuitable. The property cannot be adapted to meet their needs.
- (f) needs to move to provide support to a relative or person with serious illness, disability or medical condition and that person can only cope in their present accommodation with the applicant's support.
- (g) is living in overcrowded accommodation which leaves the person vulnerable to serious infection, for example where they are suffering from late stage HIV.
- (h) is due to leave local authority care and urgently requires their own accommodation.

Evidence will be required in these cases to support the validity of the claim

## **2. Loss of home as result of a disaster**

Awarded to applicants with a reasonable prospect of an accommodation offer within a relatively short period that suddenly lose their existing home as a result of a disaster.

## **3. Leaving armed forces or serious injury whilst serving in armed forces**

- (a) Any applicant who needs to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability which he or she, or a member of their household, has sustained as a result of service in the Armed Forces.
- (b) People needing accommodation because of leaving the armed forces and the loss of military accommodation. People who have left the armed forces under Discharge as of Right (DAOR) are excluded from this provision and will not be given band one status under this category.

## **4. Urgent cases involving children leaving care or at risk of going into care**

- (d) Young person's leaving care, where there is an urgent need to find social housing
- (e) Urgent cases where potential foster parents/carers need accommodation in order to take a child.
- (f) Where there is a likelihood of a child having to be accommodated by the local authority if re-housing is not made.

## **5. Exceptional case of urgent need whose priority is not determined elsewhere in this scheme**

## Band Four

Local Connection is not required for applicants to qualify for band four

**1. Applicants who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.**

This category includes homeless applicants both in priority need and not in priority need, and who are homeless either unintentionally or intentionally.

The definition of homelessness used is contained in sections 175-177 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. Under this definition a person who does not have accommodation which is legally and physically available to them to occupy and which is reasonable for them to occupy would be classed as homeless.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable.

**2. Applicants who are owed a duty by a local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the Housing Act 1996 (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3) of the 1996 Act.**

This category includes applicants who are:

- (a) unintentionally homeless and in priority need and who have been accepted as being owed a full duty under section 193(2);
- (b) unintentionally homeless and not in priority need but for whom accommodation has been made available by the authority under section 192(3);
- (c) threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days and owed a duty under section 195(2) of the 1996 act (i.e. have not intentionally become so threatened and are in priority need);
- (d) are owed a section 190(2) duty, have been assessed as being in priority need, but are intentionally homeless and have been provided with accommodation for a period of time to enable them to secure their own accommodation.

This category does not include applicants who have become homeless, or are threatened with homelessness, intentionally.

People will be accorded this status depending on an assessment by the relevant local authority's homelessness team or the team of a contracted out service as applicable.

### **3. Applicants suffering from insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing conditions**

This category includes the following:

- (a) Applicants living in insanitary conditions where the conditions pose an on-going and serious threat to health.
- (b) Applicants living in a property that is uninhabitable due to, for example, severe damp, major structural defects including subsidence, flooding, collapse of roof, or having living conditions which are a statutory nuisance and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied in a time period that the council considers reasonable.
- (c) Applicants whose current property:
  - a. lacks a bathroom with facilities or the facilities are located in an insanitary location e.g. within kitchen;
  - b. lacks a kitchen and/or appropriate facilities;
  - c. lacks an inside W/C;
  - d. lacks a hot or cold water supply to the property due to defect with the property;
  - e. lacks an electrical supply due to defect with property;
  - f. lacks a gas supply due to defect with property where such a supply is required to operate existing or necessary services such as heating.
- (d) Applicants who share facilities with occupiers who are not part of the applicant's household on a permanent basis. This applies to the sharing of a kitchen, bathroom/shower or toilet.
- (e) A housing situation is deemed to be overcrowded if it lacks at least one bedroom. This must be on a permanent basis. The following are taken to be minimum bedroom requirements:
  - a. A married couple or couple living together need one bedroom.
  - b. A married couple or couple living together with a child under 12 months need one bedroom.
  - c. A single person over the age of 16 or a single parent needs one bedroom. (applicable to a single parent with a child under 12 months).

- d. A child 8-16 can only share a bedroom with a child of the same sex.

**4. People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to disability)**

The following categories of applicant would qualify:

- a) Applicants whose household includes someone with a medical condition which is directly linked to unsuitable housing and where re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their health.
- b) Current accommodation presents access problems to a member of the household which have a detrimental impact on their welfare, which cannot be resolved in the current property and would be significantly alleviated if they were suitably re-housed. Such cases would be assessed by occupational therapy as requiring a move to an accessible property. These cases will be managed through an accessible housing register.
- c) Applicants whose household includes someone who has social care needs which are not being met and re-housing is necessary to significantly improve their care.

**5. People who need to move to a particular locality, where a failure to do so would cause hardship**

Cases include:

- a) It is unreasonable for the applicant to stay in their current property due to exceptional financial hardship.
- b) Applicants who need to downsize because they are unable to afford their current property due to welfare reform.
- c) The applicant or member of their household is at risk of being admitted to residential care or hospital if re-housing is not made.
- d) The applicant needs to move due to relationship breakdown and there is a need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children associated.
- e) The applicant is a care leaver, vulnerable and has a high housing need that is best met by the provision of long term settled housing. Applicants must be a former 'relevant child' as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
- f) The applicant or member of their household has permanent



employment which cannot continue unless they live in a specific locality within the area and are otherwise adequately housed.

- g) The applicant is giving or receiving essential support, which can only be delivered if they live in a specific locality within the area.
- h) Vulnerable applicants who are ready to move on to independent living and who have been given priority.

**6. Current tenants of partnership landlords for whom management transfers have been agreed**

This is only for exceptional cases where there are circumstances not covered by the rest of this scheme. All such transfers must be recorded, referenced and approved by senior officers. These cases will be monitored and reviewed.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank

### Briefing report: A Single Access Route to Housing for north east Wales

#### Introduction

SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing) is a partnership project between all the major social landlords in north east Wales, covering in the local authority areas of Conwy County Borough, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham County Borough

The partners are:

- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council
- Cartrefi Conwy
- Clwyd Alyn Housing association
- Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd
- North Wales Housing
- Wales and West Housing

The over all aim of SARTH is:

**To provide a common access route to a range of affordable housing options which is transparent, legal, efficient and accessible to all sections of the community.**

By working together to achieve this aim, we can share our strengths and good practice and place the customer at the heart of everything we do.

Through the project, we can simplify the access route to advice and to housing with one clear purpose: to help people find a home to meet their needs.

This briefing sets out the following:

Part 1: The challenges facing social housing landlords across north east Wales

Part 2: The aims of SARTH

Part 3: The draft common allocations framework (CAF)

## Part 1: The challenges facing social housing landlords across north east Wales

### Separate housing registers and allocation schemes

Currently each organisation has a separate housing register and allocation scheme. This means that people seeking a home must apply several times to different landlords and their application may be dealt with differently by each partner. This can lead to confusion and inconsistency.

Consider, for example, Carol, Pete and their son Robert, who live in north Wales, in a privately rented house. Carol is disabled and needs a stair lift and the bathroom adapted to meet her needs. Their landlord doesn't want to alter the house and wants them to move out. They've been on the council list for five years but the council don't have anything for them.

Jane works at a local housing association and a two bedroom house has become available. She checks her waiting list. They have someone who wants a two bedroom house, but the house has adaptations and the applicant doesn't need them. Jane looks at her nominations quota. She could ask for a nomination and hope she gets someone who needs adaptations or give the house to the person top of her list and rip the stair lift out. What should she do?

Well, happily for Carol, Pete and their son Robert, Jane did seek a nomination from the council and they were successfully rehoused in a property adapted to their needs. But, they were lucky. In other cases, which we won't hear about, people may be passed over because they aren't on the right list. Wouldn't it be better to have one system which would automatically have matched Carol and Pete to their new house and not relied on chance?

Consider another example. Mary has two children and is looking for a two bedroom house on the north Wales coast. She is on the waiting list with the council and three housing associations. It's August 2011, she's at the top of the council's waiting list and is nominated to a housing association. They aren't able to make contact with her. Three months later, the council have a suitable property available and she is still top of its waiting list. Paul, an estates officer at the council, tries to contact her. He fails, but after some work discovers that in fact she was rehoused by a different housing association back in July 2011. He closes the file and turns to the next person on the council list.

These stories tell us that multiple lists and schemes waste time and resources and may result in someone in need being overlooked because they are not on the right list. The current system as a whole can be inconsistent, inefficient and potentially unfair.

Moreover, agencies often work across county boundaries, as do housing associations. This suggests that clear benefit may be gained by creating a single framework that delivers one route to housing in each local authority area and delivers consistency across the whole region.

### The legal context and local factors

The legislation on housing allocations determines that the principles guiding each partner's allocation scheme are very similar. They are all based on the concept of reasonable preference for

certain categories of housing need. Hence, it should be possible for partners to adopt a common allocations framework and to have a shared housing register so that applicants can apply to all partners via one route.

At the same time, partners have a responsibility to prioritise the needs of the people in urgent need and to meet the needs of local people and address local housing issues. This presents a challenge to the partnership to design a framework which allows partners to prioritise people in urgent need and people in housing need who have a connection to a particular area, providing this is done in accordance with legislation. Furthermore, it challenges us to ensure that advice given to people at the point of application is locally relevant.

### **Demand for social housing**

In each local authority area the demand for social housing, as evidenced by the number of applicants on waiting lists, greatly exceeds the supply of properties for let. As a result, the majority of applicants have no realistic chance of being rehoused in social housing for many years and as a consequence their housing needs are not being met via the allocations systems.

For example consider an applicant looking for a one bedroom flat in Prestatyn. Wales and West Housing have analysed their waiting lists and given the turnover of available properties and the number of applicants waiting, they estimate that half the people on their list looking for a one bedroom flat in Prestatyn would have to wait over twenty years to be offered a property. Those at the bottom would have to wait about fifty years. It is very unlikely that their needs will be the same if and when they are offered accommodation. For these reasons, the current waiting lists are often not helping people find housing.

### **Housing options advice**

Because there is little prospect of an increase in availability of social housing, the situation we face implies that the best option for the majority of people waiting on housing registers is to look for alternative housing. However, people in this position do not consistently get timely, accessible and useful advice about alternative housing options.

Consider again the case of Carol and Pete mentioned above. We spoke to them when they were rehoused and they told us that they moved away from the region five years ago to find a home, which is unfortunate but not unusual. However, they have come to realise that they weren't given the best advice at the time. They only recently heard about a council scheme which could have helped them with a bond to secure good quality private accommodation. Had they known about the scheme five years ago, they may have been able to avoid uprooting their family and moving away, only to return again later.

The challenge is to provide consistent and useful advice to all customers in a timely fashion, no matter which partner organisation they contact.

### **Management of expectations**

Analysis of the management of current and past oversubscribed registers reveals that much officer time is spent dealing with people's queries about the application form, their position on the list or

their points.<sup>1</sup> Given that most people on the list unfortunately will not get rehoused, this represents a waste of resources and time, both for the customer and the provider. Expectations are not being managed. Indeed expectations are being raised unreasonably by people being registered on a list when they have very little chance of being re-housed through that route. Better housing options advice would manage these expectations and give people information about realistic options that are available. These problems are compounded by the existence of so many registers and different allocation systems.

## **Summary of challenges**

We summarise the background challenges driving the project as follows:

- The existence of separate housing registers and allocation schemes causes confusion and dissatisfaction, for applicants and agencies working with applicants, such as health, social services and voluntary organisations.
- Landlords do not have sight of each other's waiting lists and so people in need can get overlooked because they are not on the right list. Thus housing need is not being met consistently.
- Each partner allocates housing within the same legal framework, according to the legal principle of reasonable preference. Within this, partners may prioritise according to urgent need and local connection.
- Demand for affordable housing far outstrips supply across all counties.
- Where waiting lists are long, there is often little chance of those with lowest or no need being housed in a reasonable time. Their being on the waiting list raises expectations that cannot be met and serves no clear purpose.
- Considerable officer time is wasted explaining to dissatisfied customers why they will not be rehoused, rather than working with people to find different solutions. If expectations are better managed, then customers can be directed to other affordable housing options that are available to them.
- Not all sections of the community are being made aware of the full range of affordable housing options open to them, in a way which enables them to make informed and timely decisions.
- Applicants' support needs are not always identified at an early stage, resulting in unnecessary delays and/or inappropriate, unsustainable lettings

## **Part 2: The aims of SARTH**

The SARTH partnership has grown out of an initiative of Conwy and Denbighshire, who commissioned Jane Richardson from Glyndwr University in November 2010 to undertake preliminary research into developing common access to housing.

The research highlighted the issues presented above and in order to address them recommended having a common register and allocations scheme and making the process simpler and more accessible.

---

<sup>1</sup> Partners monitored customer queries over a period of two weeks in 2011.

It also recommended that the allocation scheme be integrated with an enhanced housing options advice service, to better manage demand and give people better advice to better solve their real needs. This housing options service needs to be locally expert so that people receive advice relevant to them and their needs and preferences at their first point of contact with the common system.

SARTH aims to deliver these solutions and is now a partnership project consisting of the nine partners listed in the introduction, together with Glyndwr University, who operate as a source of independent challenge and advice. The project has a steering group which brings together senior officers from each partner and a working group which brings together allocations, housing and strategy managers.

The project has built on the recommendations above and aims to develop the following:

- **A shared approach to the delivery of housing advice and options.** This aims to better manage customer expectations about the allocation of social housing and provide high quality advice about the whole range of affordable housing options that are available. The advice will be consistent, timely, accessible and locally expert.
- **A shared applications process and shared housing register for social housing.** This will give customers one route to apply for social housing in the area where they want to live. Their application will be placed on a single shared register, so they can be prioritised by all landlords with properties in their chosen areas at the same time.
- **A common allocations framework.** This will provide a consistent assessment of housing need which prioritises those in urgent need. Local connection criteria will still be defined at the local authority level and so the common framework will still in effect be specific to each local authority area. However, the process and approach will be shared. Collaboration will allow good practice to spread.

The project has adopted the following aims and objectives:

**Aims:**

The project aims are to:

- Make services more accessible
- Meet housing need with a wider range of solutions
- Using stock more effectively
- Encourage balanced and sustainable communities
- Ensure Value for Money
- Enhance customer service
- Take into account applicants' individual needs and preferences.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the partnership are:

- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996), Homelessness Act (2002) and relevant Code of Guidance
- To comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and associated legislation
- To ensure that services are responsive to the needs and aspirations of existing and potential customers
- To ensure that those with the greatest housing needs have those needs met
- To ensure that the system is accessible to all potential applicants including access to information, advice, and completion of information requirements
- To reduce barriers to mobility between local housing markets
- To ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to respond to the needs of their customers at the community and estate level
- To ensure consistency in the way in which applicants are treated by all the partner organisations
- To empower applicants and support them to make informed choices about where they want to live
- To provide appropriate, accurate and realistic advice relating to the availability of affordable housing at the point of application
- To provide improved services for vulnerable people who may find it difficult to apply for housing and offer continuing assistance to them in maintaining a successful tenancy
- Help to tackle homelessness and its causes in the region/ locality
- To provide a means *for* assessing housing need across the partnership area
- To facilitate access to alternative housing options including low cost homeownership, intermediate rents and social and private lettings
- To make best use of existing social housing stock
- To maximise customer satisfaction improve the customer service housing applicants receive and ways to ensure that their housing aspirations are realistic.

### **The Opportunity of the SARTH project**

National policy is strongly in favour of collaboration at a regional level on housing and of an emphasis on high quality housing options advice. This is supported by the Welsh Assembly Government strategy “Improving Lives and Communities: Homes in Wales” of April 2010, by the draft “Welsh Assembly Code of Guidance for local authorities on allocation of accommodation and homelessness consultation document” of March 2011 and by the white paper “Homes for Wales: A white paper for better lives and communities” of May 2012.

The white paper “Homes for Wales” states on page 16 that its vision is a future where “there are even better, more integrated policies and public services and joint action between organisations, with effective collaboration between local authorities.”

SARTH has received a vote of support from the Welsh Assembly. The project has won funding from the Assembly through the Social Housing Management Grant programme, to support the development of a pilot over the next 18 months, leading to a fully developed service following this. We see this as a sign that our vision of collaboration on a regional scale combined with a localised approach to service delivery is on the right track.

Funding of £14,227 for 2011/12 and of £34,450 for 2012/13 was sought and has been awarded in full. Further funding of £86,000 for 2013/14 and of £62,800 for 2014/15 has been applied for and a



decision on this is expected later in this financial year. This would amount to half of the projected total project costs of £394,955.

SARTH represents an opportunity for all partners to create a collaborative solution which could address the collective challenges facing us. If we work together, we can build a new regional service to allocate the stock we have in a better way and to give all customers better support and advice, so they can find an alternative to just remaining on a waiting list which might never give them anything back. This is the challenge and this drives partners on, to make the project work.

### **Part 3: Draft Common Allocations Framework (CAF)**

A draft common allocations framework (CAF) is being developed and will be finalised over the period June – August 2012, with the intention of taking this out for public consultation from September 2012. The draft will be shared internally by partner organisations during this time period or shortly afterwards and organisations asked to agree to move to the consultation phase. There are still certain outstanding points which must be agreed during this same period, which are detailed in the appendix below.

Once a consultation draft has been agreed by the partnership steering group, it will be taken out for public consultation. This may be done in a phased approach, depending on how each partner wishes to proceed.

This report highlights key elements of the draft CAF below and then sets out the points in the CAF which must still be determined in order to produce the draft for consultation.

#### **Key elements of the Draft CAF**

##### **Consistency combined with a local approach**

- Housing need will be assessed uniformly across the region, providing fairness and consistency to the customer, taking into account people's individual needs and expressed preferences.
- However, the framework has been designed so that in almost all circumstances applicants with local connection will be given priority over applicants without local connection. Thus each partner is able to target the housing stock in each local authority area at people in their own communities who are most in housing need.
- Partners share one register and so an applicant need make only one application to access the whole system. Each partner with properties in an area chosen by an applicant will be aware of the application and able to give the applicant the appropriate priority in the allocation process.

##### **The banding scheme**

- The draft allocations framework adopts a banding scheme to prioritise people in housing need, following the legal principles regarding reasonable preference, additional preference and local connection.
- The scheme is founded on the principle that priority for social housing is given to those in housing need. The definition of housing need is based on the legal concept of reasonable preference. The approach adopted makes use of the further legal powers to prioritise within applicants entitled to reasonable preference according to local connection and urgent need:
  - Amongst applicants in housing need, further priority will be given to those who have a local connection to the local authority area in which they are applying for housing.
  - Amongst people in housing need with a local connection, highest priority will be given to those in urgent need.
- The local connection criterion used is defined as a connection existing between an applicant (or a member of their household) and a local authority area. Thus, the banding criteria used in the allocations scheme are in fact specific to each local authority area. If an applicant applied to two different counties then they would only be given local connection priority in a county where they had a local connection. This enables the common framework and shared register to be at the same time a local authority specific framework and register in each area.
- When a vacancy becomes available, applicants who have expressed a preference for the area and whose household is suitable for the property type are shortlisted. Applicants are ranked on this shortlist by their band, with those in band one given highest priority and so on. Applicants within the same band are ranked according to date of application, with those who have been waiting longest given highest priority.
- The banding scheme represents a new approach, which is a departure from schemes used by some partners in the past, who may have used points. The banding scheme allows greater transparency for applicants and other agencies working with applicants, whilst at the same time ensuring that housing need is prioritised. It aims to better manage customer expectations and provide greater certainty about where on the list customers are.

### **Allocations within the context of housing options advice**

- An enhanced housing options advice service will be provided for everyone who contacts any of the partners looking for somewhere to live. When they first apply, all customers will be asked where they would like to live and what their needs and preferences are. They will be advised of the full range of options open to them in their chosen areas and can then decide where their best options lie, whether via social housing or another alternative, taking into account supply and demand.
- On the one hand, the allocation scheme is focused on those in greatest housing need. On the other hand, better management of expectations is intended to allow partners to focus more of their resources and energy on better advice and a better service to assist those who stand such little chance of being housed via the social housing route to find alternative affordable housing.
- The framework is based on the following guiding principles:

- To ensure that preference for social housing is given to those in housing need and that those in greatest need are given the highest priority.
- To give higher priority to applicants with a local connection to the area for which they are making an application than to those who have no such connection.
- To ensure that the system is fair, confidential and accessible to all potential applicants.
- To make the best use of all the available housing stock
- To ensure consistency in the way in which applicants are treated by all the partner organisations
- To provide a responsive service that treats everyone as an individual
- To empower applicants and support them to make informed and realistic choices about where they want to live

## **Appendix: Outstanding matters still to be determined in draft Common Allocations Framework (dated 31 May 2012)**

Particular outstanding points remain to be decided regarding the content of the SARTH CAF draft May31 (CAF). These points are still to be agreed by partners before a draft is taken forward for consultation. They are detailed below:

1. Partners have yet to decide as to whether a fifth band is to be included in the banding scheme. Band Five would be defined as follows:

“Band five is for applicants who do not have an urgent housing need and who do not fall within any of the reasonable preference categories.”

Partners are waiting on legal advice as to whether applicants not entitled to reasonable preference should be registered, which will decide whether the band is required.

Partners at the SARTH steering group have decided that if there is no legal requirement to register applicants not entitled to reasonable preference, then the partnership would not wish to include such a band in the draft CAF to be taken forward for consultation. This would imply that applicants who do not fall within the reasonable preference categories and do not have urgent housing needs would not be given any priority in the scheme and would not be recorded on the housing register.

The rationale supporting this decision is that supply and demand of housing accommodation implies that registering applicants in this category gives them unreasonable expectations of being offered accommodation, which cannot be met and does not provide a useful service to people looking for housing. It would also result in resources being diverted into managing applications, updating records and handling enquiries which would produce very little benefit for customers. It is the view of the partnership as a whole that resources would be better directed to providing customers with high quality and locally expert advice at the first point of contact regarding the whole range of affordable housing options.

This strategy would include the development of local marketing strategies by partners to advertise any ad hoc low demand properties which became available and which could not be allocated to applicants from the four priority bands in the scheme. In this regard, the proposed scheme would not disadvantage applicants in this category, who would not have been offered any property allocated from the banding scheme because band five would be below all other bands on the scheme.

2. The partnership still has to decide on where to place the following category of applicant:

- Applicants who occupy properties in short supply and which could be used to re-house other applicants who fall within one of the reasonable preference categories and who would otherwise have to wait an unreasonably long time for housing. Such properties would include properties with adaptations, and properties with 2 or more bedrooms which the current tenant was under-occupying.

It is the intention of the partnership to include a category of this type in band two. The exact wording is still to be determined. Partners are also awaiting further legal advice as to whether it is more appropriate to place such a category in the banding scheme, as is the intention, or to use local lettings policies to deal with such cases. It is the view of the partnership that local lettings policies would too cumbersome for this purpose.

3. The partnership still has to agree how to prioritise applicants who have a local connection and are owed a full homelessness duty. In the 31 May draft, they are placed in band two, unless certain urgent circumstances pertain, in which case they are placed in band one.

However, the partnership is giving further consideration as to whether this should be changed. Possible options that have been discussed are:

- a. According such applicants higher priority than all other reasonable preference categories, but less than applicants in urgent need. This would likely be in a band between the current bands one and two;
- b. Keeping such applicants in band two, but using a quota system to give some level of priority to such applicants. This could, for example, be implemented by offering a set proportion of all vacancies to such applicants. This proportion could vary by local authority.
- c. Leaving the scheme as it is in the draft, with such applicants in band two and accorded the same priority as other applicants with a local connection and entitled to reasonable preference.

The draft has in all other matters of content been agreed by partners at the steering group. Presentational aspects may be altered prior to consultation. This will relate in particular to the addition of certain explanatory statements, depending on which of the options above is taken regarding the three outstanding points.

## FAQ regarding SARTH and the CAF

### **1. Who will have priority for social housing?**

*The proposed common allocations framework ensures that applicants who fall within the 'reasonable preference' groups are recognised as being in housing need, and are prioritised for rehousing within the scheme.*

### **2. How do we ensure that local housing issues are addressed?**

*It is proposed that local connection criteria be used to target housing stock in each local authority area at people with a local connection to that local authority. This will be done within the legislative framework, ensuring that over all, preference is given to all applicants entitled to reasonable preference. Within applicants entitled to reasonable preference, priority will be given to those with local connection.*

*An equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the allocation scheme in its totality does not have an adverse impact on any sections of the community.*

### **3. Should we incorporate sanctions to exclude people from social housing/ suspend applications? If so what sanctions will we wish to apply?**

*The majority of organisations in the partnership currently make provision to exclude people from social housing or reduce the preference they may be given. The proposed approach continues to make such provision, so that certain applicants are ineligible for social housing. It is also proposed that in certain circumstances, where applicants have engaged in behaviour affecting their suitability to be a tenant, they may be given reduced priority. This approach takes into account the Code of Guidance, legislation and good practice and may be further refined following stakeholder feedback.*

### **4. How will we allocate our social housing – will we use Choice based lettings, A points based system or a banding system?**

*The proposal is that a banding system be adopted. This is held to be more appropriate as a means of managing customer expectations, providing fairness and transparency and clearly identifying those who have no demonstrable housing need.*

**5. How can we manage customer expectations and provide timely and consistent advice on housing options?**

*In developing a common approach it is proposed that systems are put in place to provide early and personalised advice on housing options, including those for customers with support needs*

*Further work will be undertaken as part of the SARTH project to identify opportunities for an integrated route to other housing options such as intermediate housing and low cost homeownership. The use of accessible housing registers will also be considered as part of this process.*

**6. What methods of communication can we use in order to maximise customer satisfaction, and ensure value for money?**

*The consultation process will seek views from potential customers and other stakeholders regarding an approach to communicating with customers. The project team will develop an approach based on best practice and feedback from stakeholders. The feasibility study carried out by Glyndwr University suggested that a best practice approach could be achieved through a combination of telephone interviews and personal interviews supported through an online system.*

**7. Who will manage and administer the waiting list and provide advice to customers?**

*It is too early to make detailed recommendations. The approach will be scoped by members of the project team and developed in partnership with stakeholders. Possible IT implementations will also be investigated.*

**8. What methods will we use to engage with and involving local communities in further developing the common allocation framework and associated procedure?**

*It is recommended that consultation with key stakeholders (including current staff involved in allocations and advice) is undertaken following agreement by the project steering group on the draft common allocations framework. Suggested methods are electronic consultation supplemented with focus group meetings, stakeholder workshops and interested customer panels*

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 14 June 2012

**Report Author:** Scrutiny Coordinator

**Title:** Scrutiny Work Programme

---

**1. What is the report about?**

The report presents the Communities Scrutiny Committee with its draft forward work programme for members' consideration.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To seek the Committee to review and agree on its programme of future work, and to update members on relevant issues.

**3. What are the recommendations?**

That the Committee considers the information provided and:

- 3.1 approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate;
- 3.2 appoints Members to serve on each of the Service Performance Challenge Groups;
- 3.3 appoints a representative to serve on the Council's Strategic Investment Group; and
- 3.4 nominates a representative from the Committee to serve on the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

**4. Report details.**

- 4.1 Article 6 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, whilst the rules of procedure for scrutiny committees are laid out in Part 4 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work

programme report. The objective of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.

- 4.4 The Committee is requested to consider its draft work programme for future meetings, as detailed in appendix 1, and approve, revise or amend it as it deems appropriate taking into consideration:
- issues raised by members of the Committee
  - matters referred to it by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group
  - relevance to the Committee's/Council's/community priorities
  - the Council's Corporate Plan and the Director of Social Services' Annual Report
  - meeting workload
  - timeliness
  - outcomes
  - key issues and information to be included in reports
  - officers and/or lead Cabinet members who should be invited (having regard to whether their attendance is necessary or would add value)
  - questions to be put to officers/lead Cabinet members
- 4.5 When considering future items for inclusion on the forward work programme members may also find it helpful to have regard to the following questions when determining a subject's suitability for inclusion on the work programme:
- what is the issue?
  - who are the stakeholders?
  - what is being looked at elsewhere
  - what does scrutiny need to know? and
  - who may be able to assist?
- 4.6 The Committee's draft forward work programme (appendix 1) as it currently stands is one which has been inherited from the former committee. Members are therefore asked to consider whether the programme reflects the new Committee's wishes and priorities.
- 4.7 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above the Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on the Committee's business agenda they have to formally request the Committee to consider receiving a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of suggested subjects.
- 4.8 One completed proposal form has been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting. The request, which can be seen at Appendix 2, seeks the Committee to consider a report on resource levels and the principles of community engagement with respect to



major infrastructure projects that affect the County. If the Committee determines that this request merits discussion at July's meeting, and having regard to the information in paragraph 4.3 above on the optimum number of agenda items to be transacted at any one meeting, members are asked to consider whether any of the items already scheduled for July's meeting can be deferred until a future meeting without undue adverse effect.

4.9 Cabinet Forward Work Programme

When determining their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 3.

4.10 Progress on Committee Resolutions

A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

**5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. In performing this role it can seek individual scrutiny committees to take ownership of specific topics.

5.2 At its last meeting in April no specific recommendations were made with respect to Communities Scrutiny Committee. The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 5 July.

**6. Appointment of Committee Representatives on Council Groups and Boards**

6.1 Periodically the Committee may be asked to appoint representatives from amongst its membership to serve on various Council Boards and Groups.

6.2 Since the formation of the new Council, and subsequently the new committees, requests have been received seeking the Committee to appoint members to serve on the Service Performance Challenge Groups, the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) and the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board. The relevant lead Cabinet members also take part in these Groups and Boards.

6.3 Service Performance Challenge Groups

The Service Performance Challenge process forms part of the Council's mechanism for monitoring how each of its thirteen services are delivering against, amongst other things, their business plans, and performance and efficiency targets. All scrutiny committees have been asked to appoint representatives to these Groups, one for each

service, to act as the Committee's contact for each service and attend the service challenge meetings which are held twice a year. The first round of meetings are taking place during June and July. To assist members to decide whether they would like to put their names forward as prospective Committee contacts for these services an overview of the process is attached at Appendix 5 of this report. The appendix also includes the dates, times and venues for the meetings.

6.4 Strategic Investment Group (SIG)

Similarly all scrutiny committees have been asked to nominate one representative each to serve on the Strategic Investment Group. The Strategic Investment Group, which meets on a monthly basis, considers the Council's future capital requirements and bids for capital funding and external grants. For members' information the Group's terms of reference is attached at Appendix 6.

6.5 Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board

In response to the increased emphasis given by the Welsh Government (WG) to collaborative and partnership working, Denbighshire and Conwy Councils have over a number of years collaborated in the delivery of services in a number of areas. During the term of office of the previous Council a Programme Board was established to oversee and provide proper governance for collaborative projects between both Councils.

6.6 The aim of the Board, the membership of which consists of senior elected members and officers of both authorities, is to drive existing collaborative projects and ensure that they are properly integrated into the work of both councils. The Board also acts as a forum at which proposals for new collaborative projects can be considered prior to them being considered further within each individual authority.

6.7 Denbighshire's representatives on the Board are the Leader, Chief Executive, the Lead Members for Finance, Lead Member for Public Realm, representatives from each of the Scrutiny Committees and the Corporate Director for Economic and Community Ambition. Conwy County Borough Council's representation is similar, albeit that their job titles or portfolio names are different. A copy of the Board's terms of reference (dated February 2011) is attached at Appendix 7 to this report for members' information.

6.8 The Committee is therefore asked to nominate one member to serve as its representative on the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

**7. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priorities in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual

development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council in monitoring and reviewing policy issues.

**8. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

Services may need to allocate officer time to assist the Committee with the activities identified in the forward work programme, and with any actions that may result following consideration of those items.

**9. What consultations have been carried out?**

None required for this report. However, the report itself and the consideration of the forward work programme represent a consultation process with the Committee with respect to its programme of future work.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

No risks have been identified with respect to the consideration of the Committee's forward work programme. However, by regularly reviewing its forward work programme the Committee can ensure that areas of risk are considered and examined as and when they are identified, and recommendations are made with a view to addressing those risks.

**11. Power to make the decision**

Article 6.3.7 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work.

**Contact Officer:**

Scrutiny Coordinator Tel No: (01824) 712554

Email: [dcc\\_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dcc_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

**Note: Items entered in italics have not been approved for submission by the Committee. Such reports are listed here for information, pending formal approval.**

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
16 July (Monday)	1 Management of allocation of Section 106 Commuted Sums for open space provision and Community Infrastructure Levy(CIL)	To monitor the effectiveness of the management arrangements and funds received and committed (report to include the time limits applicable to each commuted sum)	Effective management of the commuted sums and CIL schemes will assist with the Council to deliver the regeneration priority and to bring the Council closer to the community	Graham Boase/Angela Loftus	July 2011
	2 Control of Caravan Sites	To present the proposed standard conditions and procedures developed by the Working Group for the purpose of controlling and monitoring caravan sites in both Denbighshire and Conwy as well as the feedback received at the Operators' Seminar	The development of a robust and collaborative approach to ensure that tourist sites contribute to the local economy and the delivery of the regeneration corporate priority	Graham Boase/Neil Jones (CCBC)	July 2011
	3 Allocation of Additional Resources to SEN in Primary Schools <b>[Education]</b>	To monitor the progress in developing a revised funding formula for one to one SEN support in primary schools	Effective targeting of financial SEN resources for primary schools to support and improve outcomes for individual pupils	Karen Evans/Carly Wilson	December 2011
	4 Day Services provision for Older People in the north of the county <b>[Lead Member to attend]</b>	Presentation of proposals to change service provision to vulnerable client group	Development of effective and efficient services which meet service users/residents' needs and align to new methods of service delivery	Helena Thomas/Phil Gilroy	September 2011 (rescheduled from January)
	5 Community Funding	(i)to analyse the benefits accrued by each project funded by the monies allocated to the Member Area Groups in 2011/12; and	An evaluation of the benefits realised by the communities through the 2011/12 funding allocations, and the development of an effective and	Paul McGrady	March 2012 (rescheduled May 2012)

## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
		(ii) to present proposals on how community funding in future can be more effectively coordinated with other available funds	coordinated community funding strategy for the future which will aim to maximise funding opportunities and realise better quality outcomes for communities within the County		
	6	<i>Major Infrastructure Projects: Resources and Principles of Community Engagement</i>	<i>To examine the level of resource the Council should dedicate to major infrastructure projects and the extent it should actively engage with the local community at key stages in the planning process for such projects</i>	<i>Denise Shaw</i>	<i>June 2012</i>
13 September (Russell House, Rhyl)  Subject: Rhyl Going Forward Programme	1	West Rhyl Strategy	To outline the aims and objectives of the Strategy, its budget allocation and financial implications, the progress to date in implementing the Strategy and the benefits realised so far from completed projects	Tom Booty	By SCVCG February 2012
	2	Retail and Town Centre Workstream	To outline the progress to date in delivering the projects allocated to this workstream including any slippages against timescales and budget	Tom Booty	March 2012

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered	
	3	Tourism and Coastal Strip Workstream	To outline the progress to date in delivering the projects allocated to this workstream including any slippages against timescales and budget	An assessment of whether the Council has sufficient capacity, resources and commitment to achieve the ambitions it shares with partners for the town and surrounding areas and to deliver its corporate priority of regeneration. Identification of any slippages and their causes in order to assist with the delivery of this ambitious programme	Tom Booty	March 2012
25 October	1	Etape Cymru 2012	To provide a detailed analysis of the impact of the 2012 event on the local community, local businesses and participants along with the benefits realised/impact on the wider local economy and Denbighshire as a whole	An evaluation of the impact of the event and any benefits realised or detrimental effects caused by it will enable recommendations to be made with respect to the arrangements for any future major events	Ruth Williams/Mark Dixon	March 2012
	2	Getting Closer to the Community Programme	Presentation of draft proposals on alternative forums and methods for engaging and consulting with residents to replace the former Community Forum meetings	The development of inclusive engagement/consultative methods/fora that will ensure local citizens actively engage with the Council and its partner organisations	Hywyn Williams/David Davies/Amanda Brookes	April 2012
	3	Flood Risk Areas within Denbighshire (follow-up report to the one presented in June 2011)	Information on all areas within the County which are at risk from any type of flooding incidents and the plans in place to address the identified risks	Assurances that action has been taken or plans are in place to mitigate the risk of flooding to the identified communities and development of robust contingency plans	Wayne Hope	June 2011

## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
6 December	1	Review of Heritage and Arts Assets	To consider the progress to date in realising efficiencies with respect to the County's Heritage and Arts assets and the strategies developed with a view to ensuring their future viability	Arts and heritage assets that deliver the maximum benefits for local residents, communities, tourists and the Council	Steve Parker/Jamie Groves/Paul McGrady	May 2011
	2	Disposal of Council Buildings, Property and Land	Consideration of the Council's asset management/disposal strategy and the procedures/guidelines in place for disposing of Council assets	Assurances that due consideration is given to alternative uses, including community use, in all asset disposals, and that all asset disposal transactions are open/transparent and are undertaken in the taxpayers' interest	Paul McGrady/Chris Davies	January 2012 (by SCVCG)
17 January 2013						
28 February						
18 April						

**Future Issues**

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
----------------------------	-------------------	-------------------	--------	--------------



## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

The Quality and Provision of Community and Education Facilities	To outline the extent and quality of community and education facilities across the county (including sports grounds and village halls and the assistance the Council can give local groups/communities to maintain and access community facilities)	That all residents have access to good quality and affordable community/education facilities within a reasonable distance of their local community	Hywyn Williams/Jamie Groves/Diane Hesketh	May 2011
Community Sustainability	To detail actions being taken by the Council with a view ensuring the sustainability of Denbighshire's urban and rural areas	Identification of measures and actions to improve the quality of life of local citizens by ensuring the viability of the County's diverse communities which will contribute to the regeneration of communities and the area and assist the local economy	Hywyn Williams/Bethan Jones/Mark Dixon	May 2011
Waste Management Provision for Business and Schools	To detail the provision available to businesses and schools in the County with respect to waste management/recycling	To ensure that the majority of schools and businesses in the County are accessing the recycling services available with respect to the disposal of waste and are not incurring excessive costs in their attempt to recycle their waste	Steve Parker/Ken Thompson	May 2011
<i>Access to the Countryside</i>	<i>New Committee post May to decide whether to proceed with this subject and to scope the purpose and expected outcomes</i>		<i>Mark Dixon/Huw Rees</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>Transfer of Services to Town Councils</i>	<i>New Committee post May to decide whether to proceed with this subject and to scope the purpose and expected outcomes</i>		<i>Hywyn Williams /Paul Mead</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>The effectiveness of CCTV</i>	<i>New Committee post May to decide whether to proceed with this subject and to scope the purpose and expected outcomes</i>		<i>Graham Boase</i>	<i>May 2011</i>
<i>Wind Farms</i>	<i>New Committee post May to decide whether to proceed with this subject and to scope the purpose and expected outcomes</i>		<i>Graham Boase/Paul Mead</i>	<i>May 2011</i>

**For future years**

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan


**Information/Consultation Reports**

<b>Information / Consultation</b>	<b>Item (description / title)</b>	<b>Purpose of report</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date Entered</b>

06/06/2012

**Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
16 July	<b>2 July</b>	13 September	<b>30 August</b>	25 October	<b>11 October</b>

Communities Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

PROPOSAL FORM FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES					
NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		Communities			
DATE OF MEETING / TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION		As soon as possible – July meeting preferable to fit in with the timetable for major infrastructure projects in Denbighshire.			
TITLE OF REPORT		Major Infrastructure Project: Resources and Principles of Community Engagement			
P U R P O S E	1. Why is the report being proposed? (see also the checklist overleaf)	There are a number of major infrastructure projects that are within or directly affect Denbighshire Council. Decisions on major infrastructure projects are made at a national level, but Local Authorities have a significant role to play in the planning process. There is no statutory obligation placed on the Local Authority to respond to pre-application consultation or participate in the examination process, but given the scale of the development in Denbighshire and the impact this will have on our local communities, officers feel it is incumbent to fully participate in the process. The aim of this report is to seek resolution on the level of resource the Council should dedicate to major infrastructure projects and the extent to which the Council should proactively engage the local community at key stages in the planning process.			
	2. What issues are to be scrutinised?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to scrutinise the level of resource the Council should dedicate to major infrastructure projects; and</li> <li>the extent to which the Council should proactively engage the local community at key stages in the planning process for major infrastructure projects.</li> </ul>			
	3. Is it necessary/desirable for witnesses to attend e.g. lead members, officers/external experts?	Yes – Officers & lead member should be in attendance. Representative members of the public and/or community councils may also be invited to put forward the community's point of view.			
	4. What will the committee achieve by considering the report?	The committee will steer the policy and procedural stance the Council should adopt with regards to major infrastructure projects.			
	5. Score the topic from 0 – 4 on aims & priorities and impact (see overleaf)*	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Aims &amp; Priorities</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Aims & Priorities	Impact	4
Aims & Priorities	Impact				
4	4				
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS		Major infrastructure projects in Denbighshire include very large energy projects (windfarms and new grid infrastructure) which will have a significant and far reaching impact on local residents and local communities.			
REPORTING PATH – what is the next step? Are Scrutiny's recommendations to be reported elsewhere?		Full Council			
AUTHOR		Denise Shaw			



**CABINET: FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

<b>JUNE 2012</b>	
Mental Health Homeless Supported Housing – Contract Award	Lead Member / Gary Major
ABBA Floating Support Project – Contract Award	Lead Member / Gary Major
Compulsory Purchase Order Areas for 25/26 West Parade, Rhyl	Lead Member / Catherine Jones Black
Corporate Plan Q4 performance report	Cllr B Smith / Alan Smith
Financial Outturn 2011/12	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Financial Update 2012/13	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator
<b>JULY 2012</b>	
Regional CCTV	Cllr D Smith / Graham Boase
Regional Collaboration on Economic Development	Lead Member / Mark Dixon
Regional Collaborative Committees	Lead Member / Sally Ellis / Jenny Elliott
Regional Collaboration on Economic Regeneration Purpose: Approval for the governance arrangements for priority collaborative activities	Lead Member / Mark Dixon
Mental Health Measure	Lead Member / Sally Ellis
Financial Update Report	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator
<b>SEPTEMBER 2012</b>	
Financial Update Report	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator

<b>OCTOBER 2012</b>	
Financial Update Report	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator
<b>NOVEMBER 2012</b>	
Financial Update Report	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator
<b>DECEMBER 2012</b>	
Welsh Housing Quality Standards	Lead Member / Peter McHugh
Financial Update Report	Cllr J Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
Items from Scrutiny Committees	Scrutiny Coordinator

Updated 07/06/2012

## Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
12 April 2012	3. Urgent Matters	<i><b>RESOLVED</b> that the position be noted and the issues raised regarding Mwrog Street, Ruthin be considered by the committee following the county council elections to be held in May 2012.</i>	Various options are being assessed and County Councillors will be fully consulted as these options are developed further.
	7. Getting Closer to the Community	<i><b>RESOLVED</b> that – (a) subject to members' comments as detailed above, the Getting Closer to the Community Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be supported; (b) a report on the draft proposals for alternative arrangements to replace Community Forms be submitted to the committee in September or October 2012, and (c) the Community Engagement Manager approach the Member Support and Development Manager with a view to providing an opportunity for local members to attend future Citizenship Ceremonies for applicants living in Denbighshire.</i>	a report on the draft proposals has been scheduled into the Committee's work programme for 25 October (see appendix 1)  All county councillors were sent an e-mail, from the Council's Member Support and Development Manager, on 17 May drawing their attention to these ceremonies and advising that in future local members will be invited to these ceremonies to extend the local community's welcome to the new residents





# Service Performance Challenges

The Service Performance Challenge Programme is a key mechanism for monitoring performance, future plans, efficiency targets, budget discipline, and risk management throughout the council.

The meetings are chaired by the relevant Corporate Director, and are attended by the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance & Assets, the Lead Member for Modernising and Performance, the Head of Business Planning & Performance, and the Head of Finance & Assets. Other key elected members from the Cabinet and Scrutiny may also attend, as may the Leader and Chief Executive. This panel will provide a comprehensive 'challenge' to each Head of Service on the running of their service.

The meetings are usually held in October-November (mid-year) and May-June (year-end). It should be noted, however, that there is a delay in the programme this year to accommodate the recent Council elections. The Service Performance Challenge meetings held in October-November each year will act as a means to update the Efficiency Programme. This will include discussion of draft budgets and plans at a time when the WG settlement is known, but before Council makes its final decision on adopting the budget. Following the May-June Service Performance Challenge, services will draw up draft Service Plan proposals and any capital or revenue bids that require funding beyond the projected service budget.

The current timetable for the Challenge programme is below. Paperwork will be emailed one week before the meeting. If you have any problems or queries, please contact the Corporate Improvement Team on 01824 706161.

**Service Performance Challenge**  
**June – July 2012**

Service:	Date:	Venue:
Housing & Community Development – Peter McHugh	Wednesday, June 13 2.00 p.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Children & Family Services – Leighton Rees	Monday, June 18 2.00 p.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Adult & Business Services – Phil Gilroy	Wednesday, June 20 2.00 p.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Environmental Services – Steve Parker	Tuesday, June 26 2.00 p.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Legal & Democratic Services – Gary Williams	Wednesday, June 27 9.30 a.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Business Planning & Performance – Alan Smith	Friday, June 29 2.00 p.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Education and Customers & Education Support – Karen Evans & Jackie Walley	Tuesday, July 3 9.00 a.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Communications, Marketing & Leisure – Jamie Groves	Wednesday, July 4 9.00 a.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Finance & Assets – Paul McGrady	Thursday, July 5 9.30 a.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Highways & Infrastructure – Stuart Davies	Wednesday, July 11 2.00 p.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin
Regeneration – Steve Parker, Graham Boase, and Peter McHugh	Friday, July 13 2.00 p.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Planning & Public Protection – Graham Boase	Tuesday, July 24 2.00 p.m.	Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin
Strategic Human Resources – Linda Atkin	Thursday, July 26 2.00 p.m.	Cabinet Room, County Hall, Ruthin

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GROUP

### TERMS OF REFERENCE.

1. To review the capital requirements for future years as submitted by Heads of Service and in light of likely future capital funding available, recommend a medium to long term strategy for;

Prioritising schemes for support and  
Identifying options for increasing funding available.

2. Ensure bids for resources are in line with;

Statutory requirements,  
Council's agreed priorities,  
Corporate Asset Management Plan and  
Contribute to improved service delivery, sustainability, energy use  
reduction

3. Review the results of the on going Asset Challenge process to ensure asset retention is justified and that opportunities for disposal and generation of capital receipts are taken.

4. To review capital spend and project delivery on a regular basis. Requests for inclusion of 100% funded schemes in the Capital Plan to also be reviewed by the CMG.

5. To review all bids for external revenue and capital funds.

6. To act as a programme board for Regeneration.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Terms of Reference

## Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board

### Membership from each council

#### **Members**

3 Cabinet Members  
3 Scrutiny Members

#### **Officers**

Chief Executive  
1 Corporate Director

### Purpose

The Programme Board has been established to oversee and provide proper governance for collaborative projects between Conwy CBC and Denbighshire CC. It will drive existing collaborative projects and ensure that they are properly integrated into the work of both councils, and it will be a forum at which proposals for any new collaborative projects can be considered prior to them being considered further within each of the two Authorities.

### Method of Working

The Programme Board will be owned jointly by both Conwy and Denbighshire. The chairmanship of the board will rotate annually between the counties, and the vice chair will not be from the same council as the chair. The Chair can be a member or an officer.

To be quorate there need to be at least 4 members of the board present from each authority. In order to facilitate continuity no deputies will be permitted.

Administrative support to the Board and officer group will be identified from both authorities. This will share the workload and increase ownership within both authorities.

The Board will meet bimonthly in alternate Counties and will work to an agreed project management methodology.<sup>1</sup>

### Role

**1. The primary role of the Programme Board is to provide cross county and within county leadership to service collaboration projects between Conwy and Denbighshire and effectively deliver strategic change. It will achieve this through;**

- ensuring time and money is not wasted on projects that do not deliver benefits and that scarce resources are prioritised
- improving communication across and within both councils in relation to collaborative projects and providing a strong mandate from executive members, scrutiny and management
- commitment to adequate resources and cash
- providing better focus to driver change through ensuring the right projects are selected and that tangible benefits are delivered

- 2. The Board will be responsible for properly co-coordinating the delivery of all collaborative projects between Conwy and Denbighshire by;**
  - Ensuring that the projects are properly scoped and considering requests for changing the scope, this could be for example where the portfolio of departments within a service differs between counties and it is felt that consistency could be of benefit;
  - Discussing the strengths, weaknesses and challenges facing the services within each county , the implications of these on collaboration and exploring alternative ways of providing services across both counties ensuring that best practice is shared and developed;
  - Ensuring that work is prioritised that will generate the most benefit in terms of service improvement, cost avoidance and efficiencies through analysing the quick and longer term wins
  - Ensuring that each project has a clear plan and an agreed set of targeted outcomes and benefits, that all the relevant stakeholders are involved in the project, for example staff representatives, and that the departments of both councils are working appropriately to support the collaboration projects;
  - Ensuring that projects respond to emergent evidence and other changes in the political and operational context;
  - Ensuring projects are implemented and that the stated benefits are realised.
3. The Board will consider all proposals for any new collaborative projects between Conwy and Denbighshire.
4. Either Cabinet or the joint meeting of both county's executive teams may request that the Board looks at a particular issue, or focuses its efforts in a particular area.
5. Representation on the Board from Scrutiny Committees will ensure there is a strong link between the work of the Board and the role of Scrutiny
6. Whilst the activity of the Board is concerned with collaboration between Conwy and Denbighshire opportunities to collaborate with other North Wales Councils are likely to be discussed and communication on the work of the Regional Programme Boards is likely to feature as part of the agenda on a regular basis.
7. The Board will also provide the ability to respond jointly to the Welsh Assembly Government regarding issues/constraints relating to the Collaboration Agenda