

Pecyn Cyhoeddus

**Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cwsmeriaid a Chorfforaethol/
Head of Corporate and Customer Services**
Sioned Wyn Davies LLB (Hons) Birm Solicitor

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Eich Cyf/Your Ref
Ein Cyf/Our Ref
Dyddiad/Date

Dydd Iau, 8 Tachwedd
2018

Gofynner am/Ask for
Rhif Union/Direct Dial
Cyfnewid Testun/Text Relay
E-bost/E-mail

Craig Stevens
01978 292253
18001
craig.stevens@wrexham.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

You are requested to attend a **Meeting** of the **PWYLLGOR CRAFFU AR GARTREFI A'R AMGYLCHEDD of Wrexham County Borough Council** to be held in **YSTAFELL GYFARFOD 1, NEUADD Y DREF** on **DYDD MERCHER, 14 TACHWEDD 2018** at **1.30 pm** for the transaction of the business specified below.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sioned Wyn Davies'.

Head of Corporate and Customer Services

AGENDA

- 1 **Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb**
- 2 **Datganiadau o gysylltiadau personol, os oes rhai**
Atgoffir yr Aelodau o'u cyfrifoldeb, dan Baragraff 11 o God Ymddygiad yr Aelodau, i ddatgan bodolaeth a natur unrhyw gysylltiad personol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw un o'r busnesau i'w trafod yn y cyfarfod hwn.
- 3 **Cadarnhau Cofnodion**
Cadarnhau Cofnodion y Cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 10 Hydref 2018 fel cofnod cywir.
(*Tudalennau 3 - 6*)
- 4 **Rhaglen Waith**
I ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Cyllid. (*Tudalennau 7 - 30*)

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh.
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh and this will not lead to any delay.*

- 5 **Rheoli Gweithredoedd Cynnal a Chadw Tir ar Briffyrdd, Mannau Agored a Thir Cyfrif Refeniw Tai**
 TI ystyried adroddiad yr Aelod Arweiniol ar gyfer Lle – Amgylchedd a Thrafnidiaeth.
(Tudalennau 31 - 34)
- 6 **Diweddariad Diwygiad Lles**
 I ystyried adroddiad yr Aelod Arweiniol ar gyfer Lle - Tai *(Tudalennau 35 - 50)*
- 7 **Unrhyw eitemau eraill y mae'r Cadeirydd yn penderfynu eu bod yn rhai brys**

TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PWYLLGOR CRAFFU AR GARTREFI A'R AMGYLCHEDD

Councillor	Bryan Apsley	Councillor	M G Morris
“	Sonia Benbow-Jones (Is-gadeirydd)	“	Paul Pemberton (Cadeirydd)
“	Paul Blackwell	“	John Phillips
“	T Alan Edwards	“	Graham Rogers
“	Carrie Harper	“	Paul Rogers
“	R Alun Jenkins	“	Barrie Warburton
	David Maddocks		

Eitem 3

**COFNODION CYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR CRAFFU AR GARTREFI A'R
AMGYLCHEDD A GYNHALIWDYD YN YSTAFELL GYFARFOD 1, NEUADD Y
DREF AR DYDD MERCHER, 10 HYDREF 2018**

AELODAU

Y Cynghorydd Paul Pemberton, Cadeirydd
Y Cynghorydd Sonia Benbow-Jones, Is-Gadeirydd

Y Cynghorydd	Bryan Apsley	Y Cynghorydd	M G Morris
"	Paul Blackwell	"	John Phillips
"	T Alan Edwards	"	Graham Rogers
"	Carrie Harper	"	* Paul Rogers
"	R Alun Jenkins	"	Barrie Warburton
"	David Maddocks		

*Yn absennol

Hefyd yn bresennol – Y Cynghorwyr David A Bithell, Brian Cameron, Marc Jones a Geoff Lowe

17 YMDDIHEURIADAU AM ABSENOLDEB

Cyflwynwyd ymddiheuriad am absenoldeb ar ran y Cynghorydd Paul Rogers.

18 CADARNHAU COFNODION

CYTUNWYD – Y dylid llofnodi Cofnodion y Cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 12 Medi 2018 fel cofnod cywir.

19 RHAGLEN WAITH

Cyflwynodd y Pennaeth Cyllid adroddiad (HF/113/18s) i gynorthwyo Aelodau i gytuno ar restr o feysydd ar gyfer testunau craffu posibl am y 12 mis nesaf ac efallai yn y tymor hirach.

Yn ystod y drafodaeth, cyflwynwyd y cynigion canlynol:

- Cynlluniau Gwella Amgylchedd Cyfrifon Cyllid y Tai – i'w ystyried yn y cyfarfod a gaiff ei gynnal ym mis Chwefror 2019.
- Cynlluniau Parcio Preswylwyr CBSW 2010 – Aelodau i dderbyn ffurflen gais testunau ac ystyried y mater drwy sefydlu Grŵp Tasg a Gorffen.

CYTUNWYD – Yn amodol ar y newidiadau y soniwyd amdanynt, i gymeradwyo'r rhaglen waith a amlinellwyd yn adroddiad HF/113/18s.

20 PROTOCOL AR GYFER LLEOLI CELFI STRYD A RHWYSTRAU DROS DRO ERAILL AR BRIFFYRDD.

Cyflwynodd Aelod Arweiniol ar gyfer Lle – Amgylchedd a Chludiant adroddiad

(HEP/81/18s) yn cyflwyno protocolau i gymeradwyo a lleoli celfi stryd ar briffyrdd i sicrhau dull cydweithredol a chyson ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol.

Drwy gyflwyno ei adroddiad, dywedodd yr Aelod Arweiniol bod 8 mlynedd wedi bod ers i'r Bwrdd Gweithredol gymeradwyo cyfres o brotocolau ar gyfer lleoli celfi stryd parhaol a rhwystrau dros dro a symud rhwystrau dros dro nad ydynt wedi'u cymeradwyo ar y priffyrdd. Er nad oes unrhyw newidiadau i ddeddfwriaeth priffyrdd, nododd y byddai'n ddoeth adolygu'r protocolau hyn.

Yn ystod y drafodaeth, fe nodwyd y pwyntiau canlynol, yn benodol:

- Er bod gan y Cyngor brotocolau a deddfwriaeth ar waith er mwyn ymdrin â chelfi stryd a rhwystrau dros dro eraill y Priffyrdd, roedd pryderon ymysg yr Aelodau bod y rhain wedi bod yn aneffeithiol mewn sawl achos, o ganlyniad i ddiffyg gorfodi.
- Pwysleisiodd yr Aelod Arweiniol ei fod yn anodd gweithredu polisiâu ac egwyddorion sylfaenol y gellid eu cyflawni gydag adnoddau sy'n lleihau.
- Er nad oedd rhaid talu am arwyddion cyfeiriol melyn dros dro, cadarnhaodd Swyddogion eu bod wedi cwblhau proses ymgeisio ac roedd gofyn i'r arwyddion gydymffurfio â safonau perthnasol.
- Cadarnhaodd Swyddogion bod gwaith yn mynd rhagddo i reoli a gwella'r sefyllfa yn ymwneud â thipio anghyfreithlon.
- Cyfeiriodd Aelodau at bolisi ar gyfer byrddau 'A' a baratowyd sawl blwyddyn yn ôl, ac ymholwyd a ellir ei ail-gyflwyno. Pwysleisiodd Swyddogion bod y polisi blaenorol, fel y cytunwyd, wedi'i gyfeirio at Reoli Canol Tref i'w gyflwyno a'i reoli.
- Ystyriwyd byrddau 'A' yn broblem arbennig i bobl sydd â nam golwg neu bobl sydd â phroblemau symudedd, ac mae'r problemau hyn yn gwaethygu mewn tywydd garw. Mae pryderon ynghylch tresbaswyr hefyd wedi codi o'r blaen.
- Byddai angen i unrhyw bolisi sicrhau bod byrddau 'A' yn ddiogel, yn cael eu harddangos yn agos at y busnesau perthnasol ac yn ddigon cryf i wrthsefyll tywydd garw.
- Cydnabuwyd na chaiff byrddau 'A' eu hystyried yn broblem priffyrdd.
- Roedd rhai yn pryderu y byddai cyflwyno trwyddedau byrddau 'A' yn cael effaith negyddol o ran cefnogi busnesau a hyrwyddo datblygu economaidd o fewn canol y dref ac yn ardal ehangach y Fwrdeistref Sirol.
- Mae cynnydd diweddar wedi bod yn y ffioedd a godir ar rwystrau dros dro ar briffyrdd cyhoeddus ac mae'r rhain yn unol â'r rheiny a godir gan Awdurdodau

eraill.

- Caiff biniau sbwriel eu symud o'u safle, ond ni roddir rhai newydd yn eu lle bob amser, os ydynt wedi'u difrodi. Nid oedd cyllid ar gael i brynu biniau newydd a chânt eu trwsio neu eu hatgyweirio os bydd angen. Byddai'n bosibl darparu biniau sbwriel pe bai hyn yn cael ei hariannu gan Gyngorau Cymunedol.

CYTUNWYD -

- (i) Bod yr Aelodau'n cefnogi'r protocolau diwygiedig ar gyfer lleoli celfi stryd a rhwystrau dros dro eraill ar briffyrdd.**
- (ii) Bod y Swyddogion yn ystyried cwmpas ar gyfer adolygiad yn seiliedig ar drafodaethau'r Pwyllgor ac i hwn gael ei adrodd yn ôl i'r Pwyllgor.**

Y Cyngorydd Paul Pemberton
Cadeirydd



REPORT TO:	Homes & Environment Scrutiny Committee
REPORT NO:	HF/121/18s
DATE:	14 November 2018
LEAD MEMBER:	N/A
CONTACT OFFICER:	Craig Stevens, Scrutiny Facilitator (Tel: 292253)
SUBJECT:	Review of Work Programme
WARD:	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To assist Members in agreeing a list of potential scrutiny topic areas for the next 12 months and possibly longer term.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the changes to the work programme agreed at the September 2018 meeting.
- 2.2 To consider the attached topic selection form at Appendix C.
- 2.3 To consider the attached scoping document for the establishment of a residents parking task and finish group at Appendix B.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 **To consider the information included in the report and to agree a work programme for the coming 12 – 18 months.**
- 3.2 **To consider a request to for a topic for this scrutiny committee to accept a report in respect of Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme.**
- 3.3 **To consider a scope required for the establishment of a task and finish group in respect of Residents Parking Policy.**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Committee to develop an outcome focused work programme for the next 12 months and beyond.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The committee amended its work programme at the October meeting as follows:-

HRA Environmental Improvement Schemes – report to be submitted to the February 2019 meeting.

Protocol for the Planning of Highway Street Furniture and other Temporary Obstructions of the Highway - that Officers consider a scope for a future report based on the discussions of the committee and this be reported back to the committee.

Residents Parking Policy – to accept the submitted topic request and consider a related task and finish group scoping document at the next meeting.

4.2 Protocol for “A” Boards in the Town Centre

Members are reminded that a scope for a possible future report on the above issue was requested on the above issue. On this basis the Committee are asked to consider the following:-

- That the previously agreed policy in respect of “A” Boards in the Town Centre be reviewed with a view to it being implemented.
- That a licensing scheme for the siting of “A “ Boards be considered and that this be reviewed in light of the available resource to deliver the service and the comments made.

4.3 Residents Parking Policy

Further to the previous decision by the Committee to establish a task and finish group to consider the issue of a residents parking policy. A draft scoping document is attached for consideration at appendix C.

Once agreed the Committee are required to appoint members to be part of the Task and Finish Group.

4.4 Topic Request Form – Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme

Attached at Appendix B is a topic request form that has been submitted in respect of the Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme. Members are asked to consider the request and if they are minded to accept this matter on

to the work programme it is requested that this be discussed at the December 2018 meeting.

4.5 Future Work Programme

The Chair and Vice- Chair have considered items that are yet to be scheduled on the work programme. They have suggested the following items be scheduled as indicated:-

Right of Way improvement Plan – January 2019

Streetscene Service Standards – January 2019

Council House Lettings – March 2019

Highway Asset management Plan – April 2019.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 **Policy Framework** – The terms of reference of this Committee are broadly aligned to the priorities in the Council’s Strategic Theme ‘Place’ as set out in the Council Plan. Any scrutiny topics identified will contribute to the terms of reference “To ensure that we support the delivery of homes that meet people’s needs and aspirations in well connected communities. To ensure that we are an environmentally responsible County Borough.”
- 5.2 **Budget** – There are no budget implications arising from this report.
- 5.3 **Legal** – There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 **Staffing** – There are no staffing issues arising out of the report, but Officer resource will be required to support the preparation of information for Scrutiny Committee consideration.
- 5.5 **Equality/Human Rights** – This report provides information to inform a work programme and the Equality Manager has confirmed that the programme does not require an equality impact assessment as it merely sets out a timetable.
- 5.6 **Risks** – The main purpose of Scrutiny is to review and improve Council services, to make recommendations on future policy options and to act as a check and balance on the decisions made. Successful work programming and identification of issues for scrutiny, focusing on outcomes contributing to the relevant Council priorities, should minimize the risk to them not being attained/delivered.

6. **CONSULTATION**

6.1 The terms of reference of this Committee are closely aligned with the Strategic Themes and Priority Outcomes in the Council Plan which were informed by public consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.

HOMES & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**Work Programme from December 2018**

Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice.

The information in this work programme is subject to approval at the Committee meeting on 14 November 2018

The order in which items are listed at this stage may not reflect the order they subsequently appear on the agenda / are dealt with at the scrutiny meeting. Please note that for items marked as 'part 2' it is recommended that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during its consideration in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this committee's work programme, please contact Craig Stevens, Scrutiny Facilitator, Scrutiny Team on 292253.

For administrative arrangements such as enquiries relating to report dispatch dates, venue layouts, setting up of presentations, etc., please contact Marie Russell, Committee Officer, Committee and Member Services on 292241

All Meetings start at 2pm in the Guildhall, Wrexham, unless otherwise stated.

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/OFFICER
12 December 2018	Proposed Budget Savings 2019/20 and 2020/21 (provisional)	To consider the potential impact of the proposed budget savings relevant to this Committee which are highlighted at the All Member Budget Workshops between April and July 2018 - To be considered in September/October and December	To ensure that the potential impacts of the budget savings proposals are fully explored prior to public consultation	To be determined
	Welsh Housing Quality Standard Update	To consider progress made and work undertaken in respect of the Housing Revenue Account – Housing Capital Programme 2017/18. To be submitted on 6 monthly basis June and December and as information reports in September and March. To also include details of estimated % of properties that will not be compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by the required completion date of December 2020.	To help deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard on time and within budget	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
16 January 2019				
13 February 2019	HRA Environmental Improvement Schemes	To scrutinise the current issues and limitations regarding spending the Environmental Budget on land other than that owned by the housing department, i.e Highways/Environment. To also reference the new flexible approach that can be adopted so that appropriate schemes on non HRA land which directly affect tenants (such as off street parking) can be considered	To explore potential solutions to the issue.	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy

DATE OF MEETING	ITEM	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/OFFICER
13 March 2019				
10 April 2019				
8 May 2019				
12 June 2019	Welsh Housing Quality Standard Update	To consider progress made and work undertaken in respect of the Housing Revenue Account – Housing Capital Programme 2017/18. To be submitted on 6 monthly basis June and December and as information reports in September and March. To also include details of estimated % of properties that will not be compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by the required completion date of December 2020.	To help deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard on time and within budget	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
10 July 2019				

ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Network Management Duty	8 July 2015	<p>National statutory procedures provide the powers to Local Highway Authorities to manage the highway network to minimise and manage disruption and congestion.</p> <p>Over recent years the Council have regularly introduced traffic regulation orders to control and manage parking so as to improve traffic management.</p> <p>The Streetworks team within the Environment Service Department manage public utility work on the highway, coordinating and inspecting works.</p> <p>A review and re-prioritisation of related policies ensuring they are still relevant, fit for purpose, affordable, deliverable and as appropriate rationalised into a single policy document.</p>	To ensure the local authority manages the highway network efficiently and effectively.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
Local Transport Plan	8 July 2015	A change in legislation in Wales in 2014 removed the requirement to produce Regional Transport Strategies and now requires a Local Transport Plan to be prepared. This Plan has followed the statutory guidance and criteria and	To support the delivery of the Local Transport Plan.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
		<p>consultation programmes and been approved by the Welsh Government (WG) Minister earlier in 2015.</p> <p>These plans require a 5 year programme of transport interventions and these will form the basis for future Local Transport and Road Safety Grant funding from the Welsh Government.</p> <p>This report would inform Members of the National priorities for Transport from the WG and the criteria that defines eligibility for development and implementation for local transport interventions.</p> <p>The report would also allow a review of the five year regional and local transport interventions as defined in the Transport Plan.</p>		
Parks & Playgrounds	8 July 2015	<p>Wrexham County Borough Council currently administer a number of Country Parks and Visitor Centres.</p> <p>Recent changes have seen the responsibility for a number of play parks transfer to third parties, in the main Community Councils.</p>	To review and re-prioritise 'service standards' and operational protocols and priorities ensuring they are still relevant, fit for purpose,	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
		<p>These facilities still generate significant interest and remain very much in demand with recorded visit numbers growing. Current practice still involves a number of 'events' promoted by Council staff. Although the number and frequency of 'events' has reduced in recent years they are still popular attractions.</p> <p>Event organisation and promotion tends to be extremely resource intensive. Given the ownership transfer of play parks the Authority has little control and influence over the development of work in this area now.</p> <p>A review and re-prioritisation of 'service standards' and operational protocols and priorities ensuring they are still relevant, fit for purpose, affordable and deliverable.</p>	affordable and deliverable.	
Council House Lettings	13 July 2016	To consider the timescales in place for Council house lettings and how to address the issue of difficult to let properties.	To reduce the number of difficult to let properties.	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Streetscene Service Standards	13 September 2017	To consider an update on the Streetscene service performance against the revised standards and protocols once they have been in place for 12 months.	To ensure that agreed standards of service are delivered.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
Service Level Agreements for Tenants of Wrexham County Borough	11 October 2017	<p>The Council agreed to introduce charges for services, provided to some tenants, which are separate to their payable rent.</p> <p>To ensure that services are delivered to the required standard and can be effectively monitored by both the Housing Department and tenants it is considered that some Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will be required. SLAs will state the detail content and costs of services that will be provided for tenants for which they pay service charges.</p> <p>This report will allow Members of the scrutiny committee to examine the proposed SLAs prior to their introduction, in particular to consider the frequency, level of service and related charges. It is noted that SLAs will not be required for all services that are charged to tenants.</p>	<p>To ensure that the SLAs proposed are fit for purpose and offer a fair and quality service for tenants.</p> <p>To ensure that the Council is able to recover the costs of providing these services, whilst minimising the costs levied for tenants</p>	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Gardens in Council House Voids	10 January 2018	To consider the policy in respect of gardens in Council House Voids.	To implement a policy with a view to establishing the best approach in dealing with gardens so as they are safe and do not require unnecessary work	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
Local Housing Strategy 2018-23	28 February 2018	The Committee should receive 6 monthly update reports on progress of the Action Plan, to review targets / measures / outcomes during the five year programme.	To ensure that the Strategy meets its aims and objectives	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
Review of Succession of Tenancy	11 April 2018	To review the current arrangements of succession of tenancy of Council properties	To ensure that the current procedure is delivering succession in a manner which meets the requirements of the Council, Council tenants and reflects changes in society	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Highway Assessment Management Plan and Review of Road Classification/ Inspection and Defect Repair Regimes	11 April 2018	To consider performance in respect of the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and review the current arrangements for Road Classification/Inspection and Defect Repair Regimes. (information to be provided to Members in respect of Highway work being undertaken prior to this item being considered)	To highlight any issues with regard to performance in respect of the HAMP and with regard to the current mechanism for Road Classification/Inspection and Defect Repair Regimes	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
HRA Environmental Improvement Schemes	9 May 2018	To scrutinise the current issues and limitations regarding spending the Environmental Budget on land other than that owned by the housing department, i.e Highways/Environment. To also reference the new flexible approach that can be adopted so that appropriate schemes on non HRA land which directly affect tenants (such as off street parking) can be considered	To explore potential solutions to the issue.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
Next steps for Waste and Recycling in Wales	9 May 2018	To consider forthcoming Welsh Government consultation in respect of the next steps for Waste and Recycling in Wales.	To respond to this issue.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting of:	PURPOSE OF REPORT	EXPECTED OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/ OFFICER
Wrexham Rights of Way Improvement Plan	9 May 2018	To consider the public consultation response to the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and recommend thereon to the Executive Board.	To consider the draft plan prior to its approval.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
Council House Voids	11 July 2018	To consider performance in respect of Council House Voids together with information breaking down void performance into its various categories and detailing time spent on site and time processing the void.	To monitor performance levels in void turnaround times.	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
The Use of Herbicide to Manage Weed Growth on Highways and Open Spaces in Wrexham	12 September 2018	To consider an update report on the Councils use of glyphosates and related and related developments at the meeting in September 2019.	To monitor best practice in this area and Councils usage of glyphosate.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
Environmental Enforcement	12 September 2018	To consider proposals as to how this service can be delivered on a partnership, sub-regional or regional basis with other North Wales Councils.	To recommend a model for service delivery in this area.	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning

REGULAR ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Welsh Housing Quality Standard Update	11 February 2015	To consider progress made and work undertaken in respect of the Housing Revenue Account – Housing Capital Programme 2017/18. To be submitted on 6 monthly basis June and December and as information reports in September and March.	To help deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard on time and within budget	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing and Economy
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All Member INFORMATION REPORTS Recommended by Committee

ITEM	AS AGREED at meeting on	PURPOSE OF REPORT	REASON FOR CONSIDERATION	RESPONSIBLE LEAD MEMBER/OFFICER
Customer Care Contacts With Housing Department	14 January 2015	To consider the levels of customer contacts, their specific reasons and related performance in this area.	Information Item	Councillor David Griffiths (Housing)/ Head of Housing, and Economy
Street Lighting	9 November 2016	To detail responses to questions raised in respect of street lighting inspection and related street lighting issues that have arisen with Scottish Power	Information Item	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
The Use of Herbicide to Manage Weed Growth on Highways and Open	12 September 2018	To highlight developments regarding glyphosate and its usage. To be submitted in March 2019.	Information Item	Councillor David A Bithell (Environment and

Spaces in Wrexham				Transport)/ Head of Environment and Planning
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HOMES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – RESIDENTS PARKING - SCOPING DOCUMENT

MEMBERSHIP (to be agreed at the meeting the Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2018:

Councillors

Tudalen 23

Scoping Document – RESIDENTS PARKING	
Objectives / desired outcomes	<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review/revision of the current residents parking scheme, using the town centre wards as a model for other outlying areas which are having problems associated with parking. • Identifying how a Town Centre Parking Master Plan for Wrexham (including resident/street parking/public and council car parks, hospital parking and parking of larger organisations/employers in Wrexham) could be developed. <p>Outcome – To address problems that are being experienced with regard to parking in the town centre, with a view to any defined policy informing parking in other areas of the County Borough.</p>
Timescales / Time restraints	<p>There are no current time restraints on the existing policy. The Group will aim to conclude its deliberations and make recommendations within 6 months (December 2018 – May 2019)</p>
Define Scope - What is included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review/revise the current residents parking scheme. • Development of a Town Centre Parking Master Plan for Wrexham. • Consideration of how a residents parking scheme can be used in other areas of Wrexham
Where should the meeting(s) be held?	<p>Council Offices. Possible other locations as required/identified.</p>

MEETING 1 – DECEMBER 2018 – REVIEW OF CURRENT RESIDENTS PARKING POLICY (1)	
Information required/Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing Residents Parking Policy, as agreed in 2010. • Wrexham Councils Parking Services report Parking Report 2010 to 2014. • Changes to Parking Enforcement in Wrexham 2008 • Which Parking Guide 2012 • Town Centre Councillors Overview of residents Parking – July 2018 • Planning Guidance Parking Standards no.16 <p>Outcome – to consider the existing arrangements and identify relevant issues around their appropriateness and reasons for their previous non-implementation.</p>
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Officers with responsibility for parking enforcement and implementation of parking policy.
MEETING 2 – JANUARY 2019 - REVIEW OF CURRENT RESIDENTS PARKING POLICY (2)	
Information required/Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches adopted by other Council's that address issues identified with the existing scheme and its non-implementation. <p>Outcome – To identify approaches that can address perceived problems with the existing scheme.</p>
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Officers with responsibility for parking enforcement and implementation of parking policy. • Officers of other Authorities that have found their approaches successful.
MEETING 3 – FEBRUARY 2019 – SCOPE FOR TOWN CENTRE PARKING MASTER PLAN FOR WREXHAM (1)	
Information required/Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider parking Master Plans developed by other Authorities. • Review provision for parking in light of the Town Centre Masterplan. • Consider effectiveness or not of other Master Plans • Consider whether a Master Plan is required for Wrexham <p>Outcome – Should a town centre parking master plan be developed for Wrexham.</p>
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Officers with responsibility for parking enforcement and implementation of parking policy and Planning Officers.

MEETING 4 – MARCH 2019 - TBC	
Information required/Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To make recommendations with regard to a residents parking policy.• To consider how a masterplan for parking could be developed which compliments the existing Town Centre master Plan.
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant Officers with responsibility for parking enforcement and implementation of parking policy

REQUEST FOR TOPIC TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY

Title of report – Sheltered Housing Refurbishment Programme	
Purpose of Report	<p>To share with members the findings of the Options Appraisal which was carried out on the Sheltered Housing stock and to seek approval to adopt the recommendations to carry out the refurbishment/remodelling of the stock.</p> <p>The Council's Sheltered Housing Service has, for many years, provided a service that is both popular and has made a significant difference to the quality of life of many older people, both in providing companionships and social contact and in providing safety and security.</p> <p>There is still a need for this model of accommodation, but the reality is that much of this accommodation is inappropriate for the increasing support needs of older people, where space standards, ease of access and facilities are important.</p>
Expected Outcomes	<p>The programme would support the delivery of the following Council plan priorities;</p> <p>Pe2 – Supporting people to live active, independent lives within their community.</p> <p>Pe3 – Safeguarding those who are vulnerable</p> <p>PI1 – Promoting good quality homes and regeneration</p> <p>PI3 - Communities with sustainable, attractive settlements, neighbourhoods, buildings and spaces.</p>
Value of bringing to Scrutiny	<p>In 2016 Michael Dyson Associates were commissioned to carry out an options appraisal on the sheltered housing stock. This was to identify the condition of the sheltered stock, the amount of future investment required per scheme and designs for the options available.</p> <p>In the report the findings of appraisal will be presented and the options that the council would like recommended.</p>
Information Required	Report will be provided
Suggested Officer / Lead Member attendance	Cllr David Griffiths – Lead Member for Housing, Julie Francis – Service Manager for Housing
External involvement and benefit	Not at this stage. No consultation/communication has taken place on any of the proposals as no decision or approval has been granted to the findings of the options appraisal of the sheltered housing stock. Officers do not want to cause any concern or anxiety for tenants in the possibility that they may lose their home, or their scheme is demolished. Once approval is granted, a full communications strategy will be produced and all tenants will be communicated with and involved on a regular basis.
Lead Member / Head of Department Comment	The Council's approved build and buy programme allows for the acquisition of new general needs housing. The key market gap is in the sheltered housing sector (accommodation for people aged 60 and over) and it is here that the Council can make a real impact by building new state of the art premises that can accommodate the needs of an aging population, allowing people to live in their home for longer and to reduce the burden on the care sector – sustaining communities for longer. This is a really good opportunity for the Council to make a positive difference.

Submitted by:		22 October 2018	
Date:			
<p>This Scrutiny topic request is supported by the following Members (optional).</p> <p>1. _____ (print) _____ (signature)</p> <p>2. _____ (print) _____ (signature)</p> <p>3. _____ (print) _____ (signature)</p> <p>4. _____ (print) _____ (signature)</p>			
<p>Please tick all that apply and ensure that you have provided the necessary supporting detail.</p>			<p>Please tick √</p>
1	Referral from other Committee / Council / external body or partnership		
2	Committee steer / recommendation for Lead Member or Head of Department (not proceeding to Executive Board or Council at this stage)		√
	Committee steer / recommendation for Executive Board / Council (please provide date of Executive Board / Council meeting)		
	Information Only		
3	Official Consultation Document (e.g. proposed Government Legislation / Guidance)		
4	Does the issue involve public dissatisfaction with Council's performance? Insert relevant Council Priority Outcomes number(s) which are listed overleaf:-		
5	Has the issue been considered in the last 12 months by any other Member Forum? Please specify:-		No
6	Please specify which meeting of the Scrutiny Committee you wish to submit the report to and why:- Homes and Environment Scrutiny		

COUNCIL STRATEGIC THEMES AND PRIORITY OUTCOMES

ECONOMY OUTCOMES:

- E1 – Encouraging people to live, work, learn, visit and invest here
- E2 – Supporting Businesses to locate and grow here
- E3 – Helping Tackle Poverty

PEOPLE OUTCOMES:-

2

- Pe1 – Supporting people to have positive aspirations, learn and achieve their potential.
- Pe2 – Supporting people to live active, independent lives within their community.
- Pe3 – Safeguarding those who are vulnerable.
- Pe4 – Working with our partners to make Wrexham a safe place where people feel included.
- Pe5 – Enabling access to leisure and cultural activities.

PLACE OUTCOMES:-

- PI1 – Promoting good quality homes and regeneration.
- PI2 – Pride in our environment.
- PI3 - Communities with sustainable, attractive settlements, neighbourhoods, buildings and spaces.
- PI4 – Well-connected and sustainable communities.

ORGANISATION OUTCOMES:-

- O1 – Continuing to modernise our services.
- O2 – Supporting a resilient Council.

REPORT TO:	Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee
REPORT NO:	HEP/88/18S
DATE:	14 November 2018
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David A Bithell Lead Member for Place – Environment and Transport
CONTACT OFFICER:	Martin Howorth (Tel: 729630)
SUBJECT:	The Management of Grounds Maintenance Operations on Highways, Open Spaces and Housing Revenue Account Land
WARD:	All Wards

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To review service performance against agreed standards over the 2018 season in respect of grass cutting on highways, open spaces and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 During the 2018 season, grass cutting operations of open spaces (including land within the HRA portfolio) began in early April and has continued into November to keep pace with the growth of the grass. There has been an average of 6 cuts across all these areas. The extended length of the grass cutting season has allowed the grounds maintenance teams to keep pace with the grass growth across the County Borough and has resulted in few complaints this year.
- 2.2 The Streetscene team from the Environment & Planning Department cuts grass on HRA land under the terms of a service level agreement with the Housing & Economy Department.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **That the Committee supports the continuation of the Service Level Agreement between the Environment and Planning Department and the Housing and Economy Department with realistic targets set for the delivery of the service commensurate with the budget.**

3.2 That the present system and frequency of the grounds maintenance operations across the open spaces and highways be supported.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) The current Service Level Agreement between the Environment and Planning and Housing and Economy Departments provides the budget and stability to support a reasonable standard of grounds operations across HRA land.
- (ii) The existing system of management of open spaces and highways by Streetscene provides a reasonable standard of grounds maintenance .

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The Environment and Planning Department cuts all areas of public open space within the control of the environment portfolio and also maintains the highway verges. In addition, the team provides a grass cutting service for the HRA estate, HRA public open space and those tenants who are eligible (as assessed by colleagues in Housing and Economy Department) for the Assisted Gardening Scheme. There are, on average, 9 Streetscene staff working in each of 3 areas across the County Borough (27 staff). Highway verge management work is been undertaken with a mixture of Streetscene staff and contractors.

Housing Revenue Account Open Space

4.2 All grass cutting undertaken on behalf of the HRA is defined in 2 Service Level Agreements (**Appendix 1**) prior to the start of the season. To ensure a consistent appearance of the public realm throughout the County Borough and avoid confusion with differential standards, the maintenance is undertaken by the same 'gangs' (i.e. all grounds maintenance in each community, whether public open space or HRA, is cut by the same team on the same consistent basis).

Streetscene Service Standards

4.3 All grounds maintenance work is dependent on the weather and the growing season. Targets are based upon a desired number of 'cuts' per season. Adopted Streetscene Standards define the service level for public open space and verge cutting as:

- Amenity grass: 6 - 8 cuts per annum
- Highway verges: At least once annually
- Council-owned shrubs and hedges: Twice annually

2018 Season - Performance to Date

4.4 Performance on the various schedules of work is detailed below:

Open Space Amenity Grass, Communal and Open Plan HRA Land, Assisted Garden Scheme:

Grass Cutting

This year's grass cutting regime yielded few complaints and is sustainable with the current workforce and produces a reasonable length of grass. All gangs have completed 6 cuts, with 7 forecasted to be completed by the end of the season. The

Assisted Garden Scheme will have received 8 cuts by the end of the season. Growth this season has been exceptional with the high temperatures and occasional heavy rain encouraging vigorous growth, especially early in the growing season when pressure on cutting resource was at its peak. The length of time taken for a cut at this highest pressure time was around 6 weeks. Grass cutting has continued from April to November this year.

2019 Season

It is anticipated grass cutting will resume in March 2019, weather permitting.

Hedge and Shrub Bed Cutting

Hedge cutting normally takes place in the autumn and winter (outside the bird nesting season). Some hedge cutting was undertaken earlier in the season where there were access issues. One cut of hedges and shrubs is undertaken annually. Shrub bed maintenance is carried out from November to March, once the main grass cutting season is over.

Assisted Garden Scheme

There have been 6 cuts of the grass areas and at least one hedge cut of all properties. More cuts of the hedges were completed where hedge growth was particularly vigorous. This is undertaken on a need basis (e.g. privet hedges require more cutting than other types of hedging during the summer).

Highway Verges

Timing of the cut of the highway verges is a balance between highway safety and the encouragement of biodiversity. If the cut is undertaken too early complaints are received over cutting wildflowers; too late and there are issues over highway safety. The main cut commenced on 4 June 2018 and was completed by 25 July 2018. Safety visibility splay work continued during the late summer and autumn as required. A final cut of the highway verges is underway across the autumn period on areas that require cutting. The work during 2018 has met the Streetscene standards.

Trunk Roads & Special Traffic Management Controlled Areas

Llan-y-Pwll Link Road, the Industrial Estate Access Road and A541 Mold Road were cut in June and the A483 was cut 24 June to 7 July. The main A and B road network was cut from 30 July to 10 August 2018. All of these roads required traffic management to be in place which significantly adds to the cost of work.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 **Policy Framework** – The management of grounds operations on highways and open spaces supports the following corporate policies:

PI2 - Pride in our environment

PI3 - Communities with sustainable, attractive settlements, neighbourhoods, buildings and spaces, through a clean and well cared for environment.

5.2 **Budget** – Environment and Planning Department recharge the grounds works to Landlord Services, Housing and Economy Department. This covers grounds work on Housing (HRA) portfolio land. There is an additional recharge for the Assisted Garden Scheme. The Service Level Agreement will be reviewed with Officers from Housing and Economy Department.

5.3 **Legal** – There are no legal implications related to this report.

5.4 **Staffing** – Staffing levels will need to reflect the needs of the service.

5.5 **Equality/Human Rights** – Members are advised of their duty to consider the full Equality Impact Assessment which is available at <http://vmwinsqld/equalityisalive/Menu.aspx> report number EP/EIA00093/2018. Members of the public can request a copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment from the Contact Officer named in the header box of this report.

A summary of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached as **Appendix 2**.

5.6 **Risks** – There are no significant risks to continue with the current delivery of the grounds operations as long as the budget is in place to support the service.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 No consultation has been undertaken as part of this report.

7. EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

7.1 Option 1 – Existing Service

The existing service, as defined by the Streetscene Standards and the HRA Service Level Agreement remains.

7.2 Option 2 – Increase in HRA Grass Cutting Frequency

Any increase in staffing and vehicles to allow greater frequency of grass cutting on HRA land would need to be met through an increase in contribution from the Housing budget. This would also require enough lead time to be put in place to deliver changes to the grounds operations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO
None		



REPORT TO:	Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee
REPORT NO:	HHE/44/18
DATE:	14 November 2018
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Griffiths (Place - Housing)
CONTACT OFFICER:	Julie Francis Service Manager – Housing (Tel: 315436)
SUBJECT:	Welfare Reform Update
WARD:	All

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the developments with the Government's Welfare Reform Programme and to outline the work that has been undertaken by the Council since the last report dated 19 May 2018 (HHE/24/18) to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on Council housing tenants.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 1 April 2013 the Government's Welfare Reform Act came into effect.
- 2.2 On the 9 May 2018 Report (HHE/24/18) an update was given of the work that was in progress or planned to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants.
- 2.3 The changes that will have the greatest effect on housing tenants are:
 - the further reduction of the Benefit Cap;
 - the freezing of certain benefits at 2016 levels for four years;
 - the limiting of the child element of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit payable to two children only; and
 - the roll out of Universal Credit full service to all working age tenants in Wrexham

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members formulate their conclusions and recommendations based on the information in the report and the discussion at the meeting.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To provide an update to the Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the work that has been carried out since the last report and to inform Members of the ongoing impact of Welfare Reform on Council housing tenancies.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 Report (HHE/24/18) considered in May 2018, outlined the changes which have been introduced since the last report. This report provides an update of progress in relation to Universal Credit full service which went live in Wrexham on 4 October 2017.

4.2 Further changes were announced in the Government's Budget Statement of 2017. There were a number of changes introduced to mitigate some of the concerns which had been outlined in relation to the rollout of Universal Credit, a summary of these changes are outlined below:

2017 Spending Review Changes

4.3 Universal Credit Full service has been running in Wrexham for most areas from 4 October 2017, with remaining areas in Chirk & Whitchurch which went live in early May 2018. The latest caseload figures released by the Department for Work and Pensions show that as at 13 September 2018 in Wrexham the Universal Credit caseload is 4587, with 1686 in employment (36.8%) which is below the Welsh average of 37.7%. These figures show an increase in the Wrexham Caseload from the March 2018 data, at which time the Universal Credit caseload was 2584, with 963 in employment. Whilst the caseload has steadily grown over the past several months. It is still not possible to break this figure down further to provide exact number who may be in receipt of Housing Costs.

4.4 In the previous report provided in May, it outlined a number of changes which were announced, which included the ability to get an advance of 100% of the award and a 2 week transition to Universal Credit payment if someone moves from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit. Feedback is that given the initial 5 week wait for the first payment the majority of customers are seeking the 100% advance, as this is repayable over the first 12 months of the claim. Unfortunately as customers start to receive their Universal Credit awards, repayment of the advance causes financial difficulty to some of the customers.

4.5 With effect from April 2016, a four year freeze on working age benefits was introduced. Payments to pensioners were protected as were those benefits related to the extra costs associated with a disability. However, others will not see an increase until April 2020.

4.6 To provide training for new staff and ensure existing staff are aware of the ever changing UC legislation, we have provided regular training sessions. All staff also have access to an online specialist UC support package, which provides a whole

range of support tools and allows one to one support claims with benefit experts who can guide staff through problematic claims. Ongoing training is delivered as changes occur both in terms of staffing, regulations and procedures.

- 4.7 Some funding has been provided to the Council in respect of Universal Support, which enables the Council to provide assisted digital support and personal budgeting support. This has primarily been delivered by Council staff in Job Centre Plus offices as customers were presenting in this office to make claims. The Council had achieved all of the targets for Assisted Digital and Budgeting Support. However it was announced that as from 1 April 2019, responsibility for delivery of Assisted Digital and budgeting support will be moved to the Citizens Advice Bureau. There is no further detail available at this stage as to how the service will operate.
- 4.8 The rent arrears recovery procedure continues to be reviewed as different sections of Welfare Reform come into force. The emphasis continues to be on early intervention and further checks have been put in place to ensure that tenants in arrears have been made fully aware of all avenues of assistance available to them before any formal re-possession procedures are commenced.
- 4.9 A departmental Working Group also meets regularly to address on-going issues and discuss ways in which working practices can be changed and information disseminated. Some of the outcomes have been amendments to rent collection procedures to take account of the payment frequency of benefits, working in collaboration with colleagues in Finance and Welfare Rights when problems have been identified with information received from the DWP, or when requests for direct payments have proved problematic.
- 4.10 Welfare Reform continues to be an article in Tenants' Newsletters and information is produced to continue to raise awareness of the changes and how to seek advice. Information has been included in the Housing Hotline, regular updates on the Council's social media site and have attended drop in sessions with other agencies at the DWP.
- 4.11 The experience of the first year of Full Service Universal Credit has highlighted a significant culture shift in terms of claimant's behaviour and the promptness in which claim entitlement is established. The approach to claims from DWP in terms of roles and responsibilities is a significant change in behaviour for all involved and is taking time to become embedded.
- 4.12 The approach to dealing with new tenants has changed as we understand that substantial support is needed in order to ensure claims are processed quickly and for the correct entitlement. If key events are missed in the claim, then the whole process has to start again, which just creates further arrears. Pre-tenancy financial work has been introduced to understand applicant's financial behaviour, risk and vulnerabilities. This is in order to plan ahead for support and ensure each new tenancy has as much chance of success socially and financially.
- 4.13 Whilst this report primarily focusses upon work undertaken by the Housing Department in relation to its tenants, it is worth noting that the Welfare Reform changes which have been introduced by the Government in relation to the private sector, such as the freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates has meant that many private landlords are reluctant to let to tenants who are in receipt of Benefit as they

can achieve a greater rate of return from letting to other types of tenants. Feedback from most landlord forums has confirmed this is common.

- 4.14 Following the budget which was announced on 29 October, this has introduced some further changes as regards Universal Credit, however these are primarily aimed at Managed Migration which is due to commence from late 2020 onwards.

The Impact of Welfare Reform

- 4.15 There are currently a number of tenants subject to Spare Room Restriction and a number of tenants subject to the Benefit Cap, which would mean that their Housing Benefit would be reduced accordingly.
- 4.16 The Discretionary Housing Payment budget for 2018/19 is £349,528 and as at 23 October, £89,117 remains to be allocated. It is anticipated that this will be fully allocated which will be fully allocated at the year end.
- 4.17 If the Council has made a request for a Managed Payment or Alternative Payment Arrangement, these are now paid directly to the Council on a 4 weekly basis. However, depending upon where the customers' assessment period falls, it can be several weeks before the first payment is received. As the payments are made 4 weekly, if a person has a change in circumstances which takes them out of receiving Universal Credit, we get to find out about this later than we would have done previously under Housing Benefit.
- 4.18 It is anticipated that there will be an increase in rent arrears and a provision for bad debt has been made with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2018/19. Bad debt provision has been increased from 1% in 2017/18 to 1.5% in 2018/19.
- 4.19 Estate Office staff have been reviewing cases when they have identified where the customer has claimed Universal Credit, and has rent arrears or may have difficulty in managing their affairs, and taking appropriate action such as flagging the case for Budgeting advice.
- 4.20 When a tenant is in receipt of Universal Credit we engage early to support them to access their journal, apply for discretionary housing payments on their behalf, and advise and support them and how to pay their housing costs.
- 4.21 If a tenant does not engage fully we ultimately have no alternative but to apply for Alternative Payment Arrangement's and third party deductions if they are in arrears. However, third party deductions can be made at 10% of the claimant's entitlement, which can cause further difficulties, debt or encourage additional borrowing.
- 4.22 Similarly, any cases where we identify vulnerabilities or potential issues which are likely to cause the claim to be delayed, we are applying for Alternative Payment Arrangements where appropriate. This is a preventative tool used to prevent those most vulnerable from entering into further debt. Trusted partner status has been granted to Wrexham, which allows quicker application for these types of claim.

- 4.23 Plans are in place to have a trial jobs fair at Broughton Estate Office, following this a decision will be made as to whether this should be rolled out in other offices.
- 4.24 As indicated earlier in this report, the additional work generated by UC has been significant. In response to this we are restructuring the housing service functions which will provide frontline staff with more time to promote and provide more intensive support, and it is felt that further IT system developments, processes and intensive one to one support is needed to reduce the impact.
- 4.26 We are about to commence a trial our new mobile working platforms. A switch to mobile working for staff will allow more one to one interactions and claim/arrear work being conducted in “real time”. This will see more staff presence in our communities reducing the need to be office based.
- 4.27 Income Analytical software continues to be an avenue of exploration. This is income software that can predict the likelihood of payment and analyses financial behaviour data to highlight those most at risk of none payment, allowing staff efforts to be focused where needed the most and provide appropriate support.
- 4.28 As at week 28, (which is week ending 14 October 2018), the following comparison between customers not in receipt of Universal Credit and those receiving Universal Credit can be made.
- There were 3809 cases in arrears at this date not in receipt of Universal Credit, with arrears of £919,200.86 Average Arrears £241.23;
 - There were 1040 cases in arrears at this date in receipt of Universal Credit, with arrears of £632,647.87. Average Arrears £608.31;
 - Of the 1040 cases 942 tenants were in arrears prior to their Universal Credit claim totalling £376,916.39.
 - The amount of arrears which could solely be attributed to Universal Credit is £255,731.48
 - Only 22% of all cases are UC claimants, but equate for 41% of all arrears.
- 4.29 The breakdown provided in 4.28 above clearly shows that as payment of Universal Credit is made in arrears it is having an impact on the level of rent arrears due to the authority.
- 4.30 As at week 28 there were 267 cases in arrears of £1,000 or more which equated to £407,875.89. There are 135 cases which are in receipt of Universal Credit, of which 119 have Alternative Payment Arrangements and third party deductions and 5 have been entered into court.
- 4.31 There will likely be a further impact for tenants in receipt of Universal Credit in 2019/20, given that it is a 53 week year and the way Universal Credit is designed this works over 52 weeks. So unless there are any changes to the design of Universal Credit, tenants in receipt of Universal Credit will be paid 1 week short in the next financial year, which will increase the level of arrears further.
- 4.32 A change was introduced Universal Credit introduced from April 2018 in respect of temporary accommodation claims, which meant the housing costs element is no longer payable through Universal Credit. Instead it would be payable through Housing Benefit, this is primarily due to the fact that the large proportion of tenants

in this area often move before the end of their assessment period. This meant that they would not be entitled to the Housing Costs element. The amount payable in Housing Benefit has never reflected the actual cost of providing the accommodation however it does reduce the loss to the authority in these cases. This change may be reviewed in several years once managed migration is completed.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Policy Framework:** E3 - People can prosper as individuals and within their communities.
- 5.2 **Budget:** It is anticipated that there will be an increase in rent arrears. Bad debt provision within the HRA Business Plan has been increased from £482k in 2017/18 to £764k in 2018/19.
- 5.3 **Legal:** The UK Government introduced the Welfare Reform Bill in 2012 which introduced a number of changes to the welfare benefit system. Further reform changes were announced in July 2015 as set out in the Emergency budget and were enacted as part of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- 5.4 **Staffing:** It is recognised that staffing levels may need to be reviewed to support tenants in the changes on Welfare Reform in the future.
- 5.5 **Equality/Human Rights:**
An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out (HE/EIA00106/2017). The full assessment is available at <http://vmwinsqld/EqualityISALive/CreateEIA.aspx>. A summary is attached at Appendix 1. Members of the public can request a copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment from the Contact Officer named in the header box of this report. The impact of Welfare Reform was also taken into account when implementing policy changes such as the Council House Rents – Service Charges and the Review of the Council’s Allocations Policy.
- 5.6 **Risks:** The risks associated with the roll out of Welfare Reform remains the same as the previous report. The risks, however, are mitigated by the slow process of the roll out allowing the Council to implement and review systems in order to help alleviate the impact these changes may have on the Organisation.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Council tenants are advised of the changes as they are implemented. New tenants are issued advice leaflets and notified of the impending changes to the Local Housing Allowance and how this may affect them in the future. As the changes which have been outlined in this report are as a result of legislative changes announced by the UK Government, the Council is implementing them.
- 6.2 It is proposed to make Welfare Reform as a standing article in future issues of the Housing Hotline.
- 6.3 Progress reports are issued to the Wrexham Tenant and Member Partnership on a quarterly basis.

6.4 Meetings are held with other agencies and the DWP to discuss progress and share best practice.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO
Welfare Reform Act 2012	Internet	http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/7632544/L16-61+GIOTA+Welfare+Reform/dfe1c726-9119-4b73-be57-64789677abcb
Information Report - The Cumulative Impact of Welfare Reform in Wrexham (HF/33/16)	Intranet	http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/information_reports/2016/cumulative_impact_of_welfare_reform.pdf
Welfare Reform Update HHE/24/18	Intranet	http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=173&MIId=3747&Ver=4
Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016	Internet	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/7/pdfs/ukpga_20160007_en.pdf

Appendix 1

Summary Of Welfare Reform

Please note, this is a summary of the assessment. Refer to the full text.

Department: Housing and Economy
Department Reference: HE/EIA00106/2017
Responsible Officer: Steve Bailey
Job Title: Head of Housing and Economy
Completed Date:

Positive Impacts	
Impact	Description
Age Adults	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Age CYP	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Carers	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Disability	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Gender / Sex	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants
Gender Reassignment	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants
Marriage & Civil Partnership	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants
Poverty	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Poverty - As the average waiting time for a first payment of Universal Credit to be received is 6 weeks, there is the potential for claimants to experience hardship and worsen their financial situation by turning to day pay loan companies in order to meet day to day expenses.
Race / Ethnicity	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants
Religion / Belief	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants

Sexual Orientation	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants
Welsh Language	The rollout of the Welfare Reform programme will depend upon the benefits a person claims rather than their race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or their Welsh language skills. DWP have a Welsh language service freely available for claimants

Negative Impacts - Carers	
Key Issues	There may be issues regarding the ability of carers to carry out their caring roles, if there continue to be issues regarding tenants being exempt from the Spare Room Subsidy when they are in receipt of overnight care.
Mitigation Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government. The possibility of DHPs might also be explored but this would be considered on a case by case basis.
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	This will be on-going as cases arise.

Negative Impacts - Age CYP	
Key Issues	It will prove difficult to assist those aged under 22, as they will no longer be able to qualify for Housing Benefit, once they become a Universal Credit claimant. There are some exempt vulnerable groups.
Mitigation Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government.
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	December 2017

Negative Impacts - Age Adults	
Key Issues	It will prove difficult to assist those aged under 35, as they will only be eligible for the Local Housing Allowance rate for a room in a shared no longer be able to qualify for Housing Benefit, once they become a Universal Credit claimant. There are some exempt vulnerable groups.
Mitigation Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	March 2019

Negative Impacts - Disability	
Key Issues	There may be issues relating to the changes from DLA to PIP. The replacement of a 3 tier system (i.e. High, Medium and Low) with the new 2 tier PIP system could potentially removal claimants entitlement, thereby placing them at financial detriment. The current litigation regarding the issue of allowing spare bedrooms for carers means that it is still unclear whether Spare Room Subsidy will be charged in these cases or not.
Mitigation Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government.
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager

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By When	This will be on-going as cases arise.
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Negative Impacts - Pregnancy And Maternity	
Key Issues	The Local Housing Allowance rate will continue to apply for single expectant mothers aged under 35 years of age, until the child is born. This could create difficulties and additional stress if the expectation is that an expectant mother should live in shared accommodation, or be at financial detriment.
Responsible Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government. The possibility of DHPs might also be explored but this would be considered on a case by case basis.
Mitigation Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	March 2019

Negative Impacts - Poverty	
Key Issues	There are currently delays in the processing of initial payments to those transferred to Universal Credit. Delays average 6 weeks. This has the potential to cause financial hardship and rent arrears for claimants.
Mitigation Methods	Advice and assistance will be given regarding their housing options but ultimately, the regulations regarding the payment of housing benefit have been put into legislation by Central Government. Referral to DWP for an advance of payment is also an option to be considered.
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	This will be on-going as cases arise.

TUC/AL/EN/44

Appendix 2

Summary Of Impact of De-pooling & Implementation of Service Charges

Please note, this is a summary of the assessment. Refer to the full text.

Department: Housing & Public Protection
Department Reference: HPPE/EIA00056/2015
Responsible Officer:
Job Title:
Completed Date:

Positive Impacts	
Impact	Description
Age Adults	In de-pooling service charges for existing tenants the rent was reduced for 2016/17 only, by the amount of service charge. In moving towards Target Rent, annual rent uplifting was then applied to the adjusted rent and the service charge added back on top to minimise the financial impact on tenants. For new tenants taking up a tenancy the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introdu
Disability	In de-pooling service charges for existing tenants the rent was reduced for 2016/17 only, by the amount of service charge. In moving towards Target Rent, annual rent uplifting was then applied to the adjusted rent and the service charge added back on top to minimise the financial impact on tenants. For new tenants taking up a tenancy the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introdu
Age Adults	In de-pooling service charges for existing tenants the rent was reduced for 2016/17 only, by the amount of service charge. In moving towards Target Rent, annual rent uplifting was then applied to the adjusted rent and the service charge added back on top to minimise the financial impact on tenants. For new tenants taking up a tenancy the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introdu
Disability	In de-pooling service charges for existing tenants the rent was reduced for 2016/17 only, by the amount of service charge. In moving towards Target Rent, annual rent uplifting was then applied to the adjusted rent and the service charge added back on top to minimise the financial impact on tenants. For new tenants taking up a tenancy the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introdu

Negative Impacts - Age Adults	
Key Issues	For new tenants taking up a tenancy from April 2016 the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit

	but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introduction of Universal Credit and the continued roll out of the Government's welfare reform programme will impact on tenants and the Council. With proposals to introduce further ceilings on the amount of housing costs paid to benefit claimants or their entire removal, there is increased
Mitigation Methods	Systems are in place to advise and signpost current tenants and housing applicants with regard to challenges of welfare reform and the impact on under 35 years who have been offered new tenancies since April 2016 and who are in receipt of Housing Benefit. The Department will review service charges on an annual basis ensuring they will reflect actual costs of providing services, ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are provided with a breakdown of costs to ensure services that are subject to ch
Responsible Officer	Service Manager – Housing
By When	De-pooled service charges April 2016. From April 2019, tenants under 35 years will be paid Housing benefit at Local Housing Allowance. Even though this is not implemented until April 2019 it will include any new tenancies from April 2016 to under 35 years in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Negative Impacts - Disability	
Key Issues	For new tenants taking up a tenancy from April 2016 the service charge is in addition to the weekly rent. Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introduction of Universal Credit and the continued roll out of the Government's welfare reform programme will impact on tenants and the Council. With proposals to introduce further ceilings on the amount of housing costs paid to benefit claimants or their entire removal, there is increased
Mitigation Methods	Systems are in place to advise and signpost current tenants and housing applicants with regard to challenges of welfare reform and the impact on under 35 years who have been offered new tenancies since April 2016 and who are in receipt of Housing Benefit. Department will review service charges on an annual basis ensuring they will reflect actual costs of providing services, ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are provided with a breakdown of costs to ensure services that are subject to charge
Responsible Officer	Service Manager – Housing
By When	De-pooled service charges April 2016. From April 2019, tenants under 35 years will be paid Housing benefit at Local Housing Allowance. Even though this is not implemented until April 2019 it will include any new tenancies from April 2016 to under 35 years in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Negative Impacts - Poverty	
Key Issues	Service charges are currently eligible for Housing Benefit but not everyone is in receipt of this. The introduction of Universal Credit and the continued roll out of the Government's welfare reform programme will impact on tenants and the Council. With proposals to introduce further ceilings on the amount of housing costs paid to benefit claimants or their entire removal, there is increased potential for a significant impact on the Housing Revenue Account income and the financial impact on tenan
Mitigation Methods	Systems are in place to advise and signpost current tenants and housing applicants with regard to challenges of welfare reform and the impact on under 35 years who have been offered new tenancies since April 2016 and who are in receipt of Housing Benefit. Department will review service charges on an annual basis ensuring they will reflect actual costs of providing services, ensuring that tenants and leaseholders are provided with a breakdown of costs to ensure services that are subject to charge
Responsible Officer	Service Manager – Housing
By When	With effect from April 2017 - Fact sheet issued to applicants applying for housing and those under 35 years being offered a property.

Appendix 3

Summary Of Allocations Policy - 12 month review

Please note, this is a summary of the assessment. Refer to the full text.

Department: Housing & Public Protection
Department Reference: HPPE/EIA00055/2015
Responsible Officer:
Job Title:
Completed Date:

Positive Impacts	
Impact	Description
Gender Reassignment	The process of considering the housing needs of an applicant who has undergone gender reassignment or is in the process of doing, will be considered in their entirety.
Race / Ethnicity	Applicants from different ethnic backgrounds will be able to access housing. Refugees are given Local Connection once they have received a positive decision, in accordance with Housing legislation.
Gender Reassignment	The process of considering the housing needs of an applicant who has undergone gender reassignment or is in the process of doing, will be considered in their entirety.
Race / Ethnicity	Having an Allocations Policy that is more transparent and easier to understand, should help to remove any anomalies and/or problems in administration and in public perceptions that will assist all applicants to experience the same outcome.
Gender Reassignment	The process of considering the housing needs of an applicant who has undergone gender reassignment or is in the process of doing, will be considered in their entirety.
Race / Ethnicity	Certain ethnic groups who are disproportionately represented in HMOs and the Privately Rented Sector will have the same opportunity to access more suitable alternative social housing.
Gender Reassignment	The same process of applying for accommodation and being offered housing, will apply regardless of any gender reassignment or transitioning.
Race / Ethnicity	It is anticipated that having an allocations policy that is easier to understand and is more transparent, will help to counter unfounded opinions with regard to certain ethnic groups being disproportionately assisted with housing.

Negative Impacts - Carers	
Key Issues	The issue of carers and the Spare Room Subsidy has still to be fully resolved. The impact will be very similar to that of disabled applicants
Mitigation Methods	Liaise with partner organisations to keep up to date with relevant case law
Responsible Officer	Housing Tenancies Manager

By When	This work will depend upon further developments in the Government's Welfare Reform Programme and the outcome of Government appeals against legal decisions
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	Negative Impacts - Age CYP
Key Issues	Identified that it has become more difficult to assist families with children in upper flats to transfer to suitable alternative housing. Housing Benefit regulations are making it disproportionately difficult for young ethnic minority applicants to access housing benefit. Local Lettings Policies could restrict access to certain housing for younger people.
Mitigation Methods	Proposed changes to policy to give more priority to children in flats. HB issues - to make Social Services aware of the issue. Local Lettings Policies currently being reviewed with a view to their removal as appropriate.
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	Implemented as part of Departmental Service Plan 16/17.

	Negative Impacts - Age Adults
Key Issues	Applicants - particularly those under the age of 50, might find it disproportionately difficult to access suitable accommodation due to the number of properties currently covered by the Council Local Lettings Policy.
Mitigation Methods	Review of the current Local Lettings Policy with a view to the reduction in the number of properties that are covered by the Policy
Responsible Officer	Housing Tenancies Manager
By When	This process has already begun. The aim is to complete this by the end of this financial year

	Negative Impacts - Disability
Key Issues	The Spare Room Subsidy will make it difficult to ensure that those who are disabled and have a need for an extra bedroom on health grounds can be properly accommodated.
Mitigation Methods	Liaise with partner organisations to keep up to date with relevant case law
Responsible Officer	Landlord Services Manager
By When	This work will depend upon further developments in the Government's Welfare Reform Programme and the outcome of Government appeals against legal

	Negative Impacts - Poverty
Key Issues	There is the potential for all tenants subject to SRS to fall into rent arrears, as the level of Housing Benefit paid will not cover the total rent. When tenants fall into

	arrears, this has a negative impact upon their chances of being able to transfer to another Council property. This could be exacerbated by the introduction of a fifth band in the Allocations Policy
Mitigation Methods	Tenants who are subject to the Spare Room Subsidy and are able to evidence that they are in financial hardship will continue to be placed in Band 1 and given a priority to transfer. Meanwhile, any decision to award no preference to an allocation based on rent arrears will be made on a case by case basis, considering all the relevant facts
Responsible Officer	Manager - Housing Services
By When	This process is already in place - putting SRS applicants in Band 1.

