

To: Members of the Communities
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 May 2015

Direct Dial: 01824 712554

e-mail: 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, 28 MAY 2015** 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 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

To appoint a Vice-Chair for the Committee for the 2015/16 municipal year

9:30am – 9:35am

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 5 - 10)

To receive the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 23rd April, 2015 (copy enclosed).

9:35am – 9:40am

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FORM THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK AND FINISH GROUP (Pages 11 - 34)

To consider a report (copy attached) from the Strategic Housing and Planning Manager which seeks the Committee to review and comment on the conclusions and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group

9:40am – 10:30am

BREAK

10:30am - 10:45am

7 FOOD SAFETY, STANDARDS AND PROCUREMENT - UPDATE (Pages 35 - 38)

To consider a joint report by the Head of Planning & Public Protection and the Public Protection Manager which seeks the Committee to consider and comment on the progress made against the Food Safety Task and Finish Group's recommendations

10:45am – 11:30am

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 39 - 58)

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.

11:30am – 12pm

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

12pm – 12:15pm

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts
(Chair)

Councillor Win Mullen-James

Bill Cowie
Peter Evans
Carys Guy
Rhys Hughes

Bob Murray
Cefyn Williams
Cheryl Williams

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COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1A, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 23 April 2015 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Carys Guy, Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Chair), Rhys Hughes, Win Mullen-James (Vice-Chair), Bob Murray, Cefyn Williams and Cheryl Williams.

Lead Member Councillor David Smith attended at the Committee's request.

Councillors Brian Blakeley and Martyn Holland attended as observers.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Economic and Community Ambition (RM), Head of Highways and Environmental Services (SP), Head of Business, Improvement and Modernisation (AS), Head of Planning and Public Protection (GB), Section Manager: Network Management (TT), Development Manager: Planning and Public Protection (PM), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Administrative Officer (CW).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.A. Evans, J.S. Welsh and Lead Member H.C. Irving.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Members declared any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items were raised 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.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 12th March, 2015 were submitted.

RESOLVED – *that the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.*

5 RATIONALISATION OF PRECAUTIONARY GRITTING ROUTES

A copy of a joint report by the Head of Highways and Environmental Services (HHES) and the Network Manager on how Highways and Environmental Services

intend to deliver reductions in precautionary salting mileages, which had been endorsed as part of the Freedoms and Flexibilities process, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The HHES introduced the report which detailed how the required reductions in route mileage had been developed in a logical and rational manner, and provided an assurance that they would deliver the required savings.

The officers confirmed that a total of £250K of savings would be required from within the Highways maintenance budget for 2015/16. Potentially £60K of the total savings had been identified through reducing the number of precautionary gritting routes in the County. The routes referred to in the report were part of the County's own road network. Trunk roads had not been included as they were the responsibility of the Welsh Government, who paid the Council to grit them on its behalf. He emphasised that the proposal was to remove the identified routes from the 'precautionary' gritting schedule. These routes would be gritted in the event of a snowfall or snow being forecast.

The Section Manager: Network Management (SMNM) confirmed that the majority of the proposed routes were located in the north of the County, as alternative routes were available for road-users. The lack of suitable alternative routes in the south of the county meant that the rationalisation process could not as easily be applied there.

A change in legislation within the last 10 years had meant that Local Authorities now had to publicise in advance which routes they planned to precautionary grit during the forthcoming winter, hence the reason to consult on these proposals at this time.

The following points, included in the report were also highlighted:-

- Each salting run involved 9 vehicles driving a total of 850 kilometres of which 570 kilometres was salted.
- The optimisations prior to the 2014/15 season having led to some complaints from the public, so the reasons behind the changes would have to be communicated in a planned and coordinated manner.
- An estimated route reduction of around 10% being required to achieve the level of saving specified on non-trunk roads, dependent on weather conditions.

In response to Members' questions the officers and the Lead Member advised that once the final decision had been taken to remove the identified roads from the County's precautionary gritting lists the decision would be communicated to all neighbouring local authorities with whom the Council worked closely with on cross-border gritting. This was normal practice and would inform the normal discussions between authorities on cross-border gritting arrangements. All the savings in relation to this proposal would be realised from the salt/grit saved and vehicle operative costs, no jobs would be lost. However, an adverse winter could severely impact on the projected savings.

It was also explained that with respect to assessing risks when determining gritting routes officers considered the probability factor of accidents occurring. In relation to the routes identified for withdrawal from the precautionary gritting schedule the probability factor had not been calculated as 'high risk', it was considered an 'acceptable' level of risk. However, if it became apparent that a high rate of accidents were occurring it would be reported to the Head of Service who would undertake an immediate review of the risk and the decision.

The officers agreed that they would circulate the proposals and relevant maps to each Member Area Group (MAG) seeking them to discuss them before July 2015. If required a Highways officer would be made available to attend the MAG meetings to explain the proposals.

Members were informed that the resulting effects of the review would be on the drivers only. There would not be any disproportionate impact on any groups with protected characteristics, and Members attention was invited to Appendix 2. Details of the consultation process adopted, and the possible risks and measures implemented to mitigate them, had been included in the report.

At the conclusion of the ensuing discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above and the distribution of the proposals to Member Area Groups for information, Communities Scrutiny Committee endorse the route changes for precautionary gritting.*

6 BETTER REGULATION OF CARAVAN SITES

A report by the Development Manager, Planning and Public Protection (DM), which stemmed from Members' concerns on the perceived use of holiday caravan sites for residential use and the potential consequential loss of income for the Council, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Head of Planning and public Protection (HPP) introduced the report and explained that a pilot project to assess the scope of the problem had identified the complexity of the work and the potential implications of sudden stringent enforcement on a number of Council departments and on individuals who may be 'living' on some sites. This pilot had also highlighted that a gap existed in routine information sharing between the service provider arm of the Council and its regulatory services - routine information sharing may avert the escalation of the problem over time and assist with the calculation of population figures which affected the amount of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) awarded to the Council.

As a result of the Committee's earlier recommendation that resources be made available to take the project forward, the Corporate Executive Team (CET) had asked the Business Improvement and Modernisation Service to source data from all Council departments on individuals who had given caravan parks as their address when applying for services or concessions. Through the initial pilot work it had become apparent that there was a need for the Council's regulatory services to

work with some caravan site owners to support them to better manage their sites and comply with the conditions granted to them.

Details of the progress made since December, 2014, and the findings of an initial trawl of the pilot group, had been included in Appendix 1 a confidential document.

In January, 2015 a meeting had been held with a major caravan park owner to explain the nature of the Council project, and Appendix 2 provided a summary of the meeting. Officers from Denbighshire and Conwy had also met to discuss the nature of the project, the scale of the problem and the potential for collaborative work on a "Site Monitoring" protocol.

The HPP and DM responded to Members' questions and advised that:-

- individual caravans situated in the gardens of private dwellings were not included within the current project, as the majority of these in Denbighshire were an ancillary part of the main dwelling;
- chalets were covered by the same planning and licensing laws as caravans;
- if holiday caravan site owners were permitting caravan owners to live on their sites for the entire duration of their licence e.g. 10 months etc. and those caravan owners could not supply a 'home' address elsewhere, both the site owner and the caravan owner could be liable for prosecution on the grounds that the site was not complying with its planning and licensing conditions as a 'holiday' site, and the caravan owner for using a holiday caravan as their permanent abode;
- the priority of the work going forward would be to stop people using their caravans as their permanent residence. However, this would need to be managed effectively to limit the impact of enforcement action on individuals, some of whom were vulnerable. There would also need to be contingency plans in place to deal with the consequences of any action on the Council itself i.e. people presenting themselves as homeless. There may also be an issue around the quality of the caravans in comparison to the quality of housing available for the displaced caravan dweller and their 'financial' circumstances to secure alternative accommodation;
- once the extent of the problem and the anticipated impact of stringent enforcement was clear a decision would need to be taken on what the Council should do with respect to historical breaches and what it would be doing in future to deal with breaches of conditions. The cost of an all-encompassing enforcement policy could be extremely high and the fallout from it could potentially be unmanageable and damaging to the Authority's reputation;
- there were 2 residential caravan sites in Denbighshire, in Rhyl and Prestatyn respectively;
- caravan site owners were subject to National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) business rates. This was calculated by the Valuation Office and collected centrally by the government, with a percentage of it returning to the County via the RSG settlement. The local Authority was not therefore obliged to provide services such as refuse collection on these sites;
- if breaches to planning or licensing laws were suspected Data Protection laws could not legitimately be used to withhold information;
- the regulations pertaining to free bus passes had been changed earlier this year. Individuals who now presented a caravan site as their permanent residence would not be eligible for a free bus pass;

- compliance with caravan site regulations was not a problem that was unique to Denbighshire, the majority of local authorities seemed to be struggling with policing and enforcing the conditions granted. It was also fair to say that some owners were self-regulating and complying with the conditions granted to them.

Members felt that there was a need to investigate the extent of the problem and the potential costs and impact of enforcement options, including perhaps consideration being given to having some sites designated dual use sites - holiday and residential use, but with a clear separation between the two areas of the sites. They also felt that the work in relation to better regulation of caravan sites should be publicised widely. Consequently the Committee:-

RESOLVED – *that subject to the above observations:-*

- (a) *the Committee support the direction of the project to date and acknowledge the potential extent of the work in hand; and*
- (b) *the results of the scoping work and the draft strategy options for more effective regulation of caravan sites be presented to the committee in the summer of 2015.*

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator, which requested the Committee to review and agree its forward work programme and which provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A copy of the 'Member's proposal form' had been included as Appendix 2. A copy of the Cabinet forward work programme had been provided as Appendix 3. A table summarising progress on recent Committee resolutions and advising Members on progress with their implementation had been included in Appendix 4.

The SC explained that as the next meeting of the Committee would be the first meeting after the Annual Council meeting, the Committee would be required to appoint a Vice Chair for the ensuing year. The role description for the Scrutiny Chair and Vice Chair had been included in the Briefing Notes for the meeting. The SC explained that CV's would be sought from Members wishing to submit nominations for the post, and these would be required by the 20th May, 2015.

Members agreed that a report on Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group's findings be included on the Committee's forward work programme for the next meeting, following consideration by Council Briefing.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group had met on the 2nd April, 2015. At the meeting it considered a request made at the County Council meeting on 24th February, 2015 that the impact of late notification and allocation of central government grant funding on local government financial planning and management be examined in detail. Members concurred with the views expressed by the SCVCG that the Committee include this item in its forward work programme for meeting in July, 2015. It was also agreed that the Welsh Government Minister be

invited to attend the meeting to discuss how the timing of grant allocation and notification could be improved for the benefit of all parties.

Members agreed that a report on the Youth Service, and the progress made with the community mapping exercise on services available for children and young people, be included in the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting in September, 2015 as detailed in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above amendments and agreements, the Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.*

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Chair had attended an Education Service Challenge meeting on the 22nd April, 2015. He explained that the meeting had been very positive and highlighted the main topics of discussion which included:-

- The reasons for the core subject indicators (CSI) results in Denbighshire being misleading.
- The role and responsibilities of LEA Governors.
- Consultation on the quality and appointment of Headteachers
- Welsh language in Denbighshire schools.
- Management of the appraisal system.

RESOLVED – *that the Committee receive and note the report.*

Meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.

Report To:	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	28th May 2015
Lead Members:	Lead Member for Public Realm/Lead Member for Customers and Communities/Lead Member for Modernising and Performance
Report Author:	Strategic Housing and Planning Manager
Title:	Conclusions & Recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Affordable Housing is a key issue for the Council, and forms part of the Council's Housing Priority in the Corporate Plan. The Council's approach to delivering affordable housing was identified as a potential weakness by the Wales Audit Office in the Council's Annual Improvement Report May 2014 with a recommendation that the Council clarify its approach. The Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group was set up in response to concerns amongst Members about affordable housing policy and delivery. This report outlines the conclusions and recommendations agreed by the Task and Finish Group.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 This report has been prepared as a result of a request from Communities Scrutiny to review the conclusions and recommendations agreed by the Task & Finish Group, prior to them being reported to Cabinet. A summary of these recommendations was presented to Council Briefing on 14th April 2015 and Members raised some additional issues to be reflected in the Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group final report. This report provides the opportunity for Scrutiny Committee to have an input to the Task & Finish Group's final report and ensure that issues raised at Council Briefing are included in the report. The final report will inform the development of Denbighshire's wider Housing Strategy and future reviews of planning policy and guidance. Where appropriate the finalised recommendations will be reflected in strategies, plans and guidance relating to affordable housing.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Committee considers and comments on the conclusions and recommendations put forward by the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group (attached as Appendix I).

4. Report details.

- 4.1 The Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group has been co-chaired by the Lead Member for Customers and Communities and the Lead Member for Public Realm. Members from Scrutiny and Planning Committee were part of the group and the aim of the group was to review the Council's approach to delivering affordable housing and make recommendations for improvement to inform the Draft Housing Strategy and future reviews of planning policy and guidance. The terms of reference and membership of the Group are included as Appendices 2 & 3 in the attached Task and Finish Group report. The Task and Finish Group began meeting in September 2014 and held 7 workshops. It considered a range of affordable housing issues in depth, including defining affordable housing, planning policy approach, how affordable housing is accessed, demand and funding options. A note summarising the areas of discussion at each of the Task and Finish Group meetings is included in the Report back on Conclusions and Recommendations attached as Appendix I.
- 4.2 The recommendations from the Task and Finish Group will form a key input to the on-going development of the Council's wider Housing Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan and it has been proposed that the Housing Strategy should be reported to Council for consideration in October 2015.
- 4.3 The Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group - Report back on Conclusions and Recommendations is attached as Appendix I and it summarises the key findings agreed by the Task and Finish Group at its final meeting. A summary of these recommendations was presented to Council Briefing on 14th April and a number of issues raised by Members at this meeting.
- 4.4 Appendix II sets out the issues raised at Council Briefing, together with the relevant recommendation in the Report back on Conclusions and recommendations attached as Appendix I

What happens next?

- 4.5 The intention is to report the key findings and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group to Cabinet in June and comments from Communities Scrutiny Committee will inform that report. The conclusions and recommendations will form the basis of the affordable housing theme in the Housing Strategy. A number of the recommendations are already being actioned, including proposals to revise the Council's approach to the re-use of rural buildings in the open countryside. Revised supplementary planning guidance allowing for re-use for market housing, provided affordable housing can be demonstrated to be unviable, was adopted by Planning Committee on 13th May 2015.
- 4.6 The Task & Finish Group recommended that planning policies relating to affordable housing should be reviewed. There is currently no mechanism to amend policies in the Local Development Plan other than through a full review of the entire plan. Welsh Government is considering legislative amendments to allow for partial reviews but this has not been confirmed to date. As an

interim arrangement, amended supplementary planning guidance has been adopted, which will allow for the conversion of rural buildings to market housing, however a full review of planning policies will remain a longer term action.

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

5.1 The recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group and accompanying Action Plan will form a key input to Denbighshire's emerging Housing Strategy and will contribute to the following corporate priorities:

- Developing the local economy – development within the County will contribute towards securing local employment opportunities in the construction sector
- Ensuring access to good quality housing – successful delivery of the proposed actions will enable improved provision of additional affordable and market housing across Denbighshire to meet the County's needs.
- Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible

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

6.1 Successful delivery of the actions identified will be dependent on a partnership approach within the Council, including input from Finance, Legal, Property, Planning & Public Protection services.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

7.1 An EqIA will be undertaken for the further development of Denbighshire's Housing Strategy prior to its formal adoption.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 The Task and Finish Group comprised Members of Planning Committee and Scrutiny, who had the opportunity to be involved in all the meetings.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 The detailed cost implications of recommendations made will have to be considered further as the strategy develops.

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

10.1 Failure to progress the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group would miss the opportunity to improve the Council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing and demonstrate action to Wales Audit Office. The delivery of the Housing Strategy is a key priority for the Council & improving the delivery of affordable housing within the County will be a fundamental aim of the Strategy.

11. Power to make the Decision

11.1 Article 6.3.3 of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's policy development functions.

Contact Officer:

Strategic Planning and Housing Manager

Tel: 01824 706912

Denbighshire County Council

Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group

Report back on conclusions and
recommendations



April 2015

1. Background

- 1.1 Affordable Housing is a key issue for the Council, and forms part of the Council's Housing Priority in the Corporate Plan. The Task and Finish Group was set up in response to concerns amongst Members about affordable housing policy and delivery. The Council's approach to delivering affordable housing was identified as a potential weakness by the Wales Audit Office in the Council's Annual Improvement Report May 2014 with a recommendation that the Council clarify its approach.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group has been co-chaired by the Lead Member for Customers and Communities and the Lead Member for Public Realm. Members from Scrutiny and Planning Committee sit on the group and the aim of the group is to review the approach to delivering affordable housing and make recommendations for improvement which will inform the Council's Draft Housing Strategy and future reviews of planning policy and guidance. The Task and Finish Group considered a range of affordable housing issues in depth, including defining affordable housing, planning policy approach, how affordable housing is accessed, demand and funding options. This report draws out the key conclusions and recommendations arising from the workshops.
- 1.3 Where appropriate the finalised recommendations will be reflected in strategies, plans and guidance relating to affordable housing. A note summarising the areas of discussion at each of the Task and Finish Group meeting is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.4 The recommendations from the Task and Finish Group will form a key input to the on-going development of the Council's Housing Strategy and it has been proposed that the Housing Strategy should be reported to Council for consideration later this year. The Housing Strategy will provide the approach to addressing the Housing Priority in the Corporate Plan.

2. What is affordable housing?

"Affordable housing is housing provided to meet the needs of those who cannot afford general market housing, and is retained as affordable for the first and subsequent occupiers" (*Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance 2014*)

- 2.1 Affordable housing can be provided through a local authority, registered social landlord, private developer or via self-build. It can include social rented housing (affordable housing for rent which is provided by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords and has regard to Welsh Government's benchmark rents), intermediate rented (where rents are above those of social rented housing, but below market housing prices) and ownership schemes (including shared equity/

ownership, where a reduced proportion of the value of the property is bought and a proportion of the equity is retained by an RSL). Provision is not only through new-build it may also be through better use of the existing stock – this may be through changing the tenure or bringing empty homes back into use. Any affordable housing must have a secure mechanism to ensure that it remains affordable.

- 2.2 The planning system delivers affordable housing by requiring development for market housing to provide a percentage of the homes to be affordable for local people. Affordable Housing is also currently achieved through the use of WG funding, most commonly in the form of Social Housing Grant funding. This funding is used to help Registered Social Landlords deliver schemes for affordable housing. There are currently 5 RSLs who are able to access Social Housing Grant funding in Denbighshire and the funding is administered by the County Council.
- 2.3 Under the provisions of the LDP, affordable housing required under planning obligations is 10% across the county. House prices are still relatively low in the area and to have a higher threshold could be barrier to development, as this would make sites less commercially viable and the risk is even lower house building rates. There is provision in the LDP policy for this to be reviewed if house prices begin to rise and viability can be assured. Developers of between three and nine developments, where the policy does not allow for the provision of a house on site, must provide a financial contribution towards affordable housing.
- 2.4 Levels of development have been variable, with a peak in 2010/11 due to the completion of 59 extra care units in that year.

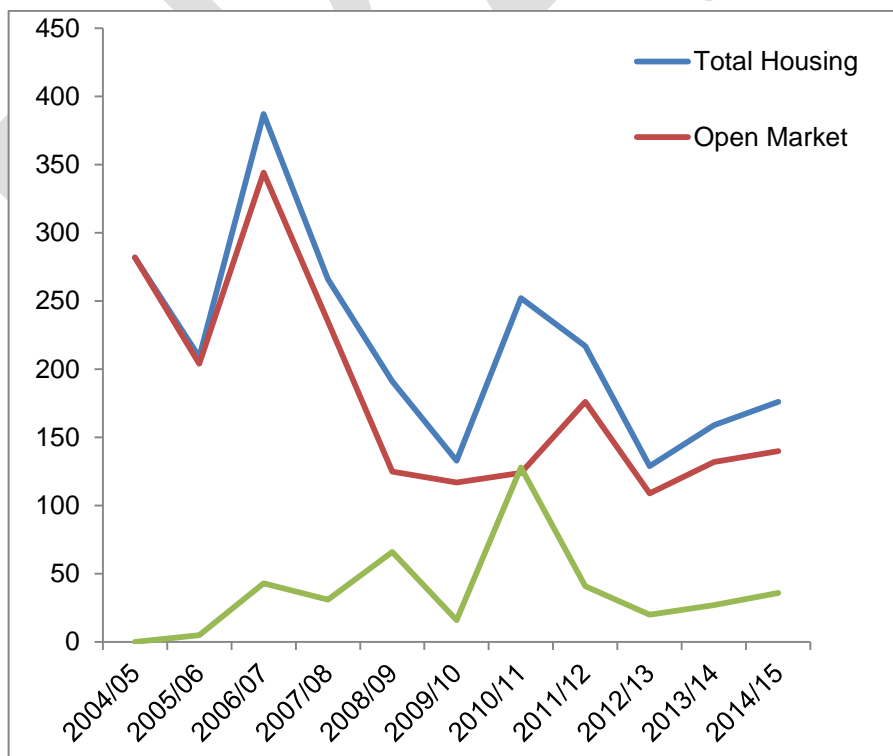
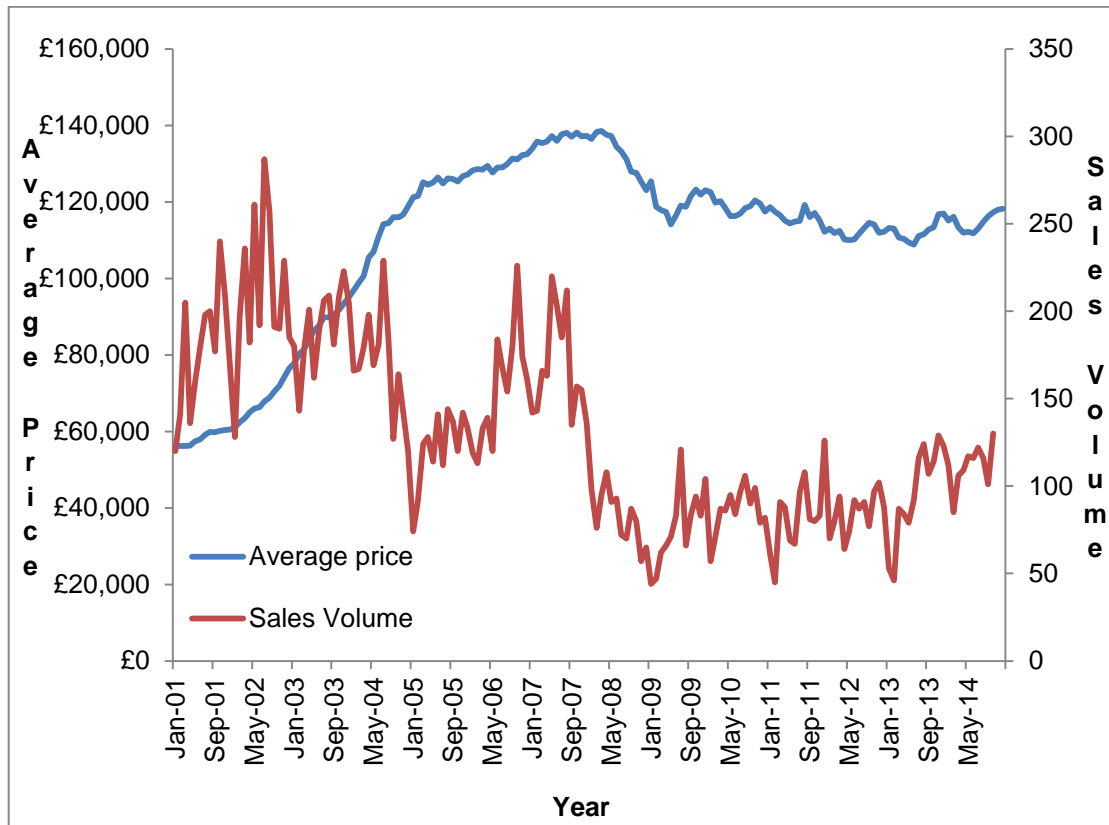


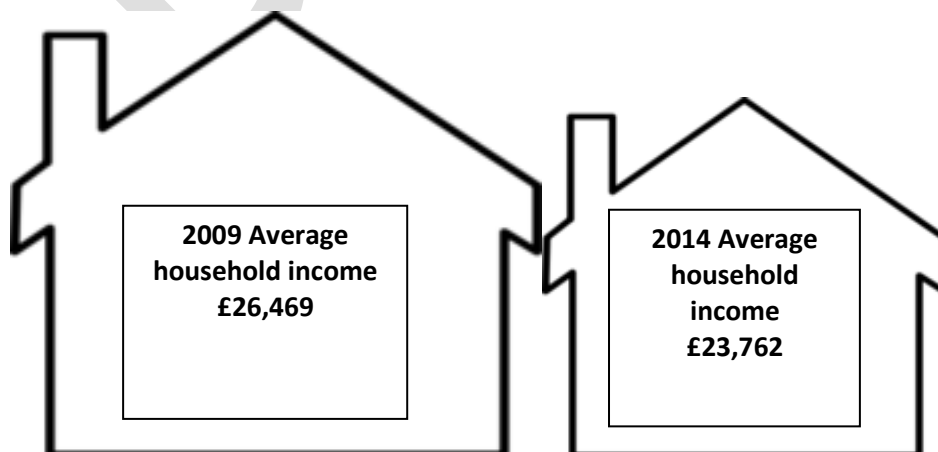
Figure 1: New Builds Completed in Denbighshire 2000/01-2013/14. Source: Denbighshire County Council

2.5 The 2007/08 financial crisis brought about a downturn in house prices, illustrated in the graph below. Over the course of 2014, Denbighshire has witnessed limited growth in sales prices and volumes, which may suggest a very slow improvement.



Average house prices and sales volumes in Denbighshire. Source: Land Registry. © Crown Copyright

2.7 The average household incomes in Denbighshire have decreased over the last 5 years by 10%, which means that despite decreasing house prices decreasing income levels mean that owning a home is out of reach for many households in the County.



Changes in average household income 2009-2014

Type of Tenure	Household Income Threshold		% of Households below the threshold	
	2011	2014	2011	2014
2 Bed 80% Market Rent	£13,000	£16,779	15.02%	35.09%
2 Bed 30% Discount for sale	£16,618	£16,639	24.75%	34.75%
2 Bed Open Market Rent	£16,293	£20,973	23.88%	44.62%
2 Bed Open Market for sale	£23,739	£23,770	43.59%	49.82%

2011 & 2014 Affordable Housing & Open Market Housing income thresholds in Denbighshire © CACI Paycheck © Hometrack

- 2.8 The affordability issues in Denbighshire are illustrated by the table above. The household income threshold figure is the annual household income required to afford each of the property types. The percentage of households below the threshold are those that are priced out of the market. The level of income needed to be able to afford to buy a two bed open market house in Denbighshire has not changed that much between 2011 and 2014, but as incomes have decreased this has had an impact on the number of households which are able to afford to meet their housing needs on the open market – either through renting or buying. Over 49% of households cannot afford to buy a 2 bedroom house on the open market. Any increase in house prices would worsen this situation.
- 2.9 The income level needed to be able to afford to rent a 2 bed property on the open market has increased significantly between 2011 and 2014. This is due to the increasing rental prices in the County. The percentage of households priced out of the private rental market has increased considerably between 2011 and 2014, from 23% (2011) to 44% (2014). Housing in Denbighshire has generally become less affordable between 2011 and 2014 and there is a need to address this issue.
- 2.10 There are currently **3597** households on the Council’s waiting list plus **245** on affordable register.

3. Key conclusions

- **There is a need for affordable housing across the County**
- **Current supply of affordable housing is not meeting the County’s needs**
- **Delivery of affordable housing will require some form of subsidy (through funding or reduced land values)**
- **Further action is required to improve the supply of affordable housing in Denbighshire**

4. Summary of Task & Finish Group Conclusions

- 4.1 The Task & Finish Group have met on a number of occasions and a number of key themes have emerged. The conclusions and recommendations from the Group's discussions are set out below:

Planning issues

- Contributions through the Planning System (whether actual affordable homes or financial contributions towards affordable housing) is only one method of delivering affordable housing. The amount provided is dependent upon the number of market houses built and, given currently low house building rates, has accounted for only a small proportion of the total amount of affordable homes delivered in the county in recent years.

Recommendation 1

Intervention by the Council is needed in bringing land forward and facilitating development of more housing, and therefore more affordable housing. The Council could play a key role in enabling development through gap funding stalled sites, purchasing off plan, underwriting development etc

- LDP policy BSC 4 applies a single percentage contribution across the whole county, which will increase county-wide once sale prices increase by 10%. There may be scope to vary the percentage contribution in different areas in the county and/or escalate the requirement at different times in each area, to reflect geographical differences in the financial viability of housing developments. This would require a review of LDP policies.

Recommendation 2

Review all LDP policies relating to affordable housing, in particular:

- **BSC 4 (Affordable Housing) – consideration should be given to possible approaches to increase the number of affordable homes provided, whilst ensuring market housing continues to be viable in the county. This could include applying variable percentage requirements across different areas of the county or increasing the percentage requirement, as linked to sale price increases, on an area (rather than countywide) basis.**
- **Further consideration should be given to the viability of self-build affordable housing and the implications for the policy approach to rural housing generally in the LDP.**

- LDP policy BSC 6 allows only affordable housing in hamlets, thus excluding local people who aren't in need of affordable housing from building a property in such locations.
- LDP policy PSE 4 restricts the conversion of redundant rural buildings to employment use and, if this is not viable, then affordable housing. Conversion of such buildings is costly and they are usually located in rural areas where access to services and public transport is limited. This has raised questions over the suitability of such buildings for affordable housing. Conversion to employment use in the first instance is a matter of national policy.

Recommendation 3

Review all LDP policies relating to affordable housing, including:

- **PSE 4 (Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings in Open Countryside) – removal of the requirement to convert such buildings to affordable housing where an employment use has been demonstrated to be unviable. This should be replaced with conversion to market housing, after an employment use has been first considered. As an interim measure Supplementary Planning Guidance to allow for market housing should be introduced.**

- Developers can make a case for a reduced/nil contribution to affordable housing if they can demonstrate that provision in line with the policy would make the development financially unviable. In the case of phased developments or those which do not commence until several years after permission has been granted, this may mean developers benefit from any future uplift in market values which would have allowed some affordable housing to be provided.

Recommendation 4

A 'clawback' mechanism through Section 106 legal agreements should be introduced to apply after scheme completion. This could be applied to developments previously exempt from affordable housing provision on viability grounds but which subsequently makes greater profit than projected.

- LDP policy BSC 4 makes provision for financial contributions to be paid on smaller developments in lieu of on-site affordable provision, resulting in a greater number of smaller amounts of money being received by the Council. This must be spent on providing affordable housing. There is a need to consider how best these smaller sums can be spent and whether there is the opportunity to pool sums to enable larger projects.

Recommendation 5

Investigation of a wider range of possible options for spending commuted sums gathered in lieu of affordable housing units, and the local areas in which these can be spent. Particular consideration should be given to which initiatives can make best use of smaller amounts of money.

- The use of three different calculations for determining the amount of financial contributions required from developers can create confusion or complications. The calculations are based on build costs but other methods could be used.

Recommendation 6

The current calculations in the Affordable Housing SPG regarding commuted sums in lieu of on-site provision, financial contributions from developments of 3-9 dwellings and financial contributions from developments of 10+ dwellings should be reviewed, with a view to simplifying and/or reducing the number of different calculations.

- The method for deriving the value/resale price of an affordable property is linked to local incomes, which reflects local variations in affordability. However, this can give a high value in affluent rural areas where a small number of high earners can skew the local average. Concerns have also arisen from applicants for self-build affordable housing that this value is insufficient to cover the costs of construction.

Recommendation 7

Review the affordable value calculation, with consideration of implications across different housing market areas and self-build affordable housing.

- The occupation and resale of affordable housing is controlled via legal agreement ('Section 106' agreements). The wording and terms in these have tended to vary in each agreement due to individual circumstances, negotiation and the evolution of affordable housing policy and guidance. This has led to apparent inconsistencies and difficulties/delays in agreeing and discharging the terms of the agreement. Mortgage lending is also more restrictive for properties subject to s106 agreements and the terms of the agreement can affect the availability of mortgages for both initial and subsequent occupiers. The development of standard clauses which are acceptable to mortgage providers would ensure a consistent approach and would help to speed up the planning process.

Recommendation 8

A standard approach to legal agreements (Section 106 agreements) should be developed, working with mortgage providers, with a view to standardising terms and clauses, particularly those relating to resale and occupancy requirements.

Land availability

- The Council has some land holdings which may provide a resource for providing additional affordable housing. These holdings may not be located in the areas of highest need for affordable housing.

Recommendation 9

Undertake a review of public land holdings – both Council and other public bodies - to determine suitability and capacity for affordable housing development. This should include land within, or the redevelopment, of existing Council housing estates, farms, empty schools, rural buildings etc. A programme of potential affordable housing development sites should be developed.

- Council owned land is normally disposed of at best value which is not compatible with securing high levels of affordable housing.

Recommendation 10

A strategic approach should be developed regarding Council's land holdings to ensure the sale of sites in areas with limited housing need and reinvestment in purchasing land in areas where housing need exists. This should include acceptance of lower than market value on some sites to allow for a higher proportion of affordable housing to be delivered.

- Ample housing land has been allocated for development in the LDP but levels of delivery are low due to current economic conditions and viability. There is evidence that developers and landowners are not proceeding with development once they have received planning permission and are waiting for land values to increase – landbanking.

Recommendation 11

Investigate possible use of reduced commencement period conditions on planning permissions and review LDP allocations to encourage development & avoid landbanking by developers. Lobby Welsh Government to change legislation to require completion of development within a defined time period.

Funding

- Levels of public funding for affordable housing through Social Housing Grant have decreased over recent years and are unlikely to increase.
- However, a range of alternative ways of funding affordable housing are available, including ways to access cost effective borrowing to facilitate the affordable housing supply.

- HRA funding changes will provide new opportunities to access significant funding for building new affordable housing.

Recommendation 12

Alternative ways of funding affordable housing should be explored further. This could include consideration of opportunities arising from the HRA funding changes.

Recommendation 13

To establish a “development fund” for future land purchase by selling off land where there is no or little evidence of housing need.

Recommendation 14

To develop an affordable housing delivery programme utilising alternative and innovative ways of providing affordable housing, including ensuring best use of any available funding, such as S106 contributions, Social Housing Grant, HRA surpluses and any other funding which may be available.

Recommendation 15

A clear Business Plan should be developed that includes development of new housing by the Council, to set against the Council’s affordable housing target.

- Lessons can be learned from other local authorities who are applying innovative approaches to accessing funding to enable the improved delivery of affordable housing and further research should be undertaken to explore potential alternative mechanisms.
- There are a limited range of partners currently able to access funding which the Council currently work with.

Recommendation 16

To identify more key partners to take forward affordable housing whether it is new build and/or other mechanisms

Recommendation 17

Innovative mechanisms for delivering affordable housing should be explored further, such as joint venture schemes, pension fund investment, special purpose vehicles, establishment of a housing delivery company, community land trusts, co-operative models and community living programmes.

Eligibility

- There are currently low numbers of people on the Affordable Housing Register, thus this does not reflect the true need in the County. Awareness of affordable housing and the register is low.

Recommendation 18

To raise awareness of the affordable housing register and review the registration process

- There can be local resistance to new affordable housing developments due to negative perceptions about future occupiers.

Recommendation 19

To develop a publicity policy to ensure successful affordable housing schemes are fully publicised

Targets

- There are a range different targets and indicators currently used by the Council, (with varying targets applied by Welsh Government) some of which are not achievable, others are not challenging enough. There is a need to identify and clarify a longer term target that is viable and deliverable, whilst recognising the limitations on the Council's power to ensure delivery.

Recommendation 20

Affordable housing targets need to be reviewed and rationalised with a view to adopting a single target which is clear, challenging but achievable. This should be derived by developing a standard formula comprising:

Activity	Projected affordable homes delivered
RSL building programme	?
SHG available	?
Projected new build through the planning system (Housing Land Availability monitoring)	?
Commuted sums	?
Empty homes brought back into use projections	?
Any other supply	?
	=Total affordable homes projected

5. What happens next?

- 5.1 The conclusions and recommendations from Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group, together with the accompanying Action Plan will inform the development of Denbighshire's wider Housing Strategy and will form the basis of the Affordable Housing Theme, within the wider Strategy.
- 5.2 Partnership working with both internal services and external organisations, is fundamental to ensure the Council's aim of achieving increased delivery of affordable housing in the County to meet growing needs is met. We will continue to work closely with Registered Social Landlords to develop an Affordable Housing Delivery Programme, which will include a review of public land holdings and further work on funding & innovative delivery mechanisms, with clear targets for future affordable housing delivery.
- 5.3 The recommendations of the Task & Finish Group provide the basis for a clear and robust framework for the Council's future approach to affordable housing, bringing together housing, planning, finance, property services within the Council, together with external partners.

Affordable Housing Task & Finish Group meetings

Affordable Housing is a key issue for the Council, crossing both Housing and Planning Strategy/Policy. It is also part of the Council's Priority in the Corporate Plan, "Ensuring access to good quality housing". Provision of Affordable Housing is a complex matter, with many components, and covers a number of Council Services, Lead Member Portfolios with input from external partners. The two relevant Lead Members with support from the Corporate Director and relevant Heads of Service concluded that a Member/Officer Task & Finish Group considering all matters relating to Affordable Housing was required.

The Group consisted of 8 Members, with support from Officers, and attendance includes external organisations as required. The remit of the Group was to consider all matters relating to the demand for Affordable Housing, the supply of Affordable Housing and access to and eligibility for Affordable Housing across the County. The final recommendations of the Group will influence the relevant planning policies and guidance associated with Affordable Housing, the Local Housing Strategy, the development of the Council's approach to the Corporate Priority "Ensuring access to good quality housing", and all other Council activities related (directly or indirectly) to Affordable Housing.

There have been 7 meetings of the Group with the conclusions and recommendations agreed at the final session held on 27th February 2015. A summary of the issues discussed at each meeting is set out below.

Session 1 (16th September 2014):

Definitions of, and introduction to, Affordable Housing

The Group discussed the definitions of Affordable Housing for the various Council and Welsh Government functions, and what doesn't constitute Affordable Housing. Analysis of the historical demand and provision for Affordable Housing in the county was also discussed.

Session 2 (23rd September 2014):

Supply of Affordable Housing through the private sector

This session focussed on the mechanisms for securing Affordable Housing through private developers, the planning system and other initiatives. The Group discussed the national and local planning policy framework for Affordable Housing, house price and building rates statistics, the use of commuted sums in delivering Affordable Housing and the contribution through the Council's Empty Homes project. Issues specific to rural areas, the calculation of an affordable sale price and the importance of development viability were also considered.

Session 3 (9th October 2014):

Supply of Affordable Housing through the public sector

This session focussed on the role of traditional 'Council housing', Registered Social Landlords, Welsh Government funding and other public funded initiatives in providing Affordable Housing. The Group also considered the various tenures and types of Affordable Housing being provided (including extra care schemes, specialist units etc.)

Session 4 (24th October 2014):

Access and eligibility for Affordable Housing

This session considered who is eligible for Affordable Housing and the requirements to access such housing. This included a presentation from the Affordable Homes Manager at Grwp Cynefin, who

manage the Affordable Housing register on behalf of Denbighshire County Council. The Group discussed the use of commuted sums in lieu of on-site Affordable Housing, promoting/advertising the register to the public and issues around mortgage access for Affordable Housing.

Session 5 (28th November 2014):

Planning issues around Affordable Housing

This session focussed on the national and local planning policies and guidance around securing Affordable Housing through the planning system (i.e. from private developers), on-site v off-site provision of Affordable Housing, and how commuted sums and affordable values are calculated. The Group also discussed the specific issues around delivering Affordable Housing in rural areas and possible planning approaches to tackle these.

Session 6 (27th January 2015):

Barriers and solutions to delivering Affordable Housing

This session focussed on land supply and funding as the two main barriers to meeting the need for Affordable Housing, and possible options to address these going forward. The Group discussed the process of target-setting for delivering Affordable Housing, the role of public sector land and organisations in delivering affordable homes and various mechanisms to achieve this.

Session 7 (27th February 2015):

Conclusions & recommendations

This session brought together the Group's conclusions and recommendations to be reported to Cabinet Briefing.

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MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE AT AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK & FINISH GROUP MEETINGS

		16/9/14	23/9/14	9/10/14	24/10/14	28/11/14	27/1/15	27/2/15
Lead Member	Cllr. David Smith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lead Member	Cllr. Hugh Irving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Partnerships Scrutiny	Cllr. Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Cllr. Merfyn Parry (substitute)							
Communities Scrutiny	Cllr. Cefyn Williams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Cllr. Rhys Hughes (substitute)							
Performance Scrutiny	Cllr. Colin Hughes	✓	✓	✓		✓		
	Cllr. Geraint Lloyd-Williams (substitute)							
Planning Committee	Cllr. Raymond Bartley	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Cllr. Win Mullen-James (substitute)	✓			✓			
	Cllr Rhys Hughes	✓	✓	✓				
	Cllr. Stuart Davies (substitute)							✓
	Cllr. Peter Owen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Cllr. Joan Butterfield (substitute)	✓						

Denbighshire County Council
Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference
Affordable Housing

Introduction:

Affordable Housing is a key issue for the Council, crossing both Housing and Planning Strategy/Policy. It is also part of the Council's Priority in the Corporate Plan, "Ensuring access to good quality housing".

Provision of Affordable Housing is a complex matter, with many components, and covers a number of Council Services, Lead Member Portfolios with input from external partners. The complexity and Member interest was highlighted at Planning Committee in May when Members were presented with the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Affordable Housing and again in June when the Draft Local Housing Strategy was presented to Council Briefing.

The two relevant Lead Members (Cllr David Smith and Cllr Hugh Irving) with support from the relevant Corporate Director (Rebecca Maxwell) and the two relevant Heads of Service (Graham Boase and Peter Mchugh) concluded that a Member/Officer Task & Finish Group looking at Affordable Housing was required. This approach was endorsed during the Council Briefing discussion in June on the Local Housing Strategy.

This paper represents the Terms of Reference for the Task & Finish Group, as agreed by the 2 relevant Lead Members.

Membership:

The Task & finish Group shall comprise of 8 Members as follows;

- Lead Member Public Realm

- Lead Member Customers & Communities

- Chair of Planning Committee

- 2 Members nominated by Planning Committee (in addition to the Chair of Planning Committee)

- 1 Member nominated by Partnership Scrutiny

- 1 Member nominated by Performance Scrutiny

- 1 Member nominated by Communities Scrutiny

The Task & finish Group will be co-chaired by the two Lead Members.

Officers supporting the work of the Task & finish Group will be Rebecca Maxwell, Graham Boase and Peter McHugh. Other Officers will attend as and when required.

Remit:

To consider all matters relating to the demand for Affordable Housing, the supply of Affordable Housing and the use of Affordable Housing across the County.

The work of the Group should therefore influence the relevant planning policies and guidance associated with Affordable Housing, the Local Housing Strategy, the development of the Council's approach to the Corporate Priority, "Ensuring Access to good quality housing", and all other Council work related, directly or indirectly, to Affordable Housing.

The Group will meet on 6 occasions, unless the 2 Lead Members consider additional sessions are required.

The 6 sessions should be held over a 3 month period starting September 2014 and concluding in November 2014 (i.e. ideally there will be 2 sessions per month for 3 months). The Sessions shall be as follows;

Session 1:

Statistical analysis of historic provision/demand of Affordable Housing.

Set a clear definition of what Affordable Housing is (and what it isn't)

Session 2:

Look at the supply of Affordable Housing through the "public sector" (e.g. existing Council Housing, possible new Council Housing, Welsh Government funding, Council funding initiatives Registered Social Landlords etc).

Session 3:

Look at the supply of Affordable Housing through the "private sector" (e.g. private developers, Planning controls/initiatives, etc)

Session 4:

Look at access and eligibility, so who can currently access Affordable Housing, how do they access Affordable Housing, what are the "local" initiatives, are certain parts of our society not being catered for etc.

Session 5:

A "reserve" session to pick up on issues not currently anticipated or picked up in Sessions 1 – 4.

Session 6:

Draw together broad conclusions, make recommendations on how to proceed etc.

Prior to each Session Graham Boase and Peter Mchugh will ensure a set of papers are circulated to Members of the Group for their consideration, ensuring a balance is struck between providing Members with appropriate information, while not over burdening Members with reports, paperwork etc .

The Sessions should be informal, and focussed on the topic of the day. Members and Officers should challenge each other on the relevant issues so there is a full understanding of the legislative/statutory requirements, the local issues facing residents of Denbighshire and the concerns of Members in terms of addressing the local concerns and making appropriate decisions.

Reporting:

As a Task & Finish Group, the Group have no powers to make decisions that influence policy/procedures, however the Group have an important role to play in making clear recommendations on improvements and how those improvements should be delivered.

The conclusions/recommendations of the Group will therefore influence a number of areas, not least the Draft Local Housing Strategy, Planning Policy and Guidance and the Corporate Priority, "Ensuring access to good quality housing". Formal decisions on any recommendations from the Group will therefore need to be made through the appropriate channels such as reporting to Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee, Lead Member Delegated Decisions etc. There is also likely to be a role for the LDP Steering Group, Scrutiny etc in moving certain recommendation forward.

It is suggested at this stage that the Group present its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the first Council Briefing in 2015.

In this regard therefore it is considered appropriate to wait until the Group has concluded before the Council adopts the Local Housing Strategy and before Planning Policy/Guidance

on Affordable Housing is amended. Appropriate Forward Work Programmes should be amended to reflect the reporting timelines of this Group.

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Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group Report back on conclusions and recommendations Summary of issues raised at Council Briefing	
Issue raised	Comments& reference in report back on Task & Finish Group recommendations
Re-use of rural buildings – affordable housing should be removed from the Local Development Plan policy as a choice. Barns in the Council’s agricultural estate could also have potential for conversion.	Recommendations 2 & 3 refer to the need to review LDP policies. However, there is currently no mechanism to amend policies in the Local Development Plan other than through a full review of the entire plan. Welsh Government is considering legislative amendments to allow for partial reviews but this has not been confirmed to date. As an interim arrangement, it is proposed to amend the supplementary planning guidance to allow for the conversion of rural buildings to market housing, however a full review of planning policies will remain a longer term action.
Section 106 legal agreements – concern regarding difficulties in accessing mortgages for initial purchase because of restrictions in Section 106 legal agreements, which can also impact resale of affordable homes	Recommendation 8 refers to the need to develop a standard approach. The development of standard Section 106 clauses which are acceptable to mortgage providers would ensure a consistent approach and would help to speed up the planning process.
Hamlets policy (Local Development Plan) – limiting access to affordable housing only may not be viable or deliverable. Hamlets are not sustainable locations, but there is a need for affordable housing in villages.	Recommendation 2 & 3 refer to the need to review LDP policies. However, there is currently no mechanism to amend policies in the Local Development Plan other than through a full review of the entire plan. Welsh Government is considering legislative amendments to allow for partial reviews but this has not been confirmed to date. A full review of planning policies will remain a longer term action.
Affordable housing register is not a true reflection of the need for affordable housing because people are not registering	Recommendation 18 refers to the need to raise awareness of the register and review the process of registration
How commuted sums collected for affordable housing should be spent	Recommendation 5 and recommendation 14 refer to investigating a wider range of options for spending commuted sums collected for

	affordable housing and developing an affordable housing delivery programme to ensure best use of all available funding
HRA funding changes could mean additional funding would be available to deliver affordable homes.	Recommendations 12 & 14 refer to investigating alternative funding for affordable housing and developing an affordable housing delivery programme to ensure best use of all available funding
The recommendations should also refer to community land trusts, co-operative models and community living programmes as options for delivery of affordable homes	Recommendation 17 refers to further work to be undertaken to investigate and assess innovative mechanisms for delivering affordable housing, including options such as community land trusts, co-operative models and community living programmes.
What can the Council do to make sure developers complete developments? Some make a start & then have planning permission in perpetuity but don't finish. The Council should lobby Welsh Government to change the legislation. There were also concerns about landbanking, where landowners achieve the allocation of land & planning permission but do not start building	Recommendation 11 refers to use of reduced commencement period conditions on planning permissions & the need to lobby Welsh Government to change legislation to require completion of development within a specified time period.
The Council should build Council housing again	Recommendation 15 refers to new building by the Council
The LDP policy requirement was reduced from 30% to 10%	Recommendations 2 & 3 refer to the need to review LDP policies However, there is currently no mechanism to amend policies in the Local Development Plan other than through a full review of the entire plan. Welsh Government is considering legislative amendments to allow for partial reviews but this has not been confirmed to date. A full review of planning policies will remain a longer term action.

Report to:	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	28th May 2015
Lead Member:	Lead Member Public Realm
Report Authors:	Head of Planning and Public Protection/ Public Protection Manager
Title:	Food Safety, Standards and Procurement – Update

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Following the national horse meat scandal Denbighshire County Council instigated an investigation into current food procurement and regulatory practices. A politically balanced Task & Finish Group was established, comprising of officers and Members of the Council, to identify any key risks and to enable adequate procedures to be in place to protect residents, visitors and users of the Council's services. This includes schools and social services residential homes and other Council controlled outlets.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 The Task and Finish Group met several times and last reported to Communities Scrutiny Committee in June 2014. Members asked officers to provide an update report in approximately 12 months to monitor progress against the recommendations agreed in that report.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members:

- 3.1 consider the content of the report and comment on the progress made against each of the recommendations; and
- 3.2 consider whether they require a further update report.

4. Report details.

- 4.1 For ease of reading and reference an update will be provided against each of the service areas that contribute to the issue of securing a safe food chain within the County.

Regulatory Functions:

- 4.2 Public Protection Officers within the Planning and Public Protection Service undertake a range of duties in relation to food safety and food standards. We have officers that are fully qualified and competent to undertake both food hygiene and food standards duties and meet the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA also undertake audits of the service, and other LA's across the UK to ensure that these standards are met.

- 4.3 Public Protection Officers undertake a significant amount of food standards (origin and labelling) inspections and sampling during the year which included the following:
- Full food standards inspections of all high risk premises due an inspection during 2014/15
 - Undertaking a range of food standards sampling surveys including meat species testing on behalf of our school meals service and social services, fish substitution, nut allergen testing in restaurant/take-away meals, testing for levels of colours in take-away meals and testing of spirits to ensure that they are not substituting with cheaper/imitation brands
 - Spirit samples taken from 30 pub premises to ensure that no substitution was taking place. All samples satisfactory.
 - Undertaking a regional project on Welsh Beef, including inspections of butchers shops and DNA testing of beef to check whether it is Welsh in origin
- 4.4 Some unsatisfactory results in relation to labelling and constitution of food were identified in some of the meat samples taken during the year, samples of take away meals containing nuts where it was not declared and high colouring levels in take away meals. A review of the work undertaken during 2014/15 highlights some areas that will be subject to further checks by our officers during this year namely meat speciation, nuts in take away meals, alcohol substitution in off licences rather than pubs and other agreed regional projects.
- 4.5 Enforcement action has been taken against some businesses that were found to be breaching food standards legislation including warning letters following inspections, seizing unlabelled food and food where the origins of the food could not be established and also a successful prosecution against a food business owner that served an Indian take away meal containing nuts to a customer with a nut allergy that had asked for a meal with no nuts.
- 4.6 Further work has also been undertaken on providing training to businesses within the county on food labelling. New legislation was introduced in December 2014 on providing clear information to the public on allergens in food. We provided training courses to businesses on these new regulations. Training has also been provided to our food safety officers and animal health officers on food standards and feed enforcement to develop a more coordinated food regulatory service. Food safety officers will now be undertaking food standards checks during routine food hygiene inspections.
- 4.7 The Council's food service was also the subject of a full audit by the Food Standards Agency in July 2013. The Council received the audit report some 13 months after the audit was undertaken and an action plan has been agreed. This action plan includes 39 recommendations which we are now working with the FSA to address.
- 4.8 A bid was successfully submitted and approved by the FSA for money to undertake sampling work across the County. This funding was used to fund sampling in our schools and care homes on meat speciation, cheese and fish substitution and nut allergens in food.

- 4.9 We successfully obtained FSA funding for other types of sampling i.e nut sampling and meat speciation in take-aways.

Procurement Functions:

- 4.10 Meetings have taken place between food standards officer, school catering officers and social services contracts officers to discuss sampling surveys, food procurement procedures and any results from the sampling undertaken.
- 4.11 Procurement audits were undertaken during the year, involving the food standards officers working with the school meals service to undertake on site audits of food being delivered to the premises. The outcomes of these audits were fed back to the school meals service.
- 4.12 The Corporate Procurement Unit are in ongoing discussions with The University Caterers Organisation (TUCO) to ensure that we get all of the required information to allow us to monitor the source of our food to schools and care homes. This will also involve including a 'right to audit' clause in the contract.
- 4.13 The creation of a central, single point of information for all food procurement contracts using the Proactis Contract Management System is now complete. A range of questionnaires that will be utilised by users and suppliers on the Proactis system have been create for performance monitoring. The Corporate Procurement Unit are now undertaking an exercise to get all current contract details on to the Proactis system and also to get the suppliers registered so that performance monitoring against contracts can be undertaken going forward. It is expected that the Proactis system will go live for users from September 2015.
- 4.14 The Corporate Procurement Unit staff have now been split to deal with specific spend categories which means that a dedicated Procurement Officer is now responsible for monitoring all catering expenditure across the Council. The new M-Power spend analysis system will be available mid-July which will allow the dedicated officer to monitor up to date catering spend.
- 4.15 Meat Framework exercise is now complete and there are 9 companies on the frame work, as a Catering Service we have decided to remain with Hughes Meats of Bangor. The Council has had no issues with this company in the past, they can provide us with Welsh Lamb and Beef and all product testing carried out by the food standards officer has come back clear and compliant. We are using Red Tractor Assured suppliers for chicken, turkey and pork fillets. The TUCO agreement is now being used for the supply of some fresh frozen meat into our care homes with the remaining supply being sourced from a local butcher from St Asaph which has a Food Hygiene Safety rating of 5. This involves the supply of meat from Hughes Meats in Bangor being supplied through Woodward's Foods. Going forward a formal procurement exercise will be undertaken in order to award a formal contract with local butchers.

4.15 The Corporate Procurement Unit is not aware of any current complaints/concerns about our food suppliers. However ongoing meetings will take place with catering officers to monitor this going forward.

4.16 As part of the catering spend analysis a collaborative contract for sandwich fillings is being undertaken with Wrexham and Flintshire Councils. Therefore the food safety requirements will be incorporated in to the contract going forward.

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

5.1 Protecting the food chain is a key responsibility of the Council to ensure that residents are provided with reliable and traceable meat and meat products, as well as other consumer goods.

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

6.1 There is no specific costs associated with the recommendations of this report. However the cost of the work that is currently and proposed to being undertaken during this year will be achieved within existing service budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

7.1 There are no equalities implications from the recommendations of this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 Consultations have taken place between the Corporate Procurement Unit, School Catering Service, Social Services and Planning and Public Protection Service in producing this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 The costs should be contained within the existing resources and grant funding for specific projects.

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

10.1 The work undertaken by each service as part of this review and recommendations contained within this report are designed to minimise the risk of low quality food materials entering the food chain in Denbighshire.

11. Power to make the Decision

11.1 Article 6.3.4(b) sets out Scrutiny's powers with respect to scrutinising such matters.

Contact Officer:
Public Protection Manager

Tel: 01824 706350

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 28 May 2015

Report Author: Scrutiny Coordinator

Title: Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

The report presents 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:

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 appoints/re-appoints representatives to serve on the Council's Service Challenge Groups.

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 aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-

users. Going forward scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. In future the WAO will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.

- 4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) has recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:
- budget savings;
 - achievement of the Corporate Plan objectives (with particular emphasis on the their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
 - any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2) and;
 - Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues

4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

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. No officer proposal forms have been received for consideration at the current meeting.

- 4.7 With a view to making better use of scrutiny's time by focussing committees' resources on detailed examination of subjects, adding value through the decision-making process and securing better outcomes for residents, the SCVCG has decided that members, as well as officers, should complete 'scrutiny proposal forms' outlining the reasons why they think a particular subject would benefit from scrutiny's input. A copy of the 'member's proposal form' can be seen at Appendix 2. The reverse side of this form contains a flowchart listing questions which members should consider when proposing an item for scrutiny, and which committees should ask when determining a topic's suitability for inclusion on a scrutiny forward work programme. If, having followed this process, a topic is not deemed suitable for formal examination by a scrutiny committee, alternative channels for sharing the information or examining the matter can be considered e.g. the provision of an 'information report', or if the matter is of a very local nature examination by the relevant Member Area Group (MAG). In future no items will be included on a forward work programme without a

'scrutiny proposal form' being completed and accepted for inclusion by the Committee or the SCVCG. Assistance with their completion is available from the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Car parking charges policy

- 4.8 Officers have asked that this report be considered by the Committee ahead of the August recess rather than in September as originally scheduled. The Chair agreed to this request (see Appendix 1).

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.9 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.

Progress on Committee Resolutions

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

5. Service Challenge Groups

As Annual Council was held on 12 May scrutiny committees have been asked, in line with normal procedures, to appoint/re-appoint members to serve on the Council's Service Challenge Groups. Attached at Appendix 5 for members' information is the current list of committee representatives. Members will note that some of the service names have changed during the last year.

6. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

- 6.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group's first meeting of the new municipal year is scheduled for mid-June.

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 to deliver its corporate priorities, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget cuts.

8. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

No Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the purpose of this report as consideration of the Committee's forward work

programme is not deemed to have an adverse or unfair impact on people who share protected characteristics.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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

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	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
9 July WG Minister to be invited to attend	Cllr. Julian Thompson-Hill	1. Impact of Late Notification of Allocation of Central Government Grant Funding on Local Government Financial Planning and Management	To outline the difficulties caused by central governments' late allocation of specific grant funding on the local authority's budget setting process, the planning and management of its financial affairs, project management and the impact on staff and on communities	Earlier notification of available grant funding to ensure better planning and management of specific projects. This would assist the Council with its financial planning and management.	Paul McGrady/Richard Weigh	By SCVCG April 2015 in response to a request via County Council in February 2015
	Cllr. David Smith	2. Better Regulation of Caravan Sites	To consider a draft strategy for assessing the extent of non-compliance with planning and licensing regulations within the County	To recommend a way forward to deal with the non-compliance based on the evaluation of potential implications of more stringent enforcement activity on all Council services	Graham Boase/Alan Smith	April 2015
	Cllr. David Smith	3. Car Parking Charges	To consider the findings of the	The formulation of recommendations for submission to Cabinet with	Steve Parker/Mike Jones	January 2015

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			Policy	study into varying car parking charges across the County	respect to the future car parking charges across the County with a view to developing the economy and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the County's town centres		
10 September	Cllr. Bobby Feeley	1.	Supported Independent Living Service	To monitor the effectiveness of the new Supporting Independent Living Service	(i) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the new service in assisting and supporting vulnerable people to live independently in the community; and (ii) Examination of the proposed procurement model for purchasing future SIL services	Phil Gilroy/Katie Newe/John Sweeney	May 2014 (rescheduled January 2015)
	Councillor Huw LI Jones	2	Denbighshire's Youth Service [Education]	To outline the results of the Youth Service Review and the progress with the community mapping process, highlighting key issues and themes which have arisen from the activity	(i) To help develop a fuller understanding of the community groups across the county that work with Children and Young People in order to maximise partnership working in helping children and young people achieve their potential; and (ii) identification of any challenges and potential solutions to the delivery of the above	Liz Grieve/Jamie Groves/Roger Ellerton	By SCVCG April 2015
5 November							
17 December							

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
4 February 2016						
24 March						
12 May						
30 June						
8 September						
27 Oct 2016	Cllr. Eryl Williams	1	Review of the Home to School Transport Policy [Education]	To consider the findings of a review of the impact of the implementation of the school transport policy	An assessment of the impact of the policy's implementation will assist the Authority to determine if learners' needs are being appropriately met and identify any anomalies or areas of concern which require addressing	Jackie Walley Cabinet September 2014
15 December						

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	To outline the proposals for implementing the CIL in Denbighshire	The development of an appropriate and effective CIL scheme for the County	Graham Boase/Angela Loftus	February 2013

For future years

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Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

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Information/Consultation Reports

Information / Consultation	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
Quarterly Information (Sept/Dec/Mar/June)	Rhyl Going Forward	To brief the Committee on the progress in delivering the Programme and its associated workstreams and projects, and to highlight to members areas of concern or slippages	Mark Dixon	May 2014
Information Report (June 2015)	Reablement Service	To detail to the Committee the: (i) effectiveness of the Reablement Service in delivering the Council's corporate priority of protecting vulnerable people and helping them to live as independently as possible; (ii) efficiencies realised following the introduction of the Service. The report to include all (positive and negative) feedback from service users	Phil Gilroy/Anne Hughes-Jones	June 2014

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Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

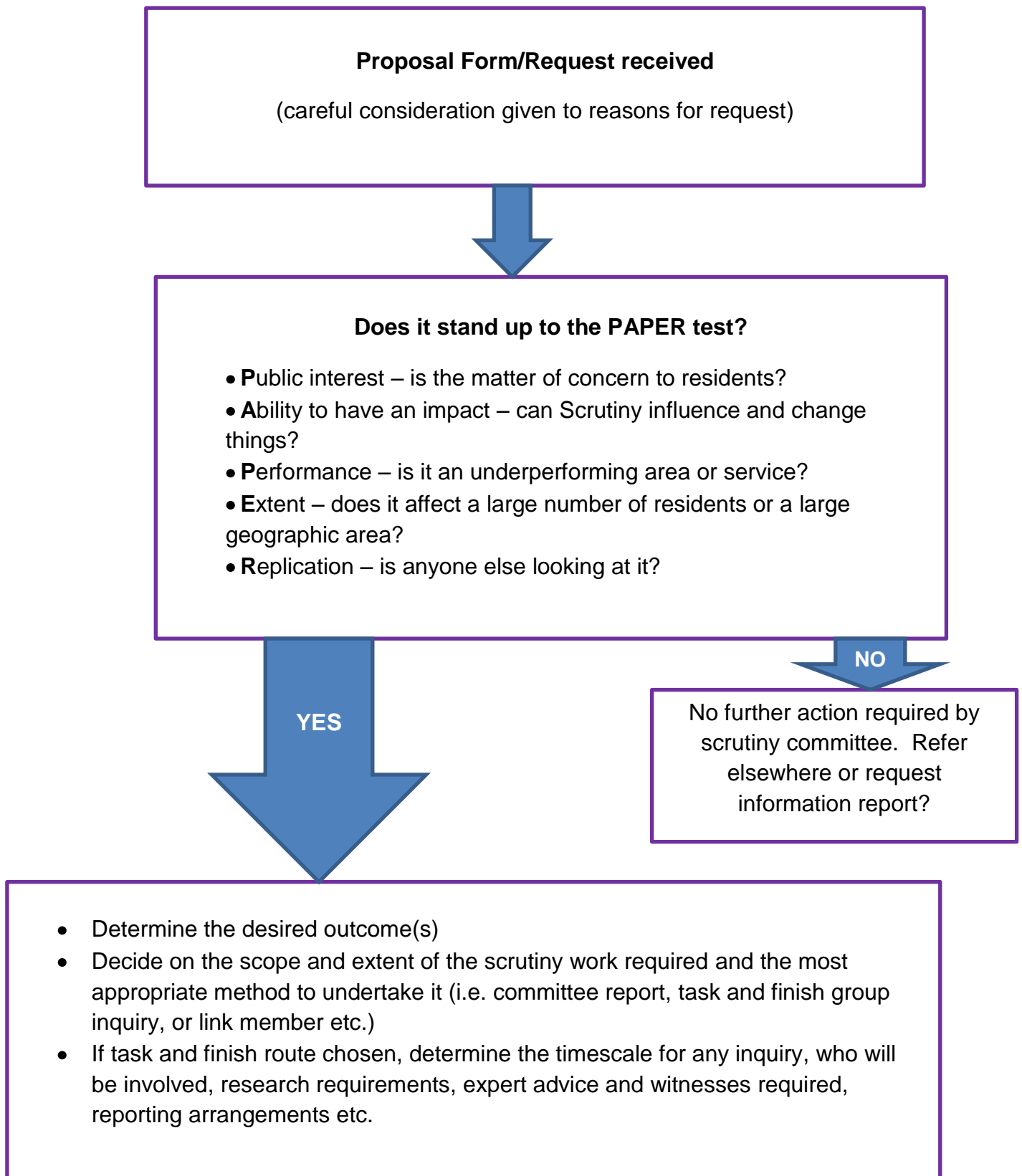
Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
9 July	25 June	10 September	27 August	10 September	27 August

Communities Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

28/05/15 RhE

Member Proposal Form for Scrutiny Forward Work Programme	
NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION	
TOPIC	
What needs to be scrutinised (and why)?	
Is the matter one of concern to residents/local businesses?	YES/NO
Can Scrutiny influence and change things? (if 'yes' please state how you think scrutiny can influence or change things)	YES/NO
Does the matter relate to an underperforming service or area?	YES/NO
Does the matter affect a large number of residents or a large geographical area of the County (if 'yes' please give an indication of the size of the affected group or area)	YES/NO
Is the matter linked to the Council's Corporate priorities (if 'yes' please state which priority/priorities)	YES/NO
To your knowledge is anyone else looking at this matter? (If 'yes', please say who is looking at it)	YES/NO
If the topic is accepted for scrutiny who would you want to invite to attend e.g. Lead Member, officers, external experts, service-users?	
Name of Councillor/Co-opted Member	
Date	

Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Appendix 3

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
2 June	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	Ruthin Primary Proposals	To consider the formal consultation reports following the publication of proposals for the amalgamation of Ysgol Llanfair DC and Ysgol Pentrecelyn and the closure of Ysgol Rhewl and to consider whether to publish the relevant statutory notices.	Yes	Councillor Eryl Williams / Jackie Walley
	3	Business Rates Write Offs	To seek approval for uncollectible Business Rates Debts to be written off	Yes	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Rod Urquhart
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
30 June	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
	2	Final Outturn Report	To consider the final revenue outturn position for 2014/15	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	3	Corporate Plan Performance Report 2014/15 Q4	To consider progress against the Corporate Plan	Tbc	Cllr Barbara Smith / Liz Grieve
	4	Town & Area Plans	To consider the allocation of funding for priority projects	Yes	Cllr Hugh Evans / Tom Booty
	5	Eisteddfod yr Urdd	To recommend support for the return of the National Urdd Eisteddfod.	N/A	Cllr Huw Jones / Jamie Groves / Gareth Watson
	6	Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	Delegation of powers under the Act	Yes	Cllr David Smith / Lisa Jones / Emlyn Jones
	7	Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group	To report the key findings and recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group	Yes	Cllr David Smith / Angela Loftus / Sue Lewis
	8	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
28 July	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	The Future of In-house Care Services	To consider the results of the consultation with existing	Yes	Councillor Bobby Feeley / Phil Gilroy

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
			users of in-house care services		
	3	Car Park Charges	To give members the opportunity to decide which car park charging regime they would like to see implemented across the county.	Tbc	Councillor David Smith / Steve Parker / Mike Jones
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
29 September	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	Corporate Plan Performance Report 2015/16 Q1	To consider progress against the Corporate Plan	Tbc	Cllr Barbara Smith / Liz Grieve
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
27 October	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
			raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention		
24 November	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
15 December	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
	2	Corporate Plan Performance Report 2015/16 Q2	To consider progress against the Corporate Plan	Tbc	Cllr Barbara Smith / Liz Grieve
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

<i>2 June</i>	<i>18 May</i>	<i>30 June</i>	<i>16 June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>14 July</i>
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Updated 12/05/15 - KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
23 April 2015	5. Rationalisation of Precautionary Gritting Routes	<i>RESOLVED – that, subject to the above and the distribution of the proposals to Member Area Groups for information, Communities Scrutiny Committee endorse the route changes for precautionary gritting.</i>	Lead Member and Officers informed of the Committee's recommendation
	6. Better Regulation of Caravan Sites	<i>RESOLVED – that subject to the above observations:- (a) the Committee support the direction of the project to date and acknowledge the potential extent of the work in hand; and (b) the results of the scoping work and the draft strategy options for more effective regulation of caravan sites be presented to the committee in the summer of 2015.</i>	(b) report scheduled for presentation to the Committee at its next meeting on 9 July 2015

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Service:	Communities	Partnerships	Performance
Economic & Business Development – Rebecca Maxwell			
Children & Family Services – Leighton Rees	Cllr Win Mullen-James	Cllr. Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones	Cllr. Arwel Roberts
Community Support Services – Phil Gilroy	Cllr Bob Murray	tba	Cllr. David Simmons
Legal, HR & Democratic Services – Gary Williams	Cllr. James Davies	Cllr. Meirick Lloyd Davies	Cllr. Dewi Owens
Business Improvement & Modernisation – Alan Smith	Cllr. Cheryl Williams	tba	Cllr. Dewi Owens
Education Services – Karen Evans	Cllr Huw Hilditch-Roberts	tba	Cllr Arwel Roberts
Customers and Education Support – Jackie Walley	Cllr. Carys Guy-Davies	Cllr. Pat Jones	Cllr. Richard Davies
Communication, Marketing & Leisure – Jamie Groves	Cllr. Joe Welch	Cllr. Dewi Owens (tbc)	Cllr. Geraint Lloyd Williams
Finance & Assets – Paul McGrady	Cllr. Peter Evans Cllr. Huw Hilditch-Roberts (sub)	Cllr. Dewi Owens (tbc)	Cllr. Colin Hughes
Highways & Environmental Services – Steve Parker	Cllr. Rhys Hughes (sub: Cllr. Cefyn Williams)	Cllr. Merfyn Parry	Cllr. Meirick Lloyd Davies (sub: Cllr. Arwel Roberts)
Planning & Public Protection – Graham Boase	Cllr. Win Mullen-James (sub: Cllr. Cefyn Williams)	Cllr. Raymond Bartley	Cllr. Meirick LI Davies

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