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# Welcome to Flintshire County Council's Improvement Plan for 2016/17

The latest version of our Improvement Plan sets out our priorities for the 2016/17 Council year and what we aim to achieve. Flintshire prides itself on being a council which performs highly for its local communities and one which is motivated by a set of strong social values.

Flintshire is a well-governed and progressive council. We are performing well as a direct provider and commissioner of public services, and as a partner to others. Our recent track record in key services such as education, social care, housing, anti-poverty and environment show that we do deliver on what we say we will do.

Everything we do is important to someone, so selecting a set of priorities for the year is never an easy task. We have set three shared priorities with our partners at a County level, and eight priorities for the Council itself. The Council's framework of eight priorities has been in place for several years and will be familiar. Through our priorities we aim to make a real and noticeable impact.

We are under huge financial pressure during this period of unprecedented austerity. Despite this we still aim high on our priorities. If we fall short against our priorities it will be because of under-funding and not because we are not committed or are not capable.

The plan sets out the Council's eight priorities and all the detailed sub-priorities for action, where we will make a bigger impact this year, page by page. An explanation for the choice of each one is given.

For 2016/17 a review of the current priorities and sub-priorities has been undertaken to set:-

- priorities that continue into 2016/17 for sustained attention;
- activities that can now be removed as completion of a time-limited piece of work which are now embedded e.g. Universal Credit preparation, use of the National Procurement Service;
- priorities which could be broadened to include more strategic issues e.g. 'Creating jobs and growing the local economy', the care home market;
- sub-priorities which could be merged e.g. Fuel Poverty and Maximising Income;
- emerging priority activities for 2016/17 e.g. Improving chances for Looked after Children, mental health.

Over the five year life of the Council, 2016/17 being the final year, the full set of priorities has adapted, and the annual set of priorities selected for special attention have changed according to need and circumstance.

We hope that you find the Plan both informative and uplifting. Your feedback on the Plan itself, and on what we aim to achieve, would be very welcome.



**Colin Everett**  
Chief Executive



**Aaron Shotton**  
Leader of the Council

# Setting Our Priorities and Judging our Performance

The priorities for Flintshire as a County are set by the Council and its local public sector partners. We work together as a Public Service Board (PSB) combining our resources for the benefit of Flintshire.

The sub-priorities shown with a  symbol (see diagram on page 6) denote those we share with our partners. These have been selected for special attention where we believe that concentrated effort by the partners working together will make a big difference to the communities of Flintshire. The sub-priorities are:

- Supporting Independent Living
- Vulnerability, Intervention and Prevention
- Inspiring Community Resilience

*Partners include: Coleg Cambria, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Wales Probation, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Welsh Government.*

The Council has also set a number of priorities for itself as an individual partner organisation. Setting priorities helps us focus our attention and resources on the things that matter most; these priorities are echoed in the Council's business plans. We are legally required to set priorities known as Improvement Objectives (under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009). We call these our Improvement Priorities.

In setting our Priorities we have to take a number of things into account from Welsh Government policy<sup>1</sup>, to the expectations of our key partners, to our legal responsibilities, to the views of local people.

We then set our targets, and judge our performance against them by using a wide range of information both quantitative (performance judged by numbers) and qualitative (performance judged by feedback, the results of consultation etc.).

To ensure that we know how well we are doing in meeting the expectations for our priorities we have a series of 'measures' which we keep under regular review. These performance measures are set out for each of our priorities page by page. They are detailed more fully in the supporting document '*How We Measure Achievement*'.

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<sup>1</sup> Our priorities reflect the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to include the improvement aspects of: strategic effectiveness; service quality; service availability; fairness; sustainability; efficiency and innovation.

Each of our sub-priorities is described individually on the following pages. We provide information about:

- The impact - what difference will be made
- Why the priority is important in 2016/17
- The national policy issues which impact on delivery of the sub-priority
- What we will do
- How we will measure achievement
- What risks we need to manage
- What some of our language means

We will let you know how well we have performed against our outcomes in two ways:

- 1) regular reports to the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny committees, and
- 2) next years published Annual Performance Report for 2016/17.

# Priorities for the 2016/17 Improvement Plan



# Following the Plan - An Easy Guide

The previous page sets out the Council's eight standing priorities and the sub-priorities which support them, where we aim to make a big impact in 2016/17.

Each standing priority is illustrated with a different colour. For example, **Poverty** is **orange** and **Modern and Efficient Council** is **dark pink**. This colour coding should make the priorities easier to follow as the reader works through the document and also the supporting document 'How we measure achievement'.

On the graphic illustration we have set out against each priority the impacts we aim to make. Under each impact we list the sub-priorities where action and achievement will help achieve the impact. A sub-priority is simply a specific programme of work on a given theme. Taken together, success in achieving the aims of a set of sub-priorities will deliver the ambition for the bigger, standing priority of the same theme.

Every organisation has to prioritise its attention and its resources to make an impact. The Council has selected a number of the sub-priorities for special attention in the 2016/17 Council year. Each of these selected sub-priorities then has a dedicated page to itself later in the document..

For example on page 23, you will see the priority for **Skills and Learning**.

This has a single impact:-

- **Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes**

This impact has two sub-priorities selected for attention in 2016/17. The reason for selection is explained on their dedicated pages (pages 22 and 23):-

- Apprenticeships and Training
- Modernised and High Performing Education

## What's changed for 2016/17?

There is a new section within each sub-priority which references national issues which have the potential to impact upon achievement of the priorities. These issues will also be referenced, where relevant, in the next refresh of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016-2020.

# Which Sub-Priorities have changed for 2016/17?

We recognise that when reading the Plan from one year to the next it can be difficult to see why some sub-priorities have not been carried forward. For this reason we have included a table below to summarise why sub-priorities have not been carried forward.

2015/16 Sub-Priorities	Why has this sub-priority not been carried forward into the 2016/17 Plan
<b>Town and Rural Regeneration</b>	<p>The 2 sub-priorities in the 2015/16 Improvement Plan (Business Sector Growth and Town &amp; Rural Regeneration) have been merged to create the sub-priority Business Sector Growth &amp; Regeneration. This is now a more strategic sub-priority, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic / regional positioning in readiness for future accelerated growth</li> <li>• Maximising the economic value of transformation projects</li> <li>• Facilitating the creation of jobs</li> <li>• Strengthening the economic benefits of town centres and the visitor economy</li> </ul>
<b>Fuel Poverty</b>	<p>Fuel Poverty has been merged within the sub-priority Maximising Income to create an overall sub-priority of 'Poverty'. This sub-priority focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of advice and support services to help people protect their income</li> <li>• Helping people to get closer to work and / or be work ready</li> <li>• Delivery of energy efficiency measures to homes in Flintshire</li> </ul>

## Regulation, Audit and Inspection

As a public organisation the Council is regularly inspected to examine and challenge its performance and effectiveness. This work is mainly undertaken by a number of appointed bodies including Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW).

The Council received a favourable Corporate Assessment as part of its Annual Improvement Report last year. The Corporate Assessment is undertaken every 4 years by the Auditor General for Wales. Flintshire's report contained seven Proposals for Improvement, most of which have either been completed or made good progress.

Other reports by Estyn and CSSIW have also been satisfactory with CSSIW finding in October 2015 that the majority of improvement areas previously identified by CSSIW have made good progress, but some areas of weaker performance remaining. During early 2015, CSSIW also inspected the Council's fostering services and found that many things were being done very well.

## Other Audit / Regulatory Activity

The council prepares an annual summary of all external audit and regulatory activity. The last one was produced in January 2015 and considered by the Council's Audit Committee.

# How Consultation Informs our Plan

The priorities set for this Improvement Plan were, from the outset, based on a wide range of previous consultations in service areas with both partners and representative groups (e.g. community safety, anti-poverty, education, economic development) and, in some cases, service users directly (e.g. housing).

There has been no single intensive consultation exercise on the Plan itself, by local choice, given this background. Elected members, on behalf of the communities they represent, have contributed to setting the priorities of the Council and used their representative role to test the relevance of the Plan against local public opinion. This has been facilitated through the sharing of the draft plan with all elected members and through its presentation at a workshop to which all elected members were invited. Feedback has been used to develop this final version of the Plan. In addition, elected members have been consulted on the targets and milestones to be used to measure achievement of the Plan and ensure there is sufficient pace and ambition.

Consultation on all parts of the Plan is continuous with stakeholders and Welsh Government. The Council remains open to feedback on the plan and amending it at any time following receipt of feedback as well as through new service based consultations.

# Improvement Plan and ‘How we measure achievement’

These 2 documents are linked with the ‘measuring achievement’ supporting document providing greater detail about the target performance and milestones we have set ourselves. The documents are hyperlinked at the relevant pages, or this table can be used as a guide.

Improvement Plan Page Numbers	Priority	Sub-Priority	Impact	Corresponding page numbers in ‘How we measure achievement’
12 13	<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate and Affordable Homes</li> <li>• Modern, Efficient and Adapted Homes</li> </ul>	Improving the choice and quality of local housing	2 - 3 4 - 5
14 15 16	<b>Living Well</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Living</li> <li>• Integrated Community Social and Health Services</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> </ul>	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded	6 - 7 8 - 9 10 - 11
17	<b>Economy &amp; Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Sector Growth &amp; Regeneration</li> </ul>	Growing the economy and creating jobs	11 - 12 12 - 14
18 19	<b>Skills and Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeships and Training</li> <li>• Modernised and High Performing Education</li> </ul>	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes	15 - 17 18 - 21
20	<b>Safe Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Safety</li> </ul>	Keeping people and communities safe	22 - 23
21	<b>Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximising Income</li> </ul>	Protecting people from poverty	24 - 27
22 23	<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport Infrastructure and Services</li> <li>• Sustainable Development and Environmental Management</li> </ul>	Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities Protecting our local environment	28 - 30 31 - 33
25	<b>Modern and Efficient Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing Communities</li> <li>• Improving Resource Management</li> </ul>	Supporting communities to become resilient Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported	34 - 36 37 - 39

# Priority: Housing



## Sub Priority

Appropriate & Affordable Homes

## Impact

Improving the choice and quality of local housing

### What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Deliver a proactive Housing Solutions service to prevent homelessness for as many households as possible.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Number of housing enquiries resolved at first point of contact
- o Maintaining the percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months

2. Stimulate the growth of affordable housing.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Increasing the numbers of new Council and affordable homes through the SHARP programme
- o Maximising the number of new affordable homes provided through the planning system
- o Increase the numbers of affordable homes provided through the Social Housing Grant (SHG) programme



This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Meet the diverse housing and accommodation needs of the local population.
- Develop more opportunities for people to access affordable rent and low cost home ownership.

### National Policy Issues:

- Capping of social rents to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels.
- Local Authorities to be able to access grant funding to support new build affordable and social housing.
- Sufficiency of resourcing to fulfil the new duties of the Wales Housing Act.

### Risks to manage

- Homelessness will remain a growing area of demand due to the current economic climate.
- The supply of affordable housing will continue to be insufficient to meet community need.

### What we mean by:

**SHARP** - Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme - programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years.

**Social Housing Grant (SHG)** - funds housing schemes that meet local needs and priorities as identified by local authorities including providing housing for rent or low cost home ownership through new build or the use of existing buildings.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Housing



## Sub Priority

Modern, Efficient & Adapted Homes

## Impact

Improving the choice and quality of local housing

### What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Deliver financial support to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Repairing / improving 40 private sector dwellings through the Council's capital programme and Welsh Government's national Home Improvement Loan
- o Maintaining the timeliness of adaptations, particularly those delivered through Disabled Facilities Grants

2. Reduce the number of long term vacant homes.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Bringing empty homes back into use for residential living through the Welsh Government Houses into Homes Scheme

3. Deliver the six year asset management strategy to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard for all Flintshire Council homes.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Completing WHQS work schemes to a value of £21M, in line with the Housing Asset Management Strategy

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Provide good quality housing for residents and maximise funding to improve homes.
- Reduce the number of empty properties in the County.
- Meet the Welsh Government target for all social housing to be brought up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

### National Policy Issues:

- Maintain the funding of Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) so that the Council can meet the WHQS standard by 2020
- Maintain current rent policy so that the Council can achieve WHQS by 2020

### Risks to manage

- The increased work programme to deliver the WHQS will not be met due to the scale of the programme.
- Council funding for adaptations and home loans will not be sufficient to meet demand.
- Financial assistance available to repair homes is not taken up by residents.
- Customer expectations for the timeliness of adaptations undertaken through disabled facilities grants will not be met due to competing demands on resources.

### What we mean by:

**Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)** - A grant paid to the 11 Local Housing Authorities who still manage and maintain their council housing which must be used to meet the WHQS.

**WHQS** - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing.

**Adaptations** - changes to a person's home to enable her/him to live as independently as possible.

**Disabled Facility Grant** - a grant available for larger adaptations to a person's home

**Houses into Homes Scheme** - A Welsh Government scheme to provide loans to bring empty houses or commercial buildings back into use as homes for sale or rent.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Living Well



Sub Priority  
Independent Living

Impact

Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

## What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure Care Home Provision within Flintshire enables people to live well and have a good quality of life.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Delivering the dementia awareness training programme to the care homes workforce
- o Working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to develop an action plan around supporting the quality and breadth of nursing provision
- o Addressing pressures in domiciliary care and the care home market and improve recruitment and retention.

2. Support greater independence for individuals with a frailty and/or disability, including those at risk of isolation.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Establishing a baseline for the people offered advice and support through the single point of access
- o Ensuring that the workforce are equipped to provide person centred care in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act

3. Improve outcomes for looked after children.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Developing a unified Corporate Parenting Strategy
- o Supporting children in stable, local placements
- o Improving the stability of school placements and the transfer process where moves are needed
- o Strengthen partnership working with Health to ensure timely access to health assessments..

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Help people to live independently as they get older.
- Support people with dementia.
- Develop a model of support for persons with a disability which enables independent living.
- Support whole families to live independently.

## National Policy Issues:

- Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Living Wage Issues for care providers, Care Market fragility.
- Aging population locally and nationally.

## Risks to manage

- Fragility and sustainability of the care home sector.
- The quality of care home services will not meet required standards.
- Children and vulnerable families are not fully supported where multi-agency services and partners do not move toward an early intervention and prevention approach together.
- Demand and aspirations for independent living will not be met.

### What we mean by:

**Looked After Children** - Children who are being looked after by their local authority, including with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes or in other residential settings like schools or secure units.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Living Well



## Sub Priority

Integrated Community Social & Health Services

## Impact

Enabling more people to live independently and well at home

### What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Ensure that effective services to support carers are in place as part of the integrated social and health services.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Developing and implementing the action plan resulting from the review of the carers' strategy
2. Influence the use of Intermediate Care Funds to support effective discharge from hospital and ensure a smoother transition between Health and Social Care services.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Agreeing the priorities and implementation plan for funding for 2016/17
  - o Improving the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons
3. Work through the Children's Services Forum and participation group to improve access to CAMHS  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Number and average waiting time for Looked After Children (LAC) to access CAMHS
4. Further develop dementia awareness across the county  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Number of events (and take-up) aimed at raising awareness of dementia across the county
  - o Number of dementia friendly towns in Flintshire

### This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Work with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to develop Health and Social Care models for the future.
- Avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital and support early and successful hospital discharges.
- Co-ordinate the provision of support for service users more effectively with BCUHB and other providers.
- Work together with BCUHB to support people with dementia within the local community.

### National Policy Issues:

- Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Living Wage Issues for care providers, Care Market fragility.
- Aging population locally and nationally.

### Risks to manage

- Funding between Health and the Council does not transfer smoothly e.g. Community Health Council, ICF, Primary Care Funds
- Service provision is not co-ordinated/integrated.



#### What we mean by:

**Intermediate Care Funds** - Funding from Welsh Government being used to support older people to maintain their independence and remain in their own home for as long as possible.

**Looked After Children** - Children who are being looked after by their local authority, including with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes or in other residential settings like schools or secure units.

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** - NHS - provided mental health services for children, generally until school-leaving age, in the UK.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Living Well



Sub Priority  
Safeguarding

Impact

Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded

## What we will do in 2016/17:

1. Strengthen arrangements within all council portfolios to have clear responsibilities to address safeguarding.

### Achievements will be measured through:

- o Developing a corporate safeguarding policy which operates as a framework for each service within the Council
- o Development of a performance framework and reporting cycle
- o Review corporate and service policies and procedures to identify breadth and depth of safeguarding coverage

2. Ensure that the workforce are trained in line with the new Codes of Practice for Safeguarding.

### Achievements will be measured through:

- o Carrying out a training needs analysis across the Council
- o Referral rates from services other than Social Services

3. Working with our partners we will ensure that our response rates to referrals remain within statutory targets.

### Achievements will be measured through:

- o Statutory procedural targets for child and adult protection

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Have a Council wide approach to safeguard and protect vulnerable people.
- Develop further awareness and support for the Council's approach to safeguarding including the prevention of human trafficking and child sexual exploitation.
- Comply with the new codes of practice for Safeguarding within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWB).

## National Policy Issues:

- Continuity of funding and collaboration with other partners.

## Risks to manage

- Safeguarding arrangements do not meet the requirements of the SSWB Act.



### What we mean by:

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** - a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online.

**Social Services and Well Being (SSWB) Act 2014** - An Act to reform social services law to make provision about improving well-being outcomes.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Economy and Enterprise



## Sub Priority

Business Sector Growth & Regeneration

## Impact

Growing the economy and creating jobs

### What we will do in 2016/17

1. Strategic / Regional positioning in readiness for future accelerated growth.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Contributing to the development and delivery of a clear cross border economic growth strategy for Flintshire
- o Success in gaining approval and/or funding for programmes which will support economic growth

2. Maximise the economic value of transformation projects.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the transformation projects
- o Supporting supply chain development
- o Converting business enquiries to investment within Flintshire

3. Facilitate the creation of jobs.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Creating jobs within Flintshire
- o Creating jobs within Flintshire through our large scale capital programmes (WHQS and SHARP)

4. Strengthen the economic benefits of town centres and the visitor economy.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Supporting the development and management of visitor facilities in key urban areas and along the Dee coastline.
- o Facilitating private sector investment in town centres.
- o Expanding the North East Wales Ambassadors programme in Flintshire.

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Grow the local and regional economy, with a target to increase Flintshire's Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK average (currently 88%) by 2030.
- Secure the infrastructure investment needed to facilitate growth both regionally and locally.
- Build upon the success of the advanced manufacturing sector in Flintshire and facilitate business innovation, adaptability and supply chain development.
- Protect the economic viability of our town centres and rural areas.
- Work collaboratively to achieve key priorities for major infrastructure projects which will support economic growth objectives.

### National Policy Issues:

- Recognition that Flintshire is part of the Northern Powerhouse and a key player in the delivery of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth deal for the Mersey Dee area and for North Wales.
- Devolution of powers to support economic growth in North Wales (opportunity and possible threat if powers are insufficient and do not match those in England).
- Infrastructure investment to create the platform for advancing economic growth.
- Change from national to local control of business rates.

### What we mean by:

**Gross Value Added (GVA)** - Measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector.

**Northern Powerhouse** - A collaboration concerned with redressing the North-South economic imbalance, aiming to attract investment into northern cities and towns.

**Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)** - Welsh Government's physical quality standard for modern social housing.

**Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)** - Programme to build 500 new homes over the next five years.

**North East Wales Ambassadors programme** - a network committed to encouraging visitors to the region, projecting a positive image and generating more business for local suppliers

**Local Enterprise Partnership** - Voluntary partnerships between local communities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities, growth and job creation.

### Risks to manage

- The Northern Powerhouse and LEP could pose risks to the growth of the Flintshire economy if there is not devolution of powers and freedoms to match those being developed in England.
- Infrastructure investment does not keep pace with needs and business is lost to the economy.
- Support for businesses in Flintshire doesn't meet their needs and fails to encourage investment.
- Devolved powers in Wales do not match those in England.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Skills and Learning



**Sub Priority**  
Apprenticeships and Training

## Impact

Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximize the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience opportunities.
2. Increase training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes.
3. Support the Young Entrepreneur Programme with the Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network (BEN).
4. Further develop the Youth Engagement and Progression work programme for learners in danger of disengaging through:
  - Targeting vocational and employability skills
  - Enhancing personal support, including coaching, mentoring and help with transition
  - Realise the benefits of regional European Social Fund (ESF) programmes
  - Increasing the use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) for young people in the youth justice service; to better engage with post-custody education, training and employment prior to release.

### Achievement will be measured through:

- Increasing the numbers of training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Increasing training and apprenticeship opportunities through the Futureworks Flintshire Apprenticeship Academy and major capital programmes
- The number of entrepreneurs supported through the Flintshire BEN
- Improving the local skills base to improve employability and earning prospects through improved qualifications
- Increasing the numbers of learners achieving the Level 1 Threshold
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above benchmark position
- Reducing the number of 18 - 24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance
- Rolling out ROTL to new institutions/partners
- Meeting ESF programme targets

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Extend and improve the available education, employment and training opportunities
- Improve the employment prospects of local people to meet the needs of local employers
- Help young people take the step from education to employment
- Reduce barriers to engagement, ensure equality of access and participation opportunities for all children and young people

## National Policy Issues:

- Delays of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes affecting delivery of local targets.
- Implementation of the Apprenticeship levy

## Risks to manage

- Local employers and learning providers do not work closely enough to identify and meet the skills based needs of the future
- Training places will not match current and future employer aspirations and needs
- Timescales of ESF programmes will not meet local targets and requirements.

### What we mean by:

**European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes** - To increase the employability of local people (aged 25 and over) who have complex barriers to employment.

**Young Entrepreneur Programme** - an opportunity for young people to work with mentors on their business ideas.

**Flintshire Business Entrepreneurship Network (BEN)** - employers working together to support Entrepreneurship Programmes.

**Level 1 Threshold** - 16 year old learners achieve five or more A\*-G grades at GCSE or equivalent.

**Apprenticeship levy** - a government proposal to apply the levy to large employers across all industries.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Skills and Learning

 <p><b>Sub Priority</b> Modernised and High Performing Education</p>	<p><b>Impact</b> Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes</p>
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## What we will do in 2016/17

Make a difference through our Education & Youth Improvement and Modernisation Strategy by raising standards through: -

1. Working effectively with the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) to:
  - Develop leadership capacity in schools through school modernisation and regional working;
  - Share best teaching practice and resources across schools most in need;
  - Identify and target support for those schools most in need;
  - Develop the capacity of schools to respond to national initiatives and curriculum reforms; and
  - Improve skills in digital literacy, literacy and numeracy
2. Reducing the impact of poverty and disadvantage through the national school improvement priority, Families First Programme (2015-17) and Flintshire's Integrated Youth Services Strategy (2014-18), "Delivering Together".
3. Improving outcomes for Looked After Children and young people exiting the Youth Justice System.
4. Continuing to implement Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
5. Developing and implementing a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
6. Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
7. Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
8. Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- Improving outcomes in Mathematics, English/Welsh 1st Language and Core Subject Indicator at Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 & 3
- Improving outcomes in Key Stage 4 including Level 2 Inclusive Threshold, Capped Points Score and A\*-A Threshold
- Raising standards achieved by learners who are entitled to free school meals
- Improving the number of hours in education, training or employment that young people in the youth justice system can access
- Completing key milestones for the 21st Century School and Schools Modernisation programmes
- Develop and implement a plan for the next phase of Schools Modernisation, through the 21st Century School (Band B) programme.
- Maintaining levels of 16 year olds in education, employment and training above the Council's benchmark position
- Securing a sustainable strategy for repairs and maintenance of school buildings.
- Securing a sustainable set of transport policies and efficient delivery practices.
- Developing an effective local approach to national inclusion reforms.

## This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Utilise resources effectively to achieve the best possible educational outcomes
- Support the national Welsh Government priorities to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment
- Improve digital literacy and skills to enable access to modern employment and economic development opportunities
- Work collaboratively to develop national reforms to curriculum, assessment and professional development models
- Work effectively with partners across the region to secure efficiency and improved outcomes from educational improvement programmes
- Make more efficient use of education resources through Schools Modernisation.

## National Policy Issues:

- Sustainable multi-year funding strategy for education funding following the National Assembly for Wales elections in May
- Rationalisation of the provision, planning and accountability processes for education related specific grants.
- Affordability of the 21st Century Schools programme new phases
- Simplification of the process for school place planning and provision

## Risks to manage

- Schools do not receive and/or make best use of the support they need from the Council and GwE
- Numbers of school places not matching the changing demographics.
- Limited funding to address the backlog of known repair and maintenance works in Education & Youth assets
- Leadership capacity does not match school needs

**What we mean by:**

**Regional School Improvement Service (GwE)** - School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales, works alongside and on behalf of the Local Authorities to develop excellent schools across the region.

**Youth Justice Service** - aims to prevent children and young people under 18 from offending or re-offending.

**Core Subject Indicator** - learners achieve the expected level in Mathematics, English or Welsh 1st language and Science

**Level 2 Inclusive Threshold** - 16 year old learners achieve five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE including Mathematics and English/Welsh first Language

**Capped Points Score** - 16 year old learners are awarded points for each grade they achieve. The best eight subjects then make their Capped Points Score.

**A\*-A Threshold** - 16 year old learners who achieve five or more A\* or A grades at GCSE

**21st Century Schools** - a national programme of funding to improve school buildings and environments

**Schools Modernisation** - the process by which the Local Authority ensures there are a sufficient number of high quality school places, of the right type in the right locations

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Safe Communities



Sub Priority  
Community Safety

Impact

Keep people and communities safe

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Develop a plan to deliver the key outcomes of the North Wales Safer Communities Board (NWSCB) Community Safety Plan.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Reviewing the performance of the delivery framework of the NWSCB
- o Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) adopting and following the key priorities of the regional Community Safety Plan

2. Contribute to the delivery of the North Wales Community Safety Plan priorities:

- o Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on high risk repeat victims.
- o Managing the impacts of substance misuse through improved service provision.
- o Managing the impacts of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Addressing high risk repeat instances of domestic abuse
- o Continuing to meet Welsh Government targets for 'completed treatments' and waiting times for substance misuse services.
- o Agreeing a coordinated response to meeting the requirements of the Act

3. Reduce fear of crime by making best use of the latest technologies including closed circuit television (CCTV).

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- o Agreement of a forward plan for the resilience of the control room (location and technology renewal)
- o Agreement of a new business and funding plan for the future service
- o Maintaining continuity of service during the service review
- o Maintaining continuity of Council and Town and Community Council partnership funding during the service review

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Support victims of domestic abuse.
- Minimise the impact of substance misuse on the individuals, their families and communities in the County.
- Understand the requirements of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

National Policy Issues:

- Sustainability of short-term grant funded schemes.

### Risks to manage

- Lack of sustainable funding to deliver nationally determined community safety priorities.
- Retention of experienced and skilled staff due to the short term grant funding regime.

### What we mean by:

**Substance Misuse** - the continued use of drugs or alcohol despite negative consequence to the individual using, their friends, family and the community.

**CCTV** - to prevent and respond to crime and disorder.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Poverty



Sub Priority  
Maximising Income

Impact

Protecting people from poverty

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income..  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Assisting Flintshire residents to claim additional Social Security and Tax Credits to which they are entitled
  - o Assisting people with Welfare Reform changes through the effective application of the Council's Discretionary Housing Policy
  - o Supporting Flintshire residents to better manage their financial commitments
  - o Monitoring the speed of processing of Housing Benefit claims: i) new claims ii) change of circumstances
2. Helping people to get closer to work and / or be work ready through a range of Government and European funded programmes..  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o The numbers of local people getting closer to work or becoming ready to enter work having benefitted from accessing Government or European funded programmes
3. Deliver energy efficiency measures to homes in Flintshire.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Reducing the overall annual fuel bill for residents
  - o The number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures
  - o Creating and launching a national energy efficiency materials and supplier framework



This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Support people to manage the ongoing impact of Welfare Reform.
- Help people claim the benefits they are entitled to.
- Help people manage their financial commitments.
- Reduce the risk of poverty for families, children and young people.
- Reduce the impact of rises in fuel costs.

National Policy Issues:

- UK Government welfare reforms are adversely affecting local people
- Sustainability of funding for fuel poverty measures.
- Delays of the European Social Fund (ESF) Programmes affecting delivery of local targets.

## Risks to manage

- Demand for advice and support services will not be met.
- Debt levels will rise if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent.
- The local economy will suffer if residents have less income to spend.
- Residents do not take up the energy efficiency measures available.
- Available funding for energy efficiency measures falls short of public demand.

**What we mean by:**

**Welfare Reform** - a range of measures introduced by Central Government to reform the Welfare Benefits system

**Discretionary Housing Policy** - Aims to provide a fair and consistent approach to help customers who require further financial assistance with their housing costs.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Environment



**Sub Priority**  
Transport Infrastructure  
and Services

**Impact**

Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Access and use available grant funding to support Council priorities for accessing employment, health, leisure and education.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Submission of successful funding bids to WG for Local Transport funding.
  - o Successfully delivering schemes funded through the Local Transport Fund - infrastructure
  - o Preparing the existing route map and integrated network map for "Active Travel"
  - o Securing funding via the Rural and Community Development Fund - community transport
2. Prioritise the Council's road infrastructure for repairs and maintenance and implement programmes of work within available funding in order to improve the resilience, efficiency and reliability of the transport network.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the condition of the highway's infrastructure
  - o Undertaking inspections to ensure reinstatements meet the required standards and raise the standard of works undertaken on Flintshire's network
3. Use available funding to support the Council's priorities to improve road safety on the County's highway network.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Delivering Welsh Government (WG) funded Grant Aided Safety Schemes to address collision trends and concentrations on the road network through the Welsh Government's Grant Aid Programme
  - o Delivering WG funded schemes identified as part of Safe Routes in Communities
  - o Delivering WG funded road safety initiatives to reduce the risk of collisions of high risk groups (measures for older drivers, newly qualified young drivers and motorcyclists)
4. Work closely with the communities to develop innovative and sustainable community transport schemes.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Working with interested local communities to develop a Community Transport Strategy
  - o Developing community transport schemes to compliment the core network of bus services
  - o Development of community transport "hubs" within available funding.

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Maintain accessibility to and between employment, homes, leisure, health and social activity.
- Support and enable safe and affordable travel services.
- Minimise congestion and delays on our highway network.

## National Policy Issues:

- Sufficiency of national funding and investment for infrastructure improvement projects and transport services.

## Risks to manage

- Sufficient funding to ensure our highways infrastructure remains safe and capable of supporting economic growth is not found.
- Sustainable transport options do not remain attractive to users.
- Sufficient funding will not be found to continue to provide subsidised bus services.

## What we mean by:

**Infrastructure** - Facilities, systems sites and networks that are necessary for the County to function.

**"Active Travel"** - Walking or cycling as an alternative means to motorised transport for the purpose of making every day journeys.

**Community Transport** - Passenger transport schemes which are owned and operated by local community groups.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Environment

## Sub Priority

Sustainable Development & Environmental Management

## Impact

Protecting our local environment

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Establish an Environment working Group to ensure that the Council adopts an integrated approach to service delivery which meets the aims and objectives of the Single Environment Grant (SEG).:
 

**Achievement will be measured through:**

  - o Gaining approval to the grant submission
  - o Establishing a Single Environment Group
  - o Monitoring progress and claiming the equivalent grant funding
  
2. Agree the Local Development Plan's vision and objectives, and options to accommodate growth.
 

**Achievement will be measured through:**

  - o Undertaking a renewable energy assessment for the LDP in partnership with Wrexham Council which will inform the pre-deposit and later deposit plan
  - o Agree a revised timetable and delivery agreement with Welsh Government leading to the pre-deposit plan
  - o Publicising the pre-deposit plan
  - o Completing the public consultation on the pre-deposit plan
  
3. Reducing our Carbon footprint.
 

**Achievement will be measured through:**

  - o Creating two solar farms on Flintshire County Council land
  - o Install an electricity link between Brook Hill Landfill site and Altami Depot or agree a virtual private network with Scottish Power to fully utilise the energy generated and reduce costs
  - o Creating a waste transfer station in Greenfield by mm/yy
  - o Improving recycling performance
  - o Reducing our carbon emissions
  
4. Reviewing the Flood Risk Management Strategy.
 

**Achievement will be measured through:**

  - o Completing Flintshire's Local Flood Risk Management Plans
  - o Developing a list of priority flood alleviation schemes based on transparent criteria
  
5. Reducing the occurrence and impact of environmental crime.
 

**Achievement will be measured through:**

  - o Identification of environmental crime hotspots from local intelligence and service requests
  - o Targeted enforcement campaigns in hotspot areas

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Address the requirements of the sustainable development principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act and Environment Bill.
- Balance the need for sustainable development with the protection of the natural environment.
- Continue to reduce our carbon emissions to meet Welsh Government targets and play our part in helping to address the consequences of climate change.

National Policy Issues:

- Reduction of the Single Environment Grant whilst delivering the priority area of natural resource management.
- Reliance on external funding for large scale developments.
- Government cap on financial support for solar farms.
- Capacity and funding to address flood risks.

## Risks to manage

- Reduction of the Single Environment Grant.
- Recycling programmes are not supported by the public and employees.
- Limitations on suitable Council sites with sufficient area for larger scale renewables schemes and suitable connections to the electric grid.
- Funding will not be secured for priority flood alleviation schemes.
- Customer expectations around the delivery of flood alleviation schemes are not effectively managed.
- Environmental crime programmes are not supported by the public and employees.

**What we mean by:**

**Single Environment Grant** - a WG grant to support integrated delivery of natural resource management, waste & resource efficiency and local environmental quality.

**Renewable energy schemes** - schemes designed to use energy from a source that is naturally replenished e.g. sunlight

**Carbon reduction commitment** - a mandatory scheme aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions in large public sector and private organisations.

**Energy Generation** - generation of heat and electricity.

**Waste Transfer Station** - facility to bulk and bale waste for onward transportation.

**Environmental Crime** - e.g. dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Priority: Modern & Efficient Council



**Sub Priority**  
Developing Communities

**Impact**

Supporting communities to become more resilient

## What we will do in 2016/17

1. Develop the community and social sectors through developing and growing social enterprises in Flintshire, in turn supporting and creating new forms of local business.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the number of new social enterprises developed
  - o Monitoring the number of social enterprises supported to thrive and prosper
  - o Monitoring community benefits delivered by new social enterprises
2. Encourage volunteers and active citizens.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the impact of the local volunteering policy
3. Ensure community benefit through our commissioning of goods and services.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Establishing a Community Benefits Board with an action plan
  - o Monitoring the percentage of community benefit clauses included in new procurement contracts.
4. Design and implement alternative delivery models (ADMs) to sustain important services to meet future need.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the level of efficiencies ADMs have supported.
  - o Monitoring the number of services sustained through delivery via alternative models.
5. Empower communities to run and manage facilities in their locality through Community Asset Transfers (CATs).  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the number of public assets safely transferred to the community
  - o Monitoring community benefits delivered by Community Asset Transfers
6. Ensure our Armed Forces Community and their families are not disadvantaged when accessing Council Services  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Monitoring the achievements of the Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

## National Policy Issues:

- Lack of support programmes for the development of alternative delivery models.
- Role of Town and Community Councils in cooperative working and local governance as detailed in the Local Government Bill 2015.
- Strengthening of the social sector to be more commercial and less reliant on grant funding.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Build on what has been completed in year one (2015/16) with support for local communities. In year two this will be concentrated on:
  - o Developing the community and social sectors to support local communities to be more self-sufficient.
  - o Creating alternative delivery models within the community and social sector to sustain valued public services.
  - o Developing social enterprises, who are able to act for the benefit of local communities and create both employment and economic opportunities.
  - o Realising social benefits in the community e.g. increasing volunteering and training opportunities for young people; keeping local money in the community.
  - o Ensuring our Armed Forces Community and their families are recognised for their commitment.

## Risks to manage

- The capacity and appetite of the community and social sectors.
- The willingness of the workforce and Trade Unions to embrace change.
- Market conditions which the new alternative delivery models face.
- Limitations on public funding to subsidise alternative models.
- Procurement regulations stifling our ability to develop local community and third sector markets
- Newly established Social Enterprises fail in their early stages of development
- Newly established Community Asset Transfers fail in their early stages of development

## What we mean by:

**Social Enterprise** - businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are mainly reinvested for that purpose in the business or community.

**Community Benefit Clauses** - benefits to local communities from major procurements e.g. training and employment opportunities, community facilities.

**Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs)** - new approaches to service delivery designed to sustain important services and meet future need.

**Community Asset Transfers (CAT)** - the leasehold transfer of a Flintshire County Council asset to an organisation with a social purpose who plans to use it for the benefit of the local community.

# Priority: Modern & Efficient Council



## Sub Priority

Improving Resource Management

## Impact

Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported

### What we will do in 2016/17

1. Develop and implement a renewed three year financial plan that reflects anticipated funding, costs and efficiencies to support strategic decision making.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Revising our plan to meet the £38m funding gap for 2016 - 2019
  - o Matching our priorities with revenue and capital investment
  - o Achieving our efficiency targets
2. Implement the People Strategy to ensure the council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Participation in Flintshire Academies Training and Development Programmes
  - o Monitoring the impact of people performance management
  - o Monitoring the impact of the new Employee Development and Talent
  - o Management scheme on retention of our capability
  - o Monitoring the impact of the People Strategy in service portfolios
3. Rationalise the Council's use of corporate accommodation.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Reducing the floor space and costs of occupied office accommodation
  - o Increasing the number/percentage of employees who work in an agile way
4. Optimise purchasing efficiencies through the use of local, regional and national procurement arrangements and through the increased use of electronic solutions.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Creating efficiencies through the use of local, regional and national procurement arrangements
  - o Reducing the cost of procurement through the use of end to end electronic purchasing
5. Embrace digital channels as the default in service design where possible to provide access to online services at a time and location convenient to the customer.  
**Achievement will be measured through:**
  - o Increase the number of transactional services online and via the Flintshire App
  - o Increase the take up of online services
  - o Respond to customer feedback ensuring information is accessed at first point of contact online

This is a priority this year because we need to:

- Manage with reducing resources.
- Continue to aim high despite reduced financial and people resources.
- Make the best use of our capability and capacity in challenging times.
- Have the right buildings in the right places for the right uses.
- Make our money go further through smarter purchasing.
- Achieve the highest possible standards of customer services.

### National Policy Issues:

- Reduction in capital investment and resources

### Risks to manage

- The scale of the financial challenge.
- The capacity and capability of the organisation to implement necessary changes.
- The pace of procurement collaborations and our limited control over their development.
- Public attitude to accessing services on-line.

### What we mean by:

**Employee Development and Talent Management scheme:** our scheme that seeks to encourage employee engagement, talent management, behaviour and competencies development, learning and skills development.

**Digital Channels:** Alternative channels of communication e.g. e-mail, social media, text messaging.

**Transactional Services:** Council services for which customers pay.

How achievement will be measured - [click here](#)

# Statement of Responsibility

This publication fulfils in part the statutory requirements to publish an annual Improvement Plan as part of the Local Government (Wales) Measure (2009). This is our 'forward-looking' document for the year. The second part of the statutory requirement is the Annual Performance Report which is our 'backward-looking' document and reviews performance against our objectives set for the previous year. This second report is published in October.

# Contacts for Feedback and Review

On-going review about the Council's priorities and this plan is available through our website where feedback forms are available for the public, our partners, our workforce and businesses. We would like to know what you think about our priorities and those for the future. We would value your feedback and hope that you can spend a few minutes to tell us what you think.

In the meantime our contacts for any initial observations are:

**Policy and Performance Team:**

Tel: 01352 702744

Email: [Policy and Performance Team@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:Policy and Performance Team@flintshire.gov.uk)

This document is available in alternative formats or your own language on request.